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ABSTRACT

COMMUNICATIVE RECEPTIVITY AND MEDIA INVOLVEMENT

By

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This study tested the Companionship Activities and Emotional Involvement with the Media scales. The companionship activities scale has five subscales: print media, visual media, friend, intimate and impersonal. The emotional involvement scale has two subscales: emotional behavior and emotional reaction. Those scales were correlated with McCroskey's Willingness to communicate scale to test the theory that shy people turn from human to media companionship activities without supporting that theory. The study did find significant correlations between emotional behavior and the five companionship factors. The magnitude of those correlations suggests the presence of intervening variables and additional research is suggested. Those variables may be embedded within the communicative receptivity construct measuring the degree to which one may perceive emotional involvement with others as harmless to self.

DEDICATION

To Frank, Mary, Dawn, Lee and Vicki who are my most demanding critics and my staunchest supporters.

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Special thanks must go to the intrepid members of my committee, Doctor Charles Atkin, Doctor Ronald Tamborini and Doctor Mary Bresnahan. Astute practitioners of the art of raising baby scientists and scholars, they have challenged, prodded, provoked, comforted, nurtured and lived with me through the time I was learning to accept my limitations without being limited by them.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This paper was designed to report the construction of scales measuring human and media companionship activity choices and emotional involvement with the media. The relationship of those scales to one another and to James McCroskey's (1986) willingness to communicate scale was then tested. The initial assumption was that a relationship would be found between willingness to communicate and choices of companionship activities. A relationship was predicted to exist between willingness to communicate and emotional involvement with the media. It was also thought that a relationship would exist between choices of human and media companionship activities and emotional involvement with the media.

The predicted relationships between the variables under study were felt to be due to factors which could predispose people to select activities for companionship. The three basic factors this study examined are shyness, companionship need fulfillment and attempts to maintain comfortable levels of arousal. Based on previous studies it was felt that those three factors might work in tandem to influence people's choices of companionship

activities.

Prior media studies had discovered that people used media for companionship need fulfillment quite consistently. Rubin (1981) found nine clusters of media viewing motivations: pass time/habit, arousal, companionship, program content, relaxation, information, escape, entertainment and social interaction. In addition to this group of motivations, Zillmann (1987) and Zillmann and Bryant (1985) have described a relationship between selective exposure to the media and individual attempts to either maintain a satisfactory level of arousal or to raise or lower the level of arousal to a more comfortable level.

Shyness has also been found to influence choices of media exposure. Whether it is called shyness (Cheek and Buss, 1981), loneliness (Russell, Peplau and Cutrona, 1980), social-communicative anxiety (Daly and Stafford, 1985), communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1985), or communication reticence (Burgoon and Hale, 1983), or any other names by which the inability to communicate with others is known, shyness researchers agree that shyness causes many problems for shy people. Among the most obvious problems which have been shown to relate to shyness are alcoholism, social isolation, fear, and constricted cognitive control.

Kagan and Resnick (1986) suggest that between five and ten percent of the total population are shy and retreat from some types of social interaction and move into others.

Thus, the researcher began to wonder if the reason that shy people avoid the company of others might also explain why shy people also use media differently than nonshy people. Using Zillmann's (1987) explanation of the hedonic principle that people make choices of media exposure and other behaviors to control arousal levels and maintain a comfortable level of arousal, this researcher asked if it might be possible that shy people choose media companionship activities rather than human companionship to reduce higher than normal levels of arousal. This view is supported by Kagan and Resnick's (1986) findings that shy children retreat from other children and have persisting patterns of shy behaviors over longitudinal study. Both Zillmann (1987) and Kagan and Resnick (1986) suggest that people whose arousal levels are uncomfortable will move away from the source of arousal. For people who are shy the source of arousal might be other people, even though Cheek and Buss (1981) described shy-sociable people as longing to be with other people.

If people who are shy retreat from others to reduce their levels of arousal, it would seem reasonable to

assume that one of the basic reasons for their doing so might be an attempt to control the amount of arousal created by the emotional involvement they would have in a situation. Therefore an assumption would be made that as people become more shy it would be increasingly difficult for them to enter companionship activities which are highly emotionally involved. It would seem that if one looked at activities which are chosen for companionship they would range from those which are very emotionally involving such as intimacy to those which are less emotionally involving such as reading a book or watching television.

Another possible reason for the choices shy people make of companionship activities might be found in Mehrabian's (1968) discussion of ambiguity and schizophrenic children. Mehrabian studied schizophrenic children and found a strong correlation between those children and parents who send children ambiguous messages. His study attempted to find out whether the children had become schizophrenic in response to their parents' ambiguous messages. However, the results of Mehrabian's study indicated that parents of schizophrenic and nonschizophrenic children were not significantly different in the number of ambiguous messages sent to their children. Thus, it may be that schizophrenic children are differentially affected by ambiguous

messages, even though both groups receive them. If ambiguity influences shy behaviors, this influence might occur as a result of there being more possible ambiguous situations as intimacy increases and fewer possible ambiguous communicative events as intimacy decreases. This study was not designed to test the possible relationship between the reception of ambiguous messages and choices of behavior, but it is a plausible explanation which also deserves testing.

A third possible explanation for why people differ in the choices they make of activities to fulfill their need for companionship might reasonably be the familial process of socialization in which they were raised. It may well be that some families have interaction patterns which are close and lovingly intimate, some are friendly and cordial to one another, and others have interaction patterns which are cold, distant and even hostile. Those children who grew up in families which are cold may not have developed skills which would allow them to know how to behave in intimate relationships or even in friendships. Their lack of social skills could be reflected in a hesitance to attempt social actions for which they are unprepared. Thus, they may retreat from forms of social interaction which require that they deal intimately with others, preferring companionship activities which are less close, or even moving away from

relating to people and choosing to relate to characters on television or in books who do not demand response. It is possible that these people would make the choice of media consumption for companionship because the media would allow them to find some sights and sounds of other people, but people who have no expectations the shy person is unable to fill. Although this study does not test socialization processes in their relationship to the issue of why shy people may consume media or interpersonal activities to fulfill their need for companionship, it does look for patterns of selective exposure to media versus interpersonal activities which would be consistent with such an explanation.

