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This is to certify that the

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COMMUNICATION HABITS AS PREDICTORS

OF COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AMONG

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ABSTRACT

COMMUNICATION HABITS AS PREDICTORS OF COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AMONG UNITED STATES FARM BROADCASTERS

By

Billy Nelson Wolfe, Jr.

This is a study of the communication habits of the members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters. It is a study of how 70 per cent of these men in radio and television communicate with their guests and broadcast audience and other reference groups such as their sponsors, their broadcast colleagues, and those who attend meetings. The data are correlated with a measure of "success", and significant differences are found among three levels of success.

This is a study of the relationship between a special kind of mass communicator and several reference groups which affect the nature of his programming content, the validity of his image of the audience, as well as the function of his behavior for the stability and maintenance of the social system within which he works.

A mail questionnaire was sent to 179 members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, and of the 72

per cent who returned the survey instrument, the data from 69 per cent (123 respondents) were used in the analysis. Fewer than 6 per cent were non-commercial farm broadcasters.

The questionnaire is a 36-item instrument containing 76 variables related to communication habits on and off the air as well as to personal attributes. Most of the response options require the use of simple check-marks on either multiple-choice items or 7-point semantic differential scales. Other items require short answers which are coded for tabulation. The entire methodology is explained in Chapter II.

The literature on mass communicator-audience relationships is reviewed in Chapter I, and a form of analysis utilized by Melvin DeFleur in his study of the mass media as social systems[1] is used to determine the role of such relationships in preserving the equilibrium of the respective media systems.

The frequencies of response for each questionnaire item are presented in Chapter III, giving both the head count and the percentages for radio and television farm broadcasters. Mean scores are presented for the scaled questions.

Two major hypotheses are solidly supported by the data in Chapter IV:

I. <u>Sponsor-related communication habits are highly correlated with one's success in obtaining program sponsorship</u>.

II. There exist significant differences in both the communication habits and personal attributes between the various levels of success.

Furthermore, communication habits and personal attributes which are not sponsor-related were found, and they, too, differentiate among the three levels of success.

"Success", as used in this study, refers to the relative percentage of each commercial farm broadcaster's programming which is usually sponsored. Sixty per cent or less sponsorship is designated "Low Success"; 60-80%, "Medium Success"; and 80-100%, "High Success".

In the same manner as it was applied to the analysis of the research literature, "functional analysis" is applied to these data, and the findings suggest that the relationship of the commercial farm broadcaster and his audience functions as a means for obtaining program sponsorship. Information about the audience serves as a means to financial ends more than as a basis for improving the mass communication system. These findings are presented in Chapter V with a reminder that nearly 95 per cent of all commercial farm broadcasters are personally involved in the sale of their programming.

A composite of the more successful farm broadcaster's communication habits and personal attributes is also summarized in Chapter V.

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[1]Melvin DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication (New York: David McKay, 1966), pp. 141-158.

COMMUNICATION HABITS AS PREDICTORS OF COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AMONG UNITED STATES FARM BROADCASTERS

By

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The germinal idea for this study was discovered in prayer during the Summer of 1966; and it is to Him, the giver of every good and perfect gift, that grateful acknowledgement is made for the gift of curiosity.

The wise King Solomon penned the words which capture for me the privilege of this endeavor in Proverbs 25:2:

> It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.

Grateful acknowledgement is also made to those scholars whom God gave the sometime wearisome task of training up the child in the way he should go:

Dr. David Ralph conveyed to me the contagious joy of research well-done and convincingly expressed;

Dr. Ralph Nicholas opened to me the needs of a larger world for dedicated scholarship and service;

Dr. David Lewis kept before me the high standards of meaning what I wrote, and writing what I meant;

While, Dr. Kenneth Hance, throughout, provided that patient ear and kind correction which makes any man's fumblings more "catchable".

And to my Shulammite Princess, whose tender hands have suffered much for the mail and for me, I offer my insufficient thanks for her sacrifices.

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INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Study

A survey of the literature concerning the relationship of the mass communicator and various of his reference groups, of which the mass audience is only one, reveals that such studies have failed to include the local, on-the-air broadcaster. A purpose of this study, consequently, is to fill a portion of this research gap.

The mass audience, the persons who are on the receiving end of the media message, are not always the sole target of the mass communicator. Studies of newspaper writers, wire editors, film and TV creators show that the audience, as a reference group, may exist only as a vague image, may be the fantasized fabrication of a rationalization, or may, in the end, be mere residual recipients of messages intended for other less obvious, or conscious "targets".

This study was designed to provide an opportunity for a specialized group of on-the-air broadcasters--farm broadcasters--to report their communication habits in terms of several reference groups. These groups include program guests as well as the broadcast audience, sponsors and station personnel, and several types of groups whom the farm broadcaster encounters at meetings which he attends.

The responses of these farm broadcasters are then analyzed for the purpose of testing two broad hypotheses:

I. Sponsor-related communication habits are highly correlated with one's success in obtaining program sponsorship.

II. There exist significant differences in both communication habits and personal attributes between the various levels of success.

Limitations

This is a mail questionnaire study of the 179 commercial and non-commercial members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters.

The 13 non-commercial members have been included for purposes of exploratory comparison; but because the analysis of this study focuses on the criterion variable of "success", which is defined in terms of commercial sponsorship, the comparisons are not presented in this report.

An earlier proposal to send questionnaires to the wife and station manager of each farm broadcaster was discarded after numerous field interviews. Because of the extensive traveling which the farm broadcaster does in the course of his work, it became evident that neither the wife nor the manager could be expected to verify the farm broadcaster's report of his far-flung communication habits. It also became obvious that complete sets of returns would be difficult to obtain, rendering much of the data useless.

An analysis of the 56 non-respondents (28%) indicates that their distribution fairly closely approximates that of the respondents on the dimensions of power, media used, and geographic representation. Generalizations from the 72%, therefore, can be made without substantial reservation to include the non-respondents.

Significance and Justification of the Research

The growing pervasiveness of the electronic media requires that the local broadcaster-audience relationship be systematically explored. Studies have been made for other media, and for different levels of geographical coverage; but the transient, illusive qualities of electronically-mediated communication continues to go unexplored. Survey research verifies that receivers are on, and some can even verify that the audience is in the same room as the receiver; but, while there is some speculation as to various roles which mass media content can play for the audience, there is unnecessary ignorance about the function of the audience for the mass communicator, especially for the broadcaster.