Shyness and Media Exposure Patterns

Basic to all three possible explanations for why a person might choose media consumption in preference to human companionship is the realization that a possible continuum exists between choices of human and media companionship activities. Perhaps shy people are more likely to prefer less intensely intimate forms of interaction whether their reason for doing so is a way of coping with arousal levels, the increased ambiguity of intimate relationships, or a socialized lack of skills with which to handle the demands of intimacy. This study will attempt to tap only the arousal aspect of media use patterns, to limit potential confounding of variables.

Conceivably, it is reasonable to assume that people who are shy would choose to consume larger quantities of media than people who are not shy. Previous studies of mass media effects have demonstrated that a relationship does exist between heavier consumption of media and shyness.

Johnstone (1974) reported a study of 9,000 school students and the relationship between their use of media and their inclusion into or exclusion from their peers. The results of this study showed that television use patterns decline rapidly in the four years of high school and that boys who are not socially integrated consume more media than those who are integrated. According to Johnstone, although "this does not establish directly that television viewing functions to reduce tensions generated in the social world, it does suggest at least that felt deprivations emanating from the social environment do lead people to turn to television to seek out emotional restoration (1974, pp. 41-42)."

Rubin (1981) constructed nine clusters of viewing motivations and examined the relationship between those motivations and the type and amounts of media consumed by people who most strongly chose those categories. The people who fit into the companionship motivation group not only watched television, but also appeared to be

strongly attached to it, choosing dramatic narratives. In this study the link between the use of media for companionship and a brief description of a preferred content type is made, but no rationale for why a group might choose one genre over another is given other than an assumption from the uses and gratifications paradigm that viewers were making their choices to fill pre-existing needs.

Perloff, Quarles and Drutz (1983) asked the question of whether people who have fewer social interactions watch more television because they have more time available or whether television viewing provides viewers with some sort of psychological alternative to interpersonal relationships. Perloff, et al.'s sample of college students were tested to see if a relationship existed between dating involvement, number of friends, depression and amounts of television viewing time. Perloff and his associates discovered that the interaction between those situational variables and television viewing was mediated by the respondents' subjective dispositions, raising the question of how many different types of personality variables might intervene between media use patterns and situational variables.

Rubin (1983) found a predictive relationship between companionship and subsequent viewing levels while failing

to specify content areas which might account for that relationship, although his study did show a general liking for television as a correlate of those viewing levels. Subsequently Rubin examined possible links between loneliness, parasocial interaction and local television news viewing. Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985) thought that lonely people used media due to a sense of intimacy with television newscasters. Rubin, et al. did not find any significant relationship between loneliness and parasocial interaction, but reiterated previous findings that lonely people watch and respond to television news differently than nonlonely people.

Austin (1985) utilized the revised UCLA loneliness scale, correlating results on that scale with media use patterns. He found no relationship between loneliness and movie going, magazine reading, book reading and television viewing. He found a modest inverse relationship between loneliness, newpaper reading, and radio use. He suggested that more specific content based approaches might yield better results.

Reporting on the use of media to satisfy one's needs for human companionship, Canary (1986) suggested that loneliness is not one construct but a continuum of relationships which range from human and media companionship to a chronic form of loneliness which is characterized by withdrawal from nearly all interaction.

Canary's results did not find an overall difference between shy and nonshy media gratifications. But he suggested that the shy might move away from television to less interactive forms of content such as reading books. In addition, his study included family as a variable leading this researcher to wonder if the inclusion of human relationships as part of a continuum of companionship satisfaction activities might be more revealing of the interaction between choices of human and media companionship activities.

Responding to Zillmann's (1987) prediction of a relationship between media exposure choices and attempts by the individual to control his or her levels of arousal Finn and Gore (1987) studied the interaction between shyness and television viewing motivations. They found that shyness was correlated with the companionship viewing motivation about equally for males ($r=.28$, $p<.001$) and females ($r=.27$, $p<.001$). Shyness was not correlated with relaxation, entertainment, or arousal for either males or females. Information and habit were correlated at $r=.19$, $p<.05$, and $r=.25$, $p<.01$, respectively, for women only. Pass time was correlated at $r=.22$, $p<.01$ for males and at $r=.32$, $p<.001$ for females. Escape was correlated with shyness at $r=.17$, $p<.05$ for males and at $r=.32$, $p<.001$ for females. Thus, this

researcher felt that companionship was the cleanest television viewing motivation when correlated with shyness and that its use would allow the most accurate results.

Three major problems have been exposed by these studies. The first problem is a conceptual one. At least part of the difficulty in finding consistent results in the relationship between shyness and media use patterns may result from an assumption that many methods of measurement are capable of tapping the same phenomenon. Another difficulty may have come from an assumption that people withdraw from human interaction and use media mainly because human interaction is not available. Although Finn and Gore (1987) distinguish between shyness and loneliness, often the terms are interchanged as though they measure the same thing. To measure television usage patterns, researchers have utilized peer relationships in teenagers, content choices, self-reports of loneliness, dating patterns, parasocial interaction with news anchors on television, and psychological scales. It is conceivable that peer interactions may represent many different underlying mechanisms from unpleasant body odors to physical unattractiveness, and might include such demographic factors as physical distance from peers. Content choices

may result from many different factors. If one is consuming media with others group decision-making processes may supercede individual choice. Rubin, et al. (1985) described a situation in which subjects chose to reject or failed to choose interpersonal interaction to relieve loneliness, preferring instead the choice of media consumption. Prior conceptualizations of loneliness and shyness were based on the rationale that people choose to consume media because there are no available humans to interact with, but when Rubin's sample was given the choice of interpersonal relationship to reduce their state of loneliness they were more likely to choose media instead.