Reams of speech and communication publications regularly omit discussion of the economic environment which provides the context and capital for much of today's mass media content, ignoring the profit motive and economic incentives which influence the communication process. This study explores

the communicator-sponsor relationship and its effect on the communicator and the audience.

In contrast to the methodologies most frequently found in other studies of the mass communicator and his audience, this study focuses on the observable behavior of the communicator rather than on the internal processes of his mind.

And, finally, this study reaches out into the many worlds of the communicator--into the office, the studio, the meeting--and then proceeds to determine the function which these various habits perform in the maintenance of the overall communication system of the farm broadcaster.

Methods of Research

The survey of the literature in Chapter I is the result of a systematic investigation of library materials to locate, describe, and analyze the research which pertains to the subject of the communicator-audience relationship within the context of mass communications.

Chapter II is devoted to a detailed description of the data-gathering procedure. Suffice it to say here that the data were collected through a mail questionnaire survey.

The data collected from 123 respondents were analyzed with the help of a CDC 3600 computer, made available through the National Science Foundation and Michigan State University.

Simple frequency distributions for the responses to the 36-item questionnaire are reported in Chapter III, while, in

Chapter IV, the findings are presented which indicate the nature and direction of the relationships among the 76 variables, as determined by measures of correlation and significant differences.

Chapter V represents both a summary of the findings and an analysis of these findings in terms of their function in an economic environment.

CHAPTER I

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The focus of communication research and theory in the recent past has been almost exclusively upon the question of "effects".[1] It is quite reasonable to ask questions about the result of a communication act, particularly when it is the intention of the communicator to influence the receiver of his message in some way. Only the mentally ill or incompetent can be content to send forth a steady stream of communication and yet remain oblivious to the results of their efforts.

Attention to effects, then, is a common feature of the normal human organism. The ability of the person varies, however, with respect to his capacity for seeing, understanding, and responding to indications of effect. While the mentally ill person is an extreme example, numerous instances are known in which individuals have exhibited varying degrees of attention to the results of their communication efforts. The "social bore" is a frequently mentioned illustration of

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[1]Melvin L. DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication (New York: David McKay Company, 1966), p. 141.

the person who does not know when to stop talking. He persists when he ought to refrain from talking.[2]

Variations in ability lie within the organic and psychological makeup of different people. But one's ability to perceive and respond to the effects of his communication are also a function of the channels used in the communication situation.

In face-to-face situations under normal conditions, the communicator has direct access to communication response. He can both see and hear the receiver and can observe the other's response to what is said.

In personal, but mediated, communication situations, such as when one talks with a friend over the phone, the visual channels of effect are absent; but the aural cues are relatively unhindered, and the response is almost as spontaneous as in the face-to-face situation.

Neither the facial cues nor the spoken response is available in the case of the personal letter, and a time lag factor is introduced into the process. Feedback is delayed for days, or even weeks.

In all three cases--face-to-face, mechanically mediated, and time mediated--it has been assumed that the communicator and the receiver were already acquainted and that their mutual expectations for each other's response had developed over

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[2]David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 109.

time. But what happens in those communication situations when the source and receiver have not established any successful, personal communication ties? What happens when the source addresses numerous unknown receivers? And what is the nature of their relationship when he must communicate to them through channels that are almost exclusively one-way?

These are the dilemmas of the mass communicator, the person whose communication is directed toward a "relatively large, heterogeneous, and anonymous audience." Wright defines the "large" audience as that which is of such a size that the communicator cannot interact with its members on a face-to-face basis.[3]

Given such a communication situation, the problem of assessing the effects of the mass communicator is extremely difficult, though not impossible. In the past twenty years, for example, a number of audience research firms have come into existence with the purpose of supplying to the mass media at least some information about the effects of their efforts.[4]

Unfortunately, the data provided by these organizations tend to be restricted to summaries of quantitative effects rather than qualitative. "How many?" however, is an important effect for advertisers, for they must give an accounting of

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[3]Charles R. Wright, Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective (New York: Random House, 1959, paperback), p. 13.

[4]Berlo, Process of Communication, p. 114.

their effectiveness in terms of cost-per-thousand people reached. It is not surprising, then, that much such research on effects has been underwritten by commercial advertisers.

But there are other questions to be asked than those about effect. As DeFleur has pointed out, "there are other, and possibly equally important, aspects of the media that deserve theoretical and empirical attention." To DeFleur, one of the most intriguing issues has been the ability of the mass media to survive, particularly while providing content to their audiences which the more artistically sensitive elite have regularly condemned as being in bad taste or even dangerous.[5]

In an effort to understand the relationship between mass media content and public taste, DeFleur has taken the tack of viewing the media as social systems which operate within a specific external system--in this case, within the American society itself.[6]

The Mass Media As Social Systems

Rather than limiting research to questions of effect of mass media messages on the audience, DeFleur acknowledges the effect of "attention" and proceeds to ask the question; What is the function of this kind of effect for the mass media?

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[5]DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication, p. 141.

[6](The entire eighth chapter, "Mass Media as Social Systems," is devoted to this area, pp. 141-158).

DeFleur's conceptualization of the mass media as social systems will be used as a framework for describing and analyzing the literature which concerns itself with the relationship of the mass communicator and his audience. However, before this body of literature is approached, some attention must first be given to the method which DeFleur uses to think of the mass media in terms of social systems.

General sociological theory, according to DeFleur, has become increasingly preoccupied with the nature of social systems. Of particular interest are the functional relationships which exist between the parts of such systems, and the consequences that particular items occurring within the system have in maintaining the stability of the system as a whole. The term "particular items" refers to patterns of actions exhibited by individuals or subgroups who relate themselves to each other within such systems. The strategy of functional analysis, then, is to concentrate upon the visible conduct of people. Stable systems of social action can thereby be mapped out, components can be identified within the system, and the relative contribution of these components toward stability can be inferred, and presumably, verified. It is not so much the component, as it is the repetitive forms of action by various components which are supposed to contribute to this stability.[7]

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[7] Ibid., p. 145.