Zillmann's (1987) explanation of the use of media makes sense in that context. If people are comfortable using media and uncomfortable with other people, it would follow that media would be given preference. Thus, a conceptualization of a shy person as one who feels discomfort with human interaction and more comfortable with media interaction would seem to fit with recent study results and to move away from research simply characterizing loneliness to ask why a person might be lonely in the first place. That would allow researchers to test specific reasons for loneliness such as shyness.

A second problem encountered is an ambiguity over

why there might be a relationship between shyness and media use patterns. Little has been done beyond merely establishing whether or not a form of shyness or loneliness exists and attempting to relate that shyness to media exposure. This is true despite Rosengren's (1974) warning that media use may be based more on subjective interaction with content than on generic choices of media. If people who are shy choose media interaction over human interaction it is reasonable to assume that they are finding something in that interaction which replaces the interaction they might have had with humans if they did not withdraw from them. Although the concept of parasocial interaction did not prove particularly useful as a way of explaining the interaction of people who are shy with the media, there are other possible explanations for human interaction with media.

Recalling the previous studies which often found a relationship between shyness and an attraction to the media, it would appear that the dramatic content linked to the use of media for companionship (Rubin, 1981) may serve to meet specific needs in shy people. Rubin did not speculate on why that relationship might have been found, but the more colloquial label "tear jerker" might contain a clue. If people are moved to tears while consuming that content it is reasonable to assume that a

strong emotional involvement with the content of the tear jerker is taking place. The content might not be specifically related to the lives of shy people, but the thematic content of emotion may be related. A person who is experiencing the emotion of grief may see a portrayal of grief tucked inside a story line which does not exactly mimic the experience of the viewer, but is made common by the similar emotional quality. A child who is afraid of parental abandonment could watch Bambi and feel some degree of relatedness to Bambi's loss of his parents. Reading a book one might sense that the characters know the same feelings that human experience and feel close to those characters. While media content may vary considerably in its ability to link the viewer to the content, the process of linkage may be similar for many viewers.

Recent studies which examine the emotional process by which viewers may involve themselves with the media include one carried out by Tamborini, Stiff and Heidel (1987). Operating under the assumption that viewers of horror movies will become emotionally involved with that content, Tamborini and his associates predicted and found a relationship between emotional involvement with graphic horror, physical arousal, and later self-reports of negative affect in empathetic viewers. It may be that

people who become physically aroused by content in media persentations connect these feelings of arousal with prior occasions when they experienced similar feelings of arousal, thus tapping into their memories, their present fears, or any other emotions.

The studies which link media use with arousal have raised many issues while demonstrating that people do utilize media to balance hedonic valence. One issue which is particularly applicable to this study is Zillmann's (1987) caution that understanding the response of consumers to media content can be biased by research expectations and assumptions made by researchers about that content. If researchers would believe that "only sissies cry" in response to media content, that will influence their perceptions of how one "ought" to respond, thus limiting the ability to see what is really there. This is especially relevant in a world which equates male as tough, unfeeling, nonresponsive, and emotionally distanced from media most of the time--with the exception of sports events and political speeches, when emotional response is almost mandatory.

A demonstration of the effect of that attitude on behavior patterns linked to media exposure can be found in Zillmann, Weaver, Mundorf and Aust (1986). Zillmann, et al. tested the effect that being with a person of the opposite gender would have on one's behavior when

confronted by the fear induced by graphic horror. They found that both males and females altered their response to graphic horror when in the presence of persons of the opposite gender to conform to the societal norms of male-strong and female-vulnerable behaviors, regardless of their physiological levels of arousal.

A third problem found in media effects research is the lack of external validity and generalizability caused by forced choice experimental procedures. No matter how much care is taken in an experimental manipulation, subjects do not necessarily behave as they would when able to make their own choice of media to consume. That does not invalidate the work of laboratory researchers whose valuable insights often contain clues which lead to deeper understanding of human behavior. However, it is a caution that researchers should not accept results of experiments as adequate without the backing of nonexperimental studies to act as a real world check on assumptions of validity.

This study was designed to respond to the three problems of conceptual weakness, lack of a direct link between shyness and media exposure, as well as an ambiguity about whether media is chosen instead of personal interaction with others, and the need for less controlled studies to provide a real world link to experimental manipulations. Therefore the researcher

proposes these research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. The choice of human companionship activities is positively related to the willingness to communicate with others.

Hypothesis 2. The choice of media companionship activities is inversely related to the willingness to communicate with others.

Hypothesis 3. The choice of media companionship activities is positively related to emotional involvement with the media.

Hypothesis 4. The choice of human companionship activities is inversely related to emotional involvement with the media.

Hypothesis 5. Emotional involvement with the media is inversely related to willingness to communicate.

Hypothesis 6. The use of media is inversely related to willingness to communicate with others.

Hypothesis 7. The use of media is positively related to emotional involvement with the media.

Hypothesis 8. The use of media is inversely related to the choice of human companionship activities.

Hypothesis 9. The use of media is positively related to the choice of media companionship activities.

It is expected that people who are willing to communicate (that is those who are not shy) will

find it easy to relate to humans for the fulfillment of their companionship needs and will find, within those human relationships, sufficient emotional involvement to fulfill their need for emotional involvement. Thus, it is expected that they will not have the need for media companionship and will consume less media. It is also expected that they will not be emotionally involved with the media. At the same time those who are not willing to communicate (that is, those who are shy) are expected to choose media companionship activities, to consume a greater quantity of media and to be more emotionally involved with the media they consume.

These relationships are predicted on the basis of Zillmann's theory of the media exposure usage to achieve hedonic valence. It is assumed that people who are willing to communicate with others and who have achieved a state of hedonic valence through their interpersonal relationships will not be motivated to use media for companionship, although they may use it to fill other needs such as the need for entertainment. One the other hand, it is assumed that people who are not willing to communicate with others will not be able to achieve the state of hedonic valence (that is comfortable levels of arousal) through their interpersonal relationships and

they will therefore use media to fill their need for companionship.

CHAPTER II METHODS

Two-hundred fifteen subjects were recruited from communication classes at a large midwestern university. They were free to refuse to participate without penalty and were given an extra credit option if they chose not to participate.

The procedure followed was to test the subjects in their classes. Class members were given a survey which contained a shyness measure (McCroskey's, 1986, willingness to communicate scale); a scale to measure emotional involvement with the media which was constructed for this study; a scale of activities used for the purpose of companionship which was also created for this study; and several demographic measures. After subjects filled out the surveys they were thanked for their participation and debriefed.

The use of the scales rather than an experimental procedure was chosen to enable the researcher to test the scales. In addition, it was felt that shyness is a personality trait which cannot be manipulated, ruling out the utilization of experimental research techniques.

Neither can shyness be adequately compared with a control group. However, it should be cautioned that test results in themselves should not be seen as a sufficient reason for making assumptions about individuals without in-depth interviews to back up the use of the scales.

The Companionship Activities Scale

The companionship activities scale is composed of ten items which are combined to form a subscale (human companionship activities), thirteen media items which are combined to form a subscale (media companionship activities), and a single item, pet, which provides an alternative to the narrow perspective that sees only human and media interaction as possible fulfillment of the need for companionship. One of the human items was designed to tap those activities which one might enjoy while alone. The assumption is that while a person is engaged in activities which are intensely involving of self, the person may have a sense of completeness, ie. of the self as the chosen companion. See Table 1. for scale items.

The Emotional Involvement with the Media Scale

The emotional involvement with the media scale is used as a tool to further investigate the connection Finn and Gore (1987) made between Zillmann's (1987)

mood-management hypothesis and the use of media to fulfill companionship needs. Tamborini, Stiff and Heidel (1987) have investigated the role of emotional involvement in determining reactions to media by incorporating measures of personality need states, media usage patterns and/or effects, and the arousal response to media which forms the connection between the need state and its fulfillment. Tamborini, et al. used both physiological and self-report measures of emotional involvement. The present study is meant to extend the self-report measure of emotional involvement with the media which Tamborini and his associates described as fictional involvement with characters and which was measured by such items as "I really get involved with the feelings and characters in a novel....If I see something very sad or very beautiful on television, I sometimes cry because what I see makes me very happy or very sad." The emotional involvement with the media scale divides that involvement with the media into a behavioral component and a reactive component.

The emotional behaviors component of the scale was created to address more of the possible emotional resonses one might have when consuming media, including tears, laughter, and anger. The emotional reaction measure was designed to tap the social aspect of the emotional reactions people have to the media. Items link

emotional involvement with the media to a willingness to share one's feelings with others by discussing the characters and action of media content with others. See Table 2. for the seven items which comprise the emotional involvement with the media scale.

The Willingness to Communicate Scale.

McCroskey's (1987) willingness to communicate scale is being used as a measure of shyness. The willingness to communicate scale is expected to further test Canary's (1986) findings that the shy are actually unwilling to communicate with others rather than wanting to talk to others. Canary's work suggests that people who are shy withdraw from interpersonal interaction to show a preference for the more solitary forms of media, such as print and music, in conjunction with the movement away from television and movies.

Interaction between these variables would support Zillmann's (1980, 1983, 1987) and Zillmann and Bryant's (1985) theories of affect dependent responses to stimuli. The implications of Zillmann's theory for an understanding of the mechanisms which drive shyness include an awareness that the fears of the shy could create sufficient arousal that interpersonal interaction could be felt as noxious. Thus, the individual might tend to move away from interpersonal interaction and

towards media interaction.

Demographic Variables

The demographic items which were measured consisted of age, gender, educational level, and several media use pattern items. Three media use items were measured: "Hours in an average day watching TV....Favorite TV time slot....Hours in an average day listening to radio." The item favorite TV time slot was measured as mornings, afternoons, prime time and late night television. The other two items were measured by simply allowing subjects to estimate the amount of time per day spent consuming media. Age and time spent consuming media were ratio scales. The other items were dummy coded.

The gender item was added because Finn and Gore's (1987) research had indicated that gender might play a strong role in mediating the results of media effects research. The amount of media consumed was measured because one of the basic assumptions of media effects research is that personality variables affect, not only the type of media consumed, but also the amount of media consumed. With shyness in particular, there is an assumption that shy people consume greater quantities of media than nonshy populations do. Therefore, the research assumption is that there is a strong correlation between the use of media for companionship and the amount

of media which is actually consumed.

Statistical Procedures

Factor analyses were computed to examine the scales for the reliability of items and the presence of subscales which are orthogonal to one another. PA 1 and Varimax rotation were used. Unless an item very clearly loaded on one factor alone (variable 2 of the companionship scale), minimal factor loadings of .50 were used as a cut off point in deciding whether or not to include an item in a factor. Even if an item loaded at more than .50, if it also loaded highly on another scale [within .10 of the first factor loading] it was discarded. As an example, an item which loaded as .55 on one factor and .48 on another was dropped, while an item which loaded at .60 on one factor and .48 on another was included.

After the factor analyses were computed Pearson Correlations were used to test the possible relationships between the variables formed through the factor analysis. Although the relationships of the scales themselves had been predicted, the relationships between the subscales could not be predicted before they were known through the factor analyses. Thus, the statistical procedures are presumed to be a test of the hypotheses and a method of discovering unknown relationships.

CHAPTER III RESULTS

Factor analyses were done to detect subscales and to ensure reliability and orthogonality of the scales and their subscales. See Tables 4, 5, and 6 for a report of factor analysis results. Tables 7, 8 and 9 report results of Pearson Correlations computed with the factor analyzed subscales for the companionship activities scale, the emotional involvement with the media scale and the willingness to communicate scale.