DeFleur uses this functional analysis approach to answer the question of why the mass media can successfully continue to produce and distribute so-called low-taste content. He uses functional analysis, then, as a "strategy for inducing or locating hypotheses that can be tested empirically by comparative studies or other appropriate research methods."[8]

Carl Hempel explains the basic logic of functional analysis:

> The object of the analysis is some 'item' i, which is a relatively persistent trait or disposition . . . occurring in a system s . . .; and the analysis aims to show s is in a state, or internal condition, c_i and in an environment presenting certain external conditions c_e such that under conditions c_i and c_e (jointly referred to as c) the trait i has effects which satisfy some 'need' or 'functional requirement' of s, i.e. a condition n which is necessary for the system's remaining in adequate, or effective, or proper, working order.[9]

DeFleur defines 'item' i, for his purposes, as "the portion of the content of the mass media that is in 'low' cultural taste or provides gratifications to the mass audience in such a manner that it is widely held to be potentially debasing."[10]

Once having identified this "relatively persistent trait or disposition," item i, DeFleur begins to identify the boundaries of the social system within which this item occurs, so that he can inductively hypothesize its contribution to

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[8]Ibid., p. 148.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 149.

the system. He identifies nine major components of the social system with which he is most concerned--the mass communication system. These include the audience, the market research-rating service organizations, the distributors of the message content, the producer of content, the advertising agencies, the regulatory bodies, the private voluntary associations, the general set of external conditions, and, within the system itself, the principal internal condition which is a financial one.[11]

Then, by a process of induction, he outlines the relative contribution of the low-taste content to the stability of the system.

> It keeps the entire complex together. By continuously catering to the tastes of those who constitute the largest segment of the market, the financial stability of the system can be maintained.[12]

DeFleur summarizes this function by saying:

> At present, however, the function of what we have called low-taste content is to maintain the financial equilibrium of a deeply institutionalized social system which is tightly integrated with the whole of the American economic institution.[13]

The question asked of the following studies has come quite logically from this analytic framework. The question is: What function does a mass communicator's relationship with the audience have for the maintenance of the social system in which he operates?

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[11] Ibid., pp. 150-155.

[12] Ibid., p. 156.

[13] Ibid., p. 157.

The Relationship of the Mass Communicator and His Audience

In their book, People, Society, and Mass Communications, Dexter and White have a series of five articles to which they have given the collective title THE COMMUNICATOR AND HIS AUDIENCE.[14] Each of these five articles, concerned, for the most part, with the newspaper medium, will be reviewed in turn.

An article by Herbert J. Gans, "The Creator-Audience Relationship in the Mass Media: An Analysis of Movie Making,"[15] will then be reviewed, as well as Muriel G. Cantor's dissertation study, "Television Producers: a Sociological Analysis."[16] A look will also be taken at J. David Lewis's article on television programmers, "Programmer's Choice: Eight Factors in Program Decision-making."[17]

First, the literature will be described, one source at a time; next, the literature will be analyzed in terms of DeFleur's functional analysis framework; and finally, a case

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[14]Lewis Anthony Dexter and David Manning White (eds.) People, Society, and Mass Communications (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 123-201.

[15]In Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (eds.) Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1957), pp. 315-324.

[16]Muriel G. Cantor, "Television Producers: A Sociological Analysis" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1969).

[17]In Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1969-70), pp. 71-82.

will be presented for the need of research on the local broadcaster and his audiences.

1. "The Communicator and the Audience," by Raymond A. Bauer.[18]

Bauer notes that researchers have had to shift their attention from the communicator's initiative to the audience itself in order to find out with what sorts of people communicators are dealing and under what circumstances. In his own attempts to understand a series of problems in the field of international communications, this social psychologist has come to entertain seriously the following three propositions concerning the role of the audience in communications:

> I. The audience influences the way in which the communicator organizes new information and thereby what he himself may remember and/or believe at a later point in time.
>
> II. A communication once completed has an existence external to the originator. It is a sample of his behavior which he must often reconcile--as a result of social and internal pressure--with other behavior.
>
> III. Communications are seldom directed to a single manifest audience. Secondary audiences or reference groups, usually internalized and often imaginary, are important targets of communication and may at times play a decisive role in the flow of communications.[19]

The larger portion of Bauer's article contains a explication of these three major propositions which he conceptualized

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[18]In Dexter and White (eds.) People, Society, and Mass Communications, pp. 125-140.

[19]Ibid., p. 127.

from his own survey of social-psychological literature. In addition, he reports the work that he and others have done or were planning to do which might contribute to the testing of these propositions, their implications, and their practical significance.

In the context of organizing his thoughts concerning the impact of foreign travel on American businessmen, Bauer credits his colleague, Ithiel Pool, with suggesting:

> a person might never formulate his impressions of a foreign country systematically until he was in the position of having to communicate them to someone else. In this event, the first audience to whom he addressed himself would influence the way he would organize his information and the terms in which he would couch his conclusions.[20]

Bauer cites extensive experimental literature on the effect of "set" on perception and retention. He credits C. H. Cooley with spelling out the notion of the process that might be at work in such a case. The anticipated audience would serve--in Cooley's words--as an "imaginary interlocuter" with whom the subject would hold internal conversations in anticipation of the eventual communication. Cooley contended, according to Bauer, that the human personality is formed via such internal conversations with audiences real and imagined.[21]

Bauer goes on to say that it may be useful to look at the intended audience as an induced reference group of high

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[20] Ibid., pp. 128-129.

[21] Ibid., p. 129 (original source: C. H. Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order (New York: Scribner, 1902), pp. 61-62.

salience. He cautions, however, that not only one's image of the audience, but the information itself and the communicator's values appear to be in a state of active interrelationship in which any one of the elements may affect any one or combination of the others. "Communicators committed strongly to the subject matter may 'distort' their image of the prospective audience to bring it more in line with either their own values or the content of the incoming information and thereby reduce the 'audience effect'."[22]

Omitting his second proposition, which has little relevance to this present survey, a note is made of Bauer's third notion, that of reference groups as secondary audiences.

> Systematic work on reference groups--to which I am referring in this context as potential secondary audiences--has been confined largely to their influence on the attitudes of the subjects under investigation. But, unless we consider the interview situation in which the attitudes were evoked as an instance of communication, there has been little direct research on the role of reference groups or secondary audiences in the flow of specific messages.[23]

Studies done with college students give some support to these three propositions by Bauer.

Descending from the rarified atmosphere of almost pure conceptualization, we turn now to an empirical study of specific communicators and their "imaginary audiences."

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[22] Ibid., p. 132.

[23] Ibid., p. 136 (underlining not in the original version).