The factor analysis of the companionship activities scale resulted in the creation of five factors which represented 54.7 percent of the total variance. Factor 1 represents 23.4 percent of the variance and is composed of the four print media items, a music media item and a self as companion item. Thus, it was named print media since that group was most represented in the factor loadings. Factor 2 is comprised of items dealing with friends and others with whom one is acquainted, but not intimately. Factor 2 represents 12.1 percent of the variance and is named friend. Factor 3 accounted for another 7.4 percent of the variance and contained the television

and movie items. This factor was named visual media. Factor 4, which is comprised of the items close friend/ lover and good friends, added 6.2 percent of the variance and was called intimate. Factor 5 added 5.6 percent of the variance with the items pet and caregiver. Pets could be assumed to be less close to people than human interaction, and caregivers such as doctors are noted for keeping a professional distance from their patients, so this factor was named impersonal using Williams' (1984) definition of impersonal communication as lacking in interpersonal development. This was felt to be able to include both the person-pet relationship and the person-caregiver relationship, since the expectation is that neither would develop on an interpersonal level within those roles. (The possibility of exceptions exists, but the factoring would seem to back up this interpretation because authority figures were seen as fitting into the friend category where the potential for development exists, but caregivers did not load on that factor.

Factoring the emotional involvement with the media scale resulted in two subscales. The first was called emotional behavior because the items which loaded on this factor represented such emotional behaviors as tears and laughter. This factor was responsible for 42.7 percent of the variance. Factor 2, emotional reaction,

added 15 percent of the variance to account for a total of 57.7 percent of the variance. Emotional reaction was composed of the items which indicated that viewers who become emotionally involved with the characters become angry when those characters are harmed, talk to their friends about the characters and worry about how things will work out for the characters.

The willingness to communicate scale factored into two factors. Factor 1 accounted for 46.1 percent of the variance and was named stranter because most of the items indicated willingness to communicate with strangers. Factor 2 accounted for another 12.8 percent of the variance for a total of 58.9 percent of the variance. This factor was named friend because the greatest number of items which loaded on this factor involved talking to friends in various circumstances.

Subsequently correlations were computed using the newly constructed scales and subscales. Several items in the scales loaded on more than one factor and were dropped from the correlations to maintain orthogonality. The results of those correlations confirmed some of the predicted results and failed to confirm others. It was expected that the three scales would be correlated with one another and they were, however, some of the ways

Place Tables 10, 11, and 12 about here.

they correlated with one another were somewhat surprising. The strongest correlations were observed between the companionship activities scale and the emotional involvement with the media scale at r=.38, p=.0001. This relationship was not expected to be that strong because it was felt that the strength of the norm of seeking human companionship in the human companionship items of the companionship scale would account for the greatest amount of variance and, thus, that weighting would result in a lowered correlation with the emotional involvement with the media scale, despite the expected correlation with the media items in the companionship scale. Conversely, the modest relationship between the companionship activities scale and the willingness to communicate scale of r=.16, p=.008 was much lower than had been expected. It was assumed that people would use human companionship if they were able to talk to other people and that doing so would be given strong preferential treatment. Quite obviously that expectation was not met despite the fact that the scales were positively correlated with one another.

Again, the relationship between willingness to communicate and emotional involvement with the media was surprising. Although those scales had been expected to be inversely related due to the media

rather than the human nature of the emotional involvement with the media items, the observed relationship was a moderate positive relationship of r=.21, p=.001. The fact that this was a stronger relationship than the one between willingness to communicate and companionship activities was totally unexpected, but very interesting.

These results were duplicated in the Pearson Correlations of the media use variables with the

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Place Table 13. About Here.

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three scales. Television use was correlated with the companionship activities scale at r=.17, p=.005 as was expected given the results of previous media studies suggesting that the use of media for companionship would result in a higher use of media. It was not related at all to the emotional involvement with the media scale or the willingness to communicate scale. It is not surprising that television use would not be related to willingness to communicate unless it was inversely related, but it was expected that it would be strongly related to emotional involvement with the media.

There was a modest inverse relationship between emotional involvement with the media and favorite viewing time (r=-.12, p=.04) which indicates that there

is a slight correlation between emotional involvement with the media and morning and afternoon television viewing patterns. Radio use per day was also slightly correlated with companionship activities at r=.11, p=.05. See Table 13 for media use correlations.

Age was moderately and inversely related to companionship activities with r=-.20, p=.002, and with the emotional involvement with the media scale at r=-.20, p=.002. However, it was not related to willingness to communicate or any of the media use variables.

Gender correlated positively with the companionship activities scale at r=.12, p=.04. It was also fairly strongly correlated with the emotional involvement with the media scale at r=.31, p=.0001. Willingness to communicate was not influenced by gender. Radio

Place Table 14 About Here.

use was related to gender at r=.12, p=.04. And, not too surprisingly, favorite TV time was related to gender at r=-.34, p=.0001. This is an indication that women consume more TV in the early times of the day, and that males consume more TV in the prime time and late evening hours. Education was only related to one of the subscales of the emotional involvement with the media scale, emotional reaction, at r=.12, p=.04. See Table 14 for the Pearson Correlations of age,

gender and education with the other variables.

The real excitement of this study's results lies in the relationships of the subscales which were created in the factor analysis. These subscales seem able to provide explanations for the unexpected relationships among the scales.

In the relationship between the companionship activities scale and the willingness to communicate scale, the predicted correlation between the human items which loaded on friend and intimate on the companionship scale were correlated strongly with the stranger and friend factors of the willingness to communicate scale, respectively. Evidently the friend factor of the companionship scale is more closely allied to the stranger factor of the willingness to communicate scale at r=.34, p=.0001 than it is to the friend factor of the willingness to communicate scale at r=.26, p=.0001.

The intimate factor of the companionship activities scale is related to the friend factor of the willingness to communicate scale at r=.37, p=.0001. The relationship with the stranger factor is r=.08, and it is nonsignificant at p=.117.

Neither of the media factors is related to willingness to communicate although they were expected to be inversely related. Nor is the impersonal factor

related to any of the willingness to communicate subscales.

A comparison of the strong correlations between friend and intimate in the companionship scale and stranger and friend in the willingness to communicate scale with the relations between the scales at r=.17 indicates that there is a weakening of that relationship which is not revealed in correlations between the other factors. It would be reasonable if the media factors were inversely related to the willingness to communicate scale to assume that they had simply canceled out the effect of the strong relationships, but this did not occur.