2. "Newsmen's Fantasies, Audiences, and Newswriting," by Pool & Shulman.[24]

Pool and Shulman give as two purposes for this study (1) the empirical ascertainment about the population of reference persons who actually flow into the consciousness of a communicator as he communicates, and (2) whether these spontaneously produced images influence a communication in the same way that experimentally induced audiences do.[25]

Using Bauer's framework, Pool and Shulman developed a three-phase study. First, they conducted thirty-three exploratory interviews with newsmen. On the basis of the hypotheses formed in these sessions with newspapermen, a controlled experiment was performed on a class of journalism students. Two years later, many of the newsmen were reinterviewed.

Pool and Shulman argue that while most studies of communication address themselves to the problem of how the message affects the audience, in the communication process effects go both ways: the audience also affects the communicator.

> The messages sent are in part determined by expectation of audience reactions. The audience, or at least those audiences about whom the communicator thinks, thus play more than a passive role in communication.[26]

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[24]In Dexter and White, People, Society, and Mass Communications, pp. 141-159.

[25]Ibid., p. 144.

[26]Ibid., p. 143.

They describe this communicator-audience relationship, a relationship which occurs in the mind, a reference group phenomenon.

The major hypothesis generated from the interviews was this:

> Where a person's images are incongruent with the character of the event being described, his accuracy in reporting is reduced.[27]

Tested in an experimental study with a large class of journalism students, this hypothesis was supported.

Another interesting cluster of variables was discovered in the thirty-three interviews with newsmen:

> The variable in the writer's flow of associations which appeared to influence most markedly what he wrote was the affective relationship that he conceived to exist between himself and his imaginary interlocuters. Some respondents thought about persons who were disliked, critical, or hostile; others thought of persons who were liked, supportive, or friendly. Thus, for most of our respondents, the act of writing seemed to provide one of two kinds of gratifications. For some, writing provided the opportunity to bestow pleasure on readers, who would reward them for it by admiration and affection. For others, the gratification came from awareness of the weapon of words which they had in their hands and the damage that it could do to the 'bad guys.' Both the gratification of winning affection and the gratification of aggression are predicated upon the power of the printed word. They involve a fantasy of someone's reading the text and being strongly moved by it.[28]

Pool and Shulman liken the newswriting situation to that of political oratory--frequently instances of one-way communication to a secondary audience. And since the audience

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[27] Ibid., p. 153.

[28] Ibid., p. 145.

consists of secondary contacts, at best, notions of power and deference replace and symbolize more tangible and intimate rewards.[29]

In the third phase of this study, the newsmen were reinterviewed to see how much the images, or orientations to the world, were the result of personality or the mood of one day. Pool and Shulman found that temperament is probably the more important factor.[30]

Pool and Shulman's research focuses on the writing stage of the communication process. The next study also involves the newspaper medium, but this time the process under consideration is the selection of previously written copy for inclusion in a specific newspaper in a single city.

3. "The 'Gatekeeper': a Case Study in the Selection of News," by D. M. White.[31]

In the same volume from which these five articles are taken, Walter Gieber[32] credits this study of White's with giving "impetus to research in a critical area--the channels of mass communication themselves. What happens to news stories as they are handled by newsmen within these channels?"

White, in turn, credits the late Kurt Lewin with coining the term "gatekeeper". Dr. Lewin, says White, pointed out that

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[29]Ibid., p. 156.

[30]Ibid., p. 157.

[31]In Dexter and White, People, Society, and Mass Communications, pp. 160-172.

[32]Ibid., p. 174.

the traveling of a news item through certain communication channels is dependent on the fact that certain areas within the channels function as "gates".[33]

In this case study by White, the unit of analysis is a single wire editor of a morning newspaper in a Midwest city of 100,000. The focus of research was on the copy which did not get into the paper. This amounted to approximately nine-tenths of the total available copy received on the three wire services.

"Mr. Gates", as White labeled him, saved all the unused wire copy. At the end of the working day, he "went through every piece of copy in the 'reject' box and wrote on it the reason why he had initially rejected it, assuming that he could recall the reason."[34] This process went on for a week. When he had turned over the raw material of his choice for the week's period, White tried to analyze his performance in terms of certain basic questions which presented themselves. White's theoretical assumption was that "all of the wire editors' standards of taste should refer back to an audience who must be served and pleased."[35]

One of the questions asked of "Mr. Gates" was, "What is your concept of the audience for whom you select stories and

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[33]Ibid., p. 162 (original source: Kurt Lewin, "Channels of Group Life," Human Relations, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 145).

[34]Ibid., p. 164.

[35]Ibid., p. 169.

what sort of person do you conceive the average person to be?"

Mr. Gates responded:

> Our readers are looked upon as people with average intelligence and with a variety of interests and abilities. I am aware of the fact we have readers with above-average intelligence (there are four colleges in our area) and that there are many with far less education. Anyway, I see them as human and with some common interests. I believe they are all entitled to news that pleases them, (stories involving their thinking and activity), and news that informs them of what is going on in the world.[36]

From his analysis of each rejected item of newswire copy, and from his evaluation of "Mr. Gates's" replies to several generalized questions, White concluded his report with these observations:

> It is a well-known fact in individual psychology that people tend to perceive as true only those happenings which fit into their own beliefs concerning what is likely to happen. It begins to appear (if Mr. Gates is a fair representative of his class) that in his position as 'gatekeeper' the newspaper editor sees to it (even though he may never be consciously aware of it) that the community shall hear as fact only those events which the newsman, as the representative of his culture, believes to be true.
>
> This is the case study of one 'gatekeeper', but one, who like several hundred of his fellow 'gatekeepers', plays a most important role as the terminal 'gate' in the complex process of communication. Through studying his overt reasons for rejecting news stories from the press associations we see how highly subjective, how based on the 'gatekeeper's' own set of experiences, attitudes, and expectations the communication of 'news' really is.[37]

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[36] Ibid., p. 170.

[37] Ibid., p. 171.

4. "News is What Newspapermen Make It," by Walter Gieber.[38]

This study concentrates primarily on the newsmen and their sources.[39] The methodologies employed are depth interviews and participant observation.

Gieber argues that while most critiques of the press are concerned with the effects of the press on society--as though the press were an autonomous force--the examination of the press ought to start where the news begins--"within the institution of the press, within the walls of the newsroom or any other place where a newsman gets and writes his stories."[40]

This study, then, is of the same genre as David Manning White's: it is a "gatekeeper" study. The goal of such studies, according to Gieber, is hopefully to make a contribution toward a better understanding of the behavior of mass-communications specialists, and ultimately to contribute to a sociology of the journalist.[41]

After reviewing the reasons for gatekeeper-type studies, which are in essence the study of information channels, Gieber reports on three studies which he made between 1956 and 1960. He summarizes the three in this way:

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[38]In Dexter and White, People, Society, and Mass Communications, pp. 173-182.

[39]Ibid., p. 174.

[40]Ibid., p. 173.

[41]Ibid., p. 174.

> The ultimate rationale of the press--the reason for its license--is to serve the audience. The news-gathering machinery and the news-gathering bureaucracy are the means; the audience needs are the goals. In the telegraphy editor survey, the means all but replaced the goals. In the civil liberties study, both the sources and the reporters rationalized audience needs but neither seemed to know the audience; both communicators shared responsibility for a communication breakdown resulting from their antagonistic frames of reference; each was communicating thought by the means of his bureaucracy. In the city hall study, the communicator allowed himself to be caught in a frame of reference which was only in part of his own making, the proper goals were all but forgotten.[42]

5. "Mass Communication and Sociocultural Integration," by Warren Breed.[43]

Breed hypothesizes that one function of the mass media may be to "omit or bury items which might jeopardize the sociocultural structure and man's faith in it."[44]

To test this hypothesis, he analyzed eleven sociological studies of various communities, noting all statements which, to the best of his knowledge, he believed would not be featured in that city's press; and then he looked in the newspapers to see if, in fact, these items had been omitted. In essence, Breed is suggesting that a newspaper and a community study both function in similar ways, in that they both survey the activities of a specified geographical area. Assuming,

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[42]Ibid., p. 180.

[43]In Dexter and White, People, Society, and Mass Communications, pp. 183-201.

[44]Ibid., p. 189.

apparently, that the social scientific research is more complete in its reporting of community events, he proceeds to isolate situations which, in his judgment, are not likely to have found their way into the public newspaper.

He reports that roughly two-thirds of the suppressed items were political and economic; another one-fifth were religious; and the remainder were concerned with such areas as justice, health and the family.[45]

His conclusion is based on an assumption about the nature of the relationship between mass media communicators and their audiences:

> An important difference between personal and mass communication is the lack of feedback available to permit questions and discussions of problematic points in the latter.[46]

Hence, concludes Breed, the mass media withdraw from consideration of some issues.

Having considered five studies which concern themselves with the relationship of communicators in the press and their audiences, attention is turned now to another channel, the medium of film.

6. "The Creator-Audience Relationship in the Mass Media: An Analysis of Movie Making" by Herbert J. Gans.[47]

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[45] Ibid., p. 189.

[46] Ibid., p. 199.

[47] In Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (eds.), Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America, pp. 315-324.

For purposes of analysis, Gans isolates the creator's image of the audience from the creative process as a whole and postulates that the audience has an active role in the creative process through its image in the creator's mind.

> Every creator is engaged to some extent in a process of communication between himself and an audience, that is, he is creating something for somebody. This somebody may be the creator himself, other people, or even a nonexistant stereotype, but it becomes an image of the audience which the creator develops as part of every creative process. . . . This image, though projected by the creator, functions as an external observer-judge against which he unconsciously tests his product even while he is creating it.[48]

Gans suggests that the audience image is not a single, unified concept, but a set of numerous impressions, many of which are latent and contradictory. These impressions involve primarily how people live, and how they look at and respond to the roles, personalities, relationships, institutions, and objects that movies portray. Gans contends that these impressions develop and accumulate in the mind of the creator "in his contacts with potential audiences."[49]

Gans emphasizes that the creator not only anticipates his audience, but also tries to create or attract an audience for his product. Recognizing that many "publics" or groups of audience types exist, the movie creator tries to incorporate elements into his product which he thinks will be attractive and pleasing to them.

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[48]Ibid., p. 316.

[49]Ibid., p. 317.

> The 'great' movie-maker may be able to create a loyal audience precisely because he knows or feels something, perhaps within himself, that is shared by a large number of publics, but has not been sensed by other creators who are perhaps equally bold or adept in other aspects of movie-making.
>
> Every creator has a somewhat different life history and consequently a distinctive image of the audience. Sometimes, he shares enough of the characteristics of an actual audience so that by creating for himself, that is, for his self-image, he is also communicating to a larger audience.[50]

Im summary, Gans is saying that the audience image functions to bring the movie-maker in contact with one of his major reference groups, the audience. He recognizes that other reference groups also affect the creator's total image; for example, colleagues, superiors, critics, and respected creators in other fields. The demands of these reference groups, according to Gans, may sometimes conflict with those of the audience, that is, the imagined ticket-buyers. These conflicts, however, may broaden and diversify the creator's own audience image.[51]

The basic data for the preceding analysis are contained in a 1952 study by Lillian Ross of the movie production of "The Red Badge of Courage".[52] While her study was intended for other purposes, Gans reanalyzes the material for insights into the role of conflicting audience images.

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., pp. 317-318.

[52] Ibid., pp. 319-321 (original source: Lillian Ross, Picture, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952).

In brief, Gans demonstrates how rewrites of this specific film were performed by three "creators" who possessed three distinctively different images of the audience. For the sake of simplicity, he uses the terms "highbrow", "middlebrow", and "lowbrow".[53] Specific indications of these varied orientations are revealed in correspondence between the parties involved and in the various scripts. Gans concludes by noting that the audience (through the audience images held by these three creators) has an active role in the creation of the mass media product.

He argues, further, that the audience affects not only the content of the product but also the structure and the culture of the mass media industries themselves.

> For example, note the indirect part the audience has in the oft-mentioned insecurity of the mass media creators, and the apparently irrational decision-making patterns that have been sometimes observed. Every mass-media creator, whatever his skill, is to some degree dependent on the validity of his audience image for his status and standing in the industry. However, publics are so numerous and so fickle in their infinite combinations that it is impossible to tell in advance whether a once successful image is still accurate . . . the turnover of creators probably also reflects the role of the audience and the turnover of publics within it.[54]

The role which one plays in the production process is, according to Gans, another important variable. The studio executive, for example, works intimately with financing; therefore, his images are likely to seek out the largest

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[53]Ibid., p. 319.

[54]Ibid., p. 322.

number of people. The director and writer, on the other hand, are able to give fullest rein to their audience images; and it is these whom Gans has used for models in much of his discussion. The producer, by contrast, occupies the ambivalent position of having to take into account the studio as a profit-making institution and his own image as a creator.[55]

And, it is the producer in this ambivalent position to which attention turns in the following study. The medium is still film; however, the product is not for the movie theater but for network television programming.