An examination of the relationship between the emotional involvement with the media scale and the willingness to communicate scale shows that the relationship between the scales can be accounted for by the emotional behavior factor at r=.24, p=.0001. Emotional behavior is correlated with stranger at r=.21, p=.0001. It is correlated with friend at r=.22, p=.0001.

The correlation of the companionship factors with the emotional involvement factors again yielded some surprises. It was not expected that emotional involvement would translate to emotional involvement

on an interpersonal level. Print media was related to emotional behavior at r=.28, p=.0001 and emotional reaction at r=.14, p=.02. Visual media relates to emotional behavior at r=.28, p=.0001 and to emotional reaction at r=.29, p=.0001.

The inverse relationships which had been predicted with the other variables failed to materialize. Friend was correlated with emotional behavior at r=.21, p=.001 and with emotional behavior at r=.19, p=.002. Intimate was correlated with emotional behavior at r=.21, p=.001 and with emotional reaction at r=.12, p=.04. Impersonal was also related to emotional behavior at r=.16, p=.009 and to emotional reaction at r=.11, p=.05. Even the weaker associations were significant. The strongest associations were invariably those with emotional behavior.

Interestingly, the relationships of the subscales of the emotional involvement and companionship activity scales does not translate to an equivalent relationship with media use patterns. TV use per day is correlated with print media at r=.13, p=.03 and with visual media at r=.28, p=.0001. Correlations with friend, intimate and impersonal are .02, .03 and -.01 respectively. Radio use per day is correlated with emotional behavior at r=.16, p=.01 and favorite TV time is related inversely to emotional reaction at -.18, p=.004.

Willingness to communicate is not related to any of the media use items. The subscale friend is weakly related to gender at r=.11, p=.05, but not to age or education. Stranger is not related to any of them.

The companionship activities subscales provide some more insight. Friend is correlated with age at r=-.12, p.04. Although a weak correlation, this would be interesting if it indicates that one's friendships decrease with age or that the criteria for naming another friend change. The inverse correlations with age hold also for visual media at r=-.22, p=.001, with intimate at r=-.20, p=.002 and with impersonal at r=-.12, p=.04. Those inverse relationships continue to hold with emotional behavior at r=-.18, p=.003 and with emotional reaction at r=-.16, p=.008.

Gender influences the use of print and visual media for companionship with correlations of r=.12, p=.04 and r=.14, p=.02 respectively. It also influences the choice of intimate relationships for companionship with a correlation of r=.21, p=.001. Gender is also related to emotional behavior at r=.33, p=.0001 and to emotional reaction at r=.22, p=.001.

The media factors were far more explanatory than had been expected. The print and visual media factors accounted for 30.8 percent of the variance explained

in total and 56 percent of the variance accounted for by the five factors of the companionship activities scale. If shyness is a predictor of media use patterns this study shows that the relationship is not a direct one since TV use and radio use and the media factors of the companionship scale were not inversely related to the willingness to communicate scale.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

People who are emotionally involved with other people are also emotionally involved with the media and consume more media. The results of this study dispute a long cherished media effects belief that people who are shy and lonely will turn to using the media to replace human companionship. This study suggests that the use of media is not a replacement for human companionship, but merely an alternative source of human companionship most often utilized as part of a continuum between deep intimacy and print media. At all levels of that continuum, the common denominator is emotional involvement and particularly emotional behavior if the use of interaction across the continuum is to be for the purpose of companionship.

The findings support Zillmann's (1987) theory which asserts that people will use media to achieve a personally comfortable level of hedonic valence through their emotional involvement with media content. This level of research seems capable of exposing a process of emotional involvement which may be generalizable, while allowing for a broad range of

idiosyncratic choice-making from among multiple options of media content. The researcher contends that on an affective level of involvement it makes little difference if the choice of content is the soap opera or the Monday night football game if the individual consuming that media content becomes emotionally involved with the content. The possibility exists, and should be further tested, that when people feel emotional involvement with media content they feel the other humans portrayed by that media content as really human even if the portrayal is fictional, and that they feel the connectedness of a companionship which allows the expression of their feelings. This evidently may be able to take place in both males and females despite socialization rules which limit that expression of emotion. Saarni (1979) discusses that socialization process and notes that preschool children are already socialized to know which emotions may be expressed publicly and under what conditions. Rubin's (1987) work with soap opera involvement has demonstrated that many soap opera viewers do become involved with the characters represented in the soap opera on a parasocial level. And Tamborini and his associates (1987) have shown a link between emotional involvement and empathic reactions to the content of graphic horror.

An increasing body of study is pointing the way toward an understanding of human involvement with the media as simply another form of human involvement. The emotional behavior factor is highly significantly associated with virtually every form of human interaction whether that interaction is interpersonal or mediated. If we can cry or laugh, yell or get angry, when exposed to media content or human interaction, something in us becomes connected with something which is real and which exists in that content. The same emotional involvement associated with choosing to be with people is also associated with watching a football game, listening to the radio, or reading a novel. The fact that emotional involvement is so broadly associated with choices of companionship activities is even more impressive when it is understood that the emotional involvement scale was constructed to measure emotional involvement with the media, not with people.

The research question then becomes, not whether personality variables influence specific content choices, although that is still an important question in its own right, but on a much broader scale what are the factors that either promote or fail to promote emotional interaction with other humans through interpersonal and mediated emotional involvement. The magnitude of the

results suggest the presence of intervening variables which may influence whether or not people allow themselves to become emotionally involved with human companions and with media companions. One probability is that human beings read cues from the environment which indicate the possibility of negative feedback from others for expressing their emotions. Saarni (1979) clearly stated that our emotions are self-controlled and masked to avoid feelings of embarassment, derision or other negative feedback. Zillmann, Weaver, Mundorf and Aust (1986) revealed the masking process which Zillmann describes as response override in their study of gender-socialized reactions to the frightening content of graphic horror.

This study is not capable of claiming a causal link between emotional involvement, choices of companionship activities and willingness to communicate, however Anderson (1987) does suggest that "the finding of an association can be a material element in the development of a causal explanation." The fact that the correlations are not .50 and higher suggests that emotional involvement is not the only factor which is influencing the choice of companionship activities. Therefore, further research into other possible factors which influence emotional involvement and choices of companionship activities is

suggested. Additionally, further conceptual work on defining shyness (Cf. Kagan, 1984, pp. 65-70, on inhibition, and Kagan, 1978, 1969, for additional information.) is suggested. Given Saarni's (1979) contention that children are taught to withhold their emotional selves as a self-protective measure, it makes sense to assume that all people are somewhat inhibited from self-expression. People who are more inhibited than others may not be different than others in being able to process environmental stimuli on a sensory level, but their internalizing of those cues may be somewhat more sensitive to cues which all people use to protect themselves from being singled out, laughed at, embarassed, derided, yelled at, put down, or threatened. If the fear of reactions from others which make us uncomfortable is universal it may be one of the universal processes which define us as human. The fear of negative reactions from others may be a process which could hold true for all people and across time as the definition of what constitutes a negative reaction from others changes but the process remains intact. It would also hold true despite differing individual sensitivity to environmental cues. Therefore it might appear behaviorally as multiple differing reactions to the same stimuli. (Cf. Ribble, 1987, unpublished paper, for a discussion of differing reactions to a fear stimulus.)

From this research a definition of companionship must include emotional involvement. If one combines awareness of the process of emotional masking or response override within one's definition of companionship one definition would be that companionship selection is a choice of an activity within which one is free to express one's real feelings.

The nearly universal use of the masking of self-expression to protect one's emotional self from negative interactions with others suggests also that our conceptualization of communication may be too narrow when it is limited to asserting control over our environment. It appears from this research that it is possible that the communication of companionship can only take place in an environment where the need for self-control or other control is not required. Fisher (1987) states: "It is one of the supreme ironies of psychology that the self, the quality that makes an individual a unique human being, develops through and is probably impossible to attain without social interaction--communication with other human beings." This search for companionship, for that situation in which one can honestly be self with another, may be one of the compelling human activities. It may, even more strongly than the social interaction for physical survival,

be the factor that makes humans social beings dependent upon communication with others not just for physical survival, but for the survival of the psychological self.

The term communicative receptivity was chosen as indicative of the construct which is being explored, since it appears that one's choice of whether or not to seek companionship, ie. to be willing to unmask one's real self, may be influenced by one's perceptions that receiving and responding to emotional content from human or media companions will not result in harm to oneself. That perception may be contained either within the content itself or in attendant situational reality. Further research is suggested in this area.

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TABLES

Table 1. Companionship Activity Scale Items.

1. Talking with my closest friend of lover.
2. Reading works of fiction.
3. Talking with good friends.
4. Watching TV sitcoms.
5. Talking with acquaintances.
6. Listening to my own records and tapes.
7. Visiting with parents, siblings or relatives.
8. Watching TV news.
9. Talking socially with coworkers, classmates or teammates.
10. Going to movies.
11. Watching VCR movies.
12. Talking informally in small groups of friends.
13. Reading the news in papers.
14. Watching TV dramas.
15. Talking at meetings.
16. Listening to D-jays.
17. Reading feature stories.
18. Reading magazines.
19. Spending time with self.
20. Listening to music on the radio.
21. Talking with care-givers.
22. Time spent with a pet.
23. Talking with authority figures.
24. Watching TV soaps.

These items were scored on a scale from
0= never use for companionship to
10=always use for companionship.

Table 2. Emotional Involvement with the Media Items.

1. I cry when I am watching TV/movies, reading or listening to music.
2. I sometimes yell at the TV, radio or newspaper when something dumb is said.
3. I allow myself to become emotionally involved with the characters or action.
4. I laugh out loud when I am watching TV/movies, reading or listening to music.
5. I get angry when one of my favorite characters is hurt or mistreated.
6. I talk to my friends about what is going on in the lives of my favorite characters.
7. I sometimes worry about what is going to happen next to characters I like in serials.

These items were scored on a scale from
0= never to 10= always.

Table 3. Willingness to Communicate Scale Items.

1. *
2. *
3. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.
4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
5. *
6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.
7. *
8. Talk in a small group of strangers.
9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.
10. *
11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
13. *
14. Present a talk to a group of friends.
15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
16. *
17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
18. *
19. Talk in a small group of friends.
20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

McCroskey and Baer (1985) report an internal alpha of .92.
McCroskey and McCroskey report an internal alpha of .91 (1986).

These items were scored on a scale from 0= never to 10=always.

Starred items were filler items not used to compute the scale.

Table 4. Factor Analysis of the Companionship Activities Scale.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Var 1	.06058	-.03415	.03917	.76483*	.00424
Var 2	.42988*	.07611	.12139	-.08552	.10241
Var 3	.06175	.47992	.14139	.60125	-.10170
Var 4	.12050	-.15879	.66482*	.13999	.18188
Var 5	.11216	.70919*	-.02411	.14219	.00355
Var 6	.38234	.15102	.31909	.25733	.02379
Var 7	-.04688	.38105	.03350	.44423	.33275
Var 8	.30360	.19255	.52716*	-.21512	-.05303
Var 9	.07146	.79607*	.04125	.18455	-.08248
Var 10	.23886	.21895	.72760*	.02980	-.08074
Var 11	.09480	.19361	.76544*	.00731	-.01689
Var 12	-.07038	.70569*	.20219	.19136	.09745
Var 13	.64631*	.11717	.35019	-.09006	-.12263
Var 14	.30562	-.12839	.64492*	.16851	.21349
Var 15	.18107	.64683*	.07841	-.25653	.14153
Var 16	.41293	.39859	.33484	.04988	-.14248
Var 17	.73573*	.17836	.15250	-.09858	.01813
Var 18	.80950*	.00652	.25328	.05272	.00677
Var 19	.68175*	-.05783	-.12452	.15031	.15488
Var 20	.63475*	-.03213	.27614	.33369	.12583
Var 21	-.11575	.37173	.18280	-.04039	.58499*
Var 22	.23270	.08641	-.10224	-.02206	.64544*
Var 23	.18042	.66720*	-.07216	-.24759	.29240
Var 24	.07016	-.15648	.46470	.16552	.55075

*Starred items were used to construct the five subscales of the companionship activities scale: print media, visual media, friend, intimate and impersonal. Items 6, 7, 16, and 24 were eliminated from the scale since those items loaded on more than one factor.