7. "Television Producers: A Sociological Analysis" by Muriel G. Cantor.[56]

This is a dissertation study of fifty-nine "working (on the line) television producers of films for prime-time shows" for American network programming. The data were collected in 1969 through tape-recorded interviews.[57]

Cantor is concerned with three major aspects of the producer's craft: (1) how they select the content for their shows, (2) how they perceive this selection as controlled and constrained by the various features of the television industry and film production company, and (3) how the producer's personal values and reference groups relate to his

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[55]Ibid., p. 318.

[56]Unpublished Ph.D. disseration, University of California, 1969--the pagination is from an unbound manuscript.

[57]Ibid., p. I-1.

selection of content.[58]

In particular, she wants to find out how much social constraint or conflict and social support the producer thinks come from several reference groups when decision about content are being made. She is concerned not only with the audience, but also, with the censors, the economically-oriented segments of the business, outside pressure groups, and other reference groups which represent artistic and professional interests of the producer.[59]

These reference groups were obtained by direct questioning of the producers. The groups which came to have the most interest for the researcher were:

> those in control of the medium, studio and network executives, sponsors and their representatives, the advertising agencies,
>
> those groups which might represent artistic excellence or achievement, and
>
> the viewing audience whom the producer may be trying to reach.[60]

It is interesting that Cantor uses the term "audience" in a sense large enough to include even those who sit in judgment upon whether or not the film is shown. She suggests that the most important reference group of a communicator is the audience who must approve of the communication. For newspapermen, the most important reference group would be the

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[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid., p. II-11.

[60]Ibid.

publishers; for the producers, in this case, it would be the network officials and censors.[61]

Though Cantor is interested in the relative contribution of several reference groups, prime attention here will be given to her comments on the viewing audience as a reference group.

No hypotheses are tested in her study, because it is primarily descriptive and analytical. She does, however, summarize her findings by formulating a typology of three types of producers. The details of her typology, though, will not be presented.

In terms of the relationship of these TV film producers and their viewing audiences, it is interesting to note:

> The majority of producers thought their audiences lived in the smaller towns and the country, and there seemed to be a consensus that if your show had a format which appealed to the rural or semi-rural kind of audience, the show's chance for success was greater than if the show were sophisticated and urbane.[62]

In describing their nation-wide, prime-time audiences, 40% of the television producers pictured the people as rural and unsophisticated, 22% described them as urban and sophisticated, 25% imagined them as a mixture of both urban and rural, while 14% did not categorize their audiences.[63]

According to Cantor, however,

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[61] Ibid., p. VI-7

[62] Ibid., p. VII-5.

[63] Ibid.

> The producer's images of his television audience seem to have little relation to actual survey data about the geographic distribution and character of the show.[64]

Cantor describes the interesting process of rationalization which accompanies these discrepencies between the producer's perception and the actual audience. She illustrates with examples:

> . . . both producers seemed to shift their conception of their audience when the ratings showed they appealed also to city people as well as those in the less populated areas. This did not cause them to shift from a theme they thought would be basically less appealing to an unsophisticated audience. Instead, they seemed to shift their view of the city audience from more sophisticated to less so.[65]

From her interviews with the fifty-nine TV producers, Cantor concluded that surveys and ratings were too impersonal and sterile to many of them, especially those who had been performers or playwrights and who missed their contact with live audiences.

> Many of the older producers formed opinions about their audience from the fan mail and the personal contacts they had with people they met who watched the show. Even those producers who were aware that, of course, just a tiny part of the audience can be reached through direct contact seemed to put more credibility in the comments of friends, family and people met casually than in reports from the survey and marketing research firms available to them.[66]

This differential response to first-hand and secondary forms of feedback from the audience is a fascinating

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[64] Ibid., p. VII-5.

[65] Ibid., pp. VII-6,7

[66] Ibid., p. VII-9.

phenomenon, and one which has been given empirical attention in the following study.

8. "Programmer's Choice: Eight Factors in Program Decision-Making" by J. David Lewis.[67]

In this national study of programming executives in commercial TV stations, Lewis investigates the program decision-making process in an attempt to discover how mass media organizations function without the aid of immediate, direct feedback on the effects of their messages.[68]

From extensive factor analyses of responses to his 45-item questionnaire, Lewis was able to isolate eight factors, or clusters of items, which the programmers use in their decision-making process.

1. **DIRECT FEEDBACK:** Information such as letters, phone calls, and meetings with the external audience of the station.

2. **REGULATORY:** Rules, regulations, and policies of the F.C.C., the broadcasting industry, and the station.

3. **INFERENTIAL FEEDBACK:** National and local ratings and rating-derived information.

4. **CONDITIONAL:** Family, friends, and critics whose opinions may be subject to bias.

5. **PRODUCTION STAFF:** Members of the production-oriented station staff, such as production manager, producer/directors, etc.

6. **PERSONAL:** Respondent's own insights derived from background, experience, and personality.

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[67] In Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1969-70), pp. 71-82.

[68] Ibid., p. 72.

7. **FINANCIAL:** Sales considerations, cost, and the sponsor.

8. **TACTICAL:** Programming methods and gambits such as program balance, strip programming, trends, etc.[69]

Lewis then ran simple and multiple correlations to determine if certain characteristics of the programmer or his market had any effect upon his use of the factors or specific types of information found within the factors.[70]

Below are ennumerated a few examples of his findings:

1. As the market size increased, so did the importance to the programmer of feedback from groups.[71]

2. The F.C.C. items scored quite high in overall importance to the programmer; however, these items showed no relationship with any of the personal or market variables.[72]

3. Ratings were important to the programmer, aiding chiefly in determining competitive position and as a form of feedback from the station's audience. Local ratings, consequently, were most important.[73]

4. The programmer's background and experience as a professional programmer--his tastes, instincts, and plain common sense--consistently scored as more important than any other factors except for the Regulatory factor. As might be expected, his years in broadcasting and years in the community correlated highly with these Personal factors.[74]

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[69]Ibid., pp. 74-75 (taken verbatim, however, from his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, J. David Lewis, "Feedback in Mass Communication: Its Nature and Use in Decision-Making," Michigan State University, 1966), p. 2 of Abstract.

[70]Lewis, Journal of Broadcasting, p. 78.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid., p. 79.

[74]Ibid., p. 80.

5. Strong negative correlations between the Financial factors and such things as market size, sponsor's opinion, and sponsor-relayed comments from the viewer, suggested to Lewis that sales items decline in importance as security increases, i.e. while the small station may need every sponsor it can obtain, the larger market station may be more financially stable and able to exert its own power.[75]

Lewis concludes that the process of decision-making is not a completely random process.[76]

Application of Functional Analysis to the Literature

Following this survey of the literature concerning the relationship of the communicator and his audience, DeFleur's social systems framework will now be used to analyze these studies of the mass media. It will be important to look for the function which the mass communicator's relationship to his audience has for the maintenance and stability of the social system in which he operates.

Three basic questions, derived from functional analysis, will be asked of each study reviewed above: (1) What are the important, repetitive communication behaviors of the mass communicators? (2) What are the major components of the social system in each study? And (3) what functions do these communication habits serve in the preservation of the social system?

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[75] Ibid., p. 81.

[76] Ibid., p. 82.

1. What are the important, repetitive communication behaviors of the mass communicators?

Bauer reports that American businessmen who have recently returned from abroad appear to organize their overseas experiences in terms of the first audience--or more precisely, in terms of their image of the first audience--to which they must speak. The image of this first audience becomes a type of secondary audience when he prepares for subsequent speeches.

Pool and Shulman's study of the writing habits of newsmen indicates that fantasy images of the audience are consistently conjured up by the communicator and serve as indicators of expectation about how the audience--that is, the real audience--will react to what they write. These images are consistently of two types: persons who are disliked and persons who are liked.

The repetitive communication behavior observed by White, in his study of the wire editor, is the "gatekeeper's" consistent rejection of wire copy on the basis of his own value and taste system. The inference is that what interests him will also be interesting to his audience.

In the three studies by Gieber, newspapermen and their sources are consistently constructing audience images which will support what they have already decided to communicate. In no case does Gieber find that these mass communicators have much actual knowledge about, or orientation towards, any audience which is external to their daily routine.

Breed finds that the newspaper, as a corporate communicator, regularly suppresses information about the environment which might potentially jeopardize the sociocultural structure of the community and the citizens' faith in it.

The feature film creators in Gans' study make differential changes in the same film because of their varying images of the audience they wish to reach. Gans considers that a creator's self-image may be his primary point of reference in the creation process and that those with the greatest diversity are the most successful.

Cantor reports that TV film producers orient their creative processes to that audience which must approve of their communication, i.e., the network executives and censors. She reports that this "audience" is their most important reference group. A second habit observed by Cantor is the consistent dependence of the producers upon personal contacts with a sample of the potential audience rather than dependence upon survey data of the total, actual audience.

Lewis suggests that the communicator in the mass media, under conditions of restricted or non-existant feedback, turns to substitute sources of information, found mainly within the internal system of the mass media organization. He makes this generalization from his study of commercial TV programmers.

Having identified the important, repetitive communication behaviors reported in each study, it becomes necessary to

identify the boundaries of each system within which these behaviors function.

2. What are the major components of the social system in each study?

Before approaching each study, it might be well to remember that the authors of these studies were not consciously applying the rigor of functional analysis; therefore, in most cases, the information being sought will not be obvious; neither, consequently, can it be very precise. In many instances, the information must be guessed at. With this in mind, the major components of the social system in each study will be sought.

Bauer's article is in large part an exercise in conceptualization, with only scanty reference to empirical situations. Those situations involving the American businessmen, however, seem to have a number of components in common: the communicator, who has had recent experiences overseas; a manifest audience for his first subsequent speech; secondary audiences or reference groups; the message itself, which has an existence apart from the communicator; and behavior of the communicator, which must frequently conform to what he has previously said.

In Pool and Shulman's study of audience images in the newswriting situation, the following components are most noticeable: the communicator; his imaginary audience or reference groups; his real audience, who for the most part is

unknown; the message written; the reward for his communication, which is primarily internal; the writing context, which is the newspaper organization; and the pressures of deadlines, space, and the editor's blue pencil.

White describes the world of his solitary wire editor in very simple terms: the gatekeeper, who is described as a rather passive communicator and more like a channel; the flow of incoming wire stories; the communicator's self-image, projected by him to represent the tastes and values of his imagined audience; the pressures of time, space, and ease with which a story can be fitted into the layout of the newspaper page. No mention is made of the influence of the office "culture" on his decision-making.

In Gieber's study of newsmen and their sources of information, the social system encompasses primarily these two communicators, their respective bureaucracies, their communicated thought, and their "rationalized audience" which they conjure in their minds to justify their communication. Gieber's observation is that their communication process does not take into account any realistic reference to anything resembling an external, or "real" audience. The rewards come, apparently, from within their respective organizations.

The community is the social system and frame of reference for the study by Breed. The components to which he alludes are: the population of "events"; the reported events, as found in the community press; the suppressed events, as found

in sociological studies of these communities; the sociocultural structure of the community and the implied faith which its citizens have in it; limited feedback channels to the press from the audience; and, of course, the corporate organization of the press itself. The reward, it seems, is community equilibrium to which such suppression of controversial items is supposed to contribute.

Determination of social systems becomes even more difficult when attention is turned to a communication process of national or international scope. The newspaper studies cited above have a much more circumscribed system. In the next two studies cited, however, the communicators are creating for audiences throughout the nation; in the first case, through film theaters, and in the second case, through the channels of network television. In these situations, the relationship of the audience and the communicator are even more tenuous because of the extreme geographical area involved.

Gans refers to a number of components in the social system, of which film-making is one. He speaks of the creators; images of the audience which they hold; reference groups of varying salience; feedback from the theater box offices; and the pervasiveness of financial criteria, which serve as guidelines for content and as indications of success. The actual parameters of such a study, as with the others in which the audience is supposed to have its effect within the communicator's mind, are extremely difficult to locate. Who can define

the boundaries of a man's mind?

A similar difficulty is encountered in Cantor's study of the television film producers. Even though she describes her study as a sociological analysis, her taped interviews with the producers seem more psychological or psychoanalytical--more concerned with thoughts than behaviors. It is true that she is concerned with the relative effect of several reference groups on the producer's creative process. The "effect", however, occurs primarily within the mind of the producer. It is difficult, then, to specify the components of this social system. There is the communicator; his reference groups, both real and imagined; his TV film product; the audience, real and imagined; his orientation, which is far more craft-oriented than audience-oriented; and his goals, which are frequently for advancement into feature film producing, where his target audience coincides more completely with his self-image. There is a system of rewards and punishments in his social system. To get past the censor is one reward, and large audience numbers, as indicated by the polls, constitute another. Punishments come from rejected content or, in the extreme case, removal of his product from network programming. There is also a continuing conflict between the audience images held by the network officials, including the censors, and by the producer. In some cases, the producer adopts the others' images to stay in business and to get the necessary experience so he can move up into feature film

production; in other cases, the conflict is more or less continuous.

In the study by Lewis, the social system is contracted once more to include the local community, or TV coverage area, as the focal point for decision-making by the commercial station programmer. But even in this case, where his decisions about programming affect a small geographical region, the factors which affect him come from far and wide.

The social system for a commercial TV programming executive involves regulatory bodies, such as the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D. C.; financial considerations, involving sponsors that are local, regional, and national; craft considerations, which are acquired from experience and conventions; and numerous other components which are more local in orientation, such as competition, local ratings, feedback from the audience, and feedback from within the station itself.

Before proceeding to the third question, it might be well to pause and consider the nature of the audiences referred to in the studies above. They are certainly not all of the same genre.

For Bauer's subjects, the "real audience" probably refers to those assembled for a speech. When the speech is broadcast, or reprinted in some form, however, the secondary audiences become important. In fact, Bauer suggests that for governmental spokesmen, in particular, the manifest

audience, or the audience present for the speech, may not be the target audience at all. Witness how frequently the President addresses the nation via a speech to some smaller audience.

Throughout the studies reviewed in this chapter, there runs the notion of "real" versus "imagined" audiences. Mass communication by definition is almost exclusively one-way communication to an anonymous audience. There is no known evidence which measures the relative difficulty of "picturing the audience" either at the local level or the national. The evidence cited in the above studies suggests that it is rather much a "hit or miss" proposition. Audience survey data are not very helpful, as yet, because they tend to be more quantitative than qualitative. It is difficult, therefore, to verify whether one has actually reached the intended audience.

Following this brief detour into the nature of the audiences, as mentioned in these studies, attention is turned now to the third question in this functional analysis of the literature.

3. What functions do these communication habits serve in the preservation of the social system?

The function of the audience in Bauer's study is extensive. It not only serves as a target for which to arrange information, but even prior to this point in the process, it

affects what the communicator actually perceived in his experiences and what he remembers of what he sees. If it were not for these images of the audience, or potential audiences, one would perceive little and retain even less. The audience, therefore, is not the passive recipient of a message, but functions to affect the entire communication process, from event to presentation of that event.

For the news writers in the Pool and Shulman study, audience images serve two major functions: first, they provide a target for communicating, and secondly, they provide a source for imaginary reward. In the absence of substantiating feedback from all of the audience, the communicator creates an audience image which meets his own psychological needs. Perhaps he is retained on the staff because his "fantasies" correspond with these of the editor and publisher.

The content of a newspaper is so varied, and its components are capable of pleasing so many different publics, that it is difficult to determine the specific contribution of a specific communicator to the continued success of an entire publishing enterprise. It is difficult, for example, to establish the precise contribution that "Mr. Gates" makes in his selection of wire stories according to his own personal values and tastes. White infers that this man is successful, because it is an important and responsible position.

In the "gatekeeper" studies by Gieber, it is evident that communication specialists can stay in business without

a very valid concept of the audience. The bureaucracies for which they work--the city government and the newspaper--operate in such a fashion that one-way communication can continue without much apparent harm to the communication system. It would seem that as long as the press can continue to make money from its advertisers, it is not terribly important whether or not specific components of the news gathering and news reporting systems are operating at optimal communicating efficiency.

The function of suppressed news in Breed's study is hypothesized to serve as a buffer to the community and as a preserver of the social structure. It is not evident whether or not what Breed calls "suppressed news" may, in fact, be primarily news of which the press is unaware. The "beats" of the reporters may not bring to attention the same types of information sought out by social science researchers, such as those who penned the reports which Breed analyzed.

The test of "success" for a feature film is easier to discern than for that of broadcast media, because the receipts at the box office provide concrete proof that the product has reached a specified number of receivers, and the reward to the producers and financial backers is available almost immediately. In the study by Gans, of creators in the film industry, audience images function to maximize box office returns. Success and failure are clearly demonstrated. It is not always clear why some films are so appealing and others

not, nor why some appeals work one time and not the next; but it is virtually indisputable that film creators can consciously incorporate content which is designed to appeal to various publics. The most successful creators do not have to guess about the size of their audience nearly so much as does the local newspaperman, whose product is buried among a multitude of other articles and advertisements. It is still not clear, either, if the film creators' audience images are any more accurate than the other mass media creators'.

An excellent example of this phenomenon is demonstrated in Cantor's study of TV film producers, who sometimes, perhaps frequently, reach audiences not intended. Some producers with little "audience orientation" are by industry standards very successful at capturing large audiences. Cantor suggests that one's personal experiences may be important in building a multi-facted self-image, so that by pleasing oneself, the various publics represented in one's self-image are reached through the communicated product. Whatever the explanation, there is rather universal agreement that the creative process involves dialogue within the mind of the creator.

The Local Broadcaster and His Audience

The preceding survey of the literature indicates that much attention has been given to the relationship of the communicator and his audience in the media of the press,

feature film and TV film industries. With the one exception of Lewis's study, however, there has been virtually no research on the relationship of the broadcaster and his audience. And even his study does not focus on the relationship to the audience, but considers audience contact and information about the audience within a much larger number of factors utilized by programming executives in decision-making.

There is great need for research on the "live" broadcasters who address their audiences daily through the electronic media of radio and television. Their relationship to the audience needs to be systematically explored.

There is reason to believe that if the communication habits of local broadcasters are carefully analyzed, a more definitive understanding can be achieved concerning the process by which mass media communicators relate to their relatively anonymous audiences.

It is suggested not only that this process of relating to the audience should be described, but also that these communication habits be analyzed for their relative contribution to the maintenance of the financially-oriented social system of broadcasting.

It is further suggested that a category of broadcasting be selected for whom a social system can be easily determined and preferably one whose target audiences and reference groups can be readily identified.

While "audience images" ought to be explored, it would appear to be methodologically sound to concentrate on more observable communication habits. It is difficult to verify what goes on inside a man's head, and frequently difficult for him to convey this experience to the researcher. It has been suggested in some of the literature that a communicator's personal experience is an important contribution to his audience images. It seems logical, then, that research on the local broadcaster ought to look for background information about the communicator and for information about the similarity and differences between his self-image and his image of the audience.

Realizing that the local broadcaster