Table 5. Factor Analysis of the Emotional Involvement with the Media Scale.

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Var 1	.53654*	.33160
Var 2	.54118*	.14033
Var 3	.74110*	.00815
Var 4	.80633*	.00815
Var 5	.43725	.65274*
Var 6	.22415	.76594*
Var 7	.04434	.88799*

*Starred items were utilized to form Factor 1 emotional behavior and Factor 2 emotional reaction.

Table 6. Factor Analysis of the Willingness to Communicate Scale.

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Var 40	.77892*	.07366
Var 41	.25707	.51558*
Var 43	.33659	.69867*
Var 45	.79770*	.12767
Var 46	-.14145	.77166*
Var 48	.55763	.59057
Var 49	.57122*	.25204
Var 51	.46954	.54251
Var 52	.53598	.62267
Var 54	.84257*	.11030
Var 56	.12684	.78757*
Var 57	.66363*	.47111

*Starred items were combined to form Factor 1 Stranger and Factor 2 Friend.

Table 7. Pearson Correlations of the Companionship Activities Scale.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Companionship	1.00					
2. Print Media	.78 .0001	1.00				
3. Friend	.62 .0001	.21 .001	1.00			
4. Visual Media	.75 .0001	.51 .0001	.19 .003	1.00		
5. Intimate	.34 .0001	.17 .006	.24 .0001	.19 .002	1.00	
6. Impersonal	.47 .0001	.15 .012	.33 .0001	.16 .008	.07 .166	1.00

Table 8. Pearson Correlations of the Emotional Involvement With the Media Scale.

	Emotional Involvement	Emotional Behavior	Emotional Reaction
Emotional Involvement	1.00		
Emotional Behavior	.88	1.00	
Emotional Reaction	.86	.52	1.00

All correlations are significant at $p<.0001$.

Table 9. Pearson Correlations of the Willingness to Communicate Scale.

	Willingness to Communicate	Stranger	Friend
Willingness to Communicate	1.00		
Stranger	.94	1.00	
Friend	.75	.48	1.00

All correlations are significant at $p<.0001$.

Table 10. Pearson Correlations of Willingness to Communicate with the Companionship Activities Scale.

	Willingness to Communicate	Stranger	Friend
Companionship	.17 .005	.15 .015	.16 .009
Print Media	.08 .115	.09 .093	.03 .299
Friend	.35 .0001	.34 .0001	.26 .0001
Visual Media	-.04 .283	-.05 .197	.01 .436
Intimate	.21 .001	.08 .117	.37 .0001
Impersonal	.03 .352	-.00 .478	.07 .142

Table 11. Pearson Correlations of Willingness to Communicate with Emotional Involvement with the Media.

	Willingness to Communicate	Stranger	Friend
Emotional Involvement	.19 .002	.17 .006	.16 .009
Emotional Behavior	.24 .0001	.21 .001	.22 .001
Emotional Reaction	.09 .092	.09 .089	.06 .209

Table 12. Pearson Correlations of Companionship Activities with the Emotional Involvement with the Media Scale.

	Emotional Involvement	Emotional Behavior	Emotional Reaction
Companionship Activities	.38 .0001	.37 .0001	.29 .0001
Print Media	.25 .0001	.28 .0001	.14 .018
Friend	.23 .0001	.21 .001	.19 .002
Visual Media	.33 .0001	.28 .0001	.29 .0001
Intimate	.19 .003	.21 .001	.12 .039
Impersonal	.16 .009	.16 .009	.11 .047

Table 13. Pearson Correlations of Media Use with the Companionship Activities, Emotional Involvement with the Media and Willingness to Communicate Scales.

	Television Use Per Day	Favorite TV Viewing Time	Radio Use Per Day
Companionship Activities	.17* .005	-.08 .134	.11 .052
Print Media	.13* .030	-.10 .065	.09 .089
Friend	.02 .409	.01 .435	.05 .228
Visual Media	.28* .0001	-.05 .237	.07 .151
Intimate	.03 .350	-.04 .261	.06 .185
Impersonal	-.01 .451	-.05 .242	.09 .106
Emotional Involvement	.06 .177	-.12* .037	.09 .085
Emotional Behavior	.04 .264	-.04 .292	.16* .011
Emotional Reaction	.07 .158	-.18* .004	.00 .481
Willingness to Communicate	.05 .218	-.05 .241	.02 .368
Stranger	.03 .323	-.05 .233	.03 .315
Friend	.08 .134	-.03 .346	-.00 .476

Table 14. Pearson Correlations of Age, Gender and Education with the Companionship Activities, Emotional Involvement with the Media and Willingness to Communicate Scales, and with TV Use Per Day, Favorite Television Time Slot, and Radio Use Per Day.

	Age	Gender	Education
Companionship Activities	-.20* .002	.12* .036	-.00 .474
Print Media	-.06 .189	.12* .041	-.03 .317
Friend	-.12* .038	-.06 .208	.04 .272
Visual Media	-.22* .001	.14* .016	-.01 .426
Intimate	-.20* .002	.21* .001	-.04 .259
Impersonal	-.12* .042	.07 .168	.02 .388
Emotional Involvement	-.20* .002	.31* .0001	.04 .289
Emotional Behavior	-.18* .003	.33* .0001	-.05 .247
Emotional Reaction	-.16* .008	.22* .001	.12* .041
Willingness to Communicate	.05 .221	.04 .294	.06 .200
Stranger	.07 .148	-.01 .441	.02 .368
Friend	-.00 .487	.11* .048	.10 .067
Television Use Per Day	-.08 .117	-.06 .200	.01 .449
Favorite TV Time	.03 .347	-.34* .0001	-.11 .061
Radio Use Per Day	-.10 .079	.12* .042	-.00 .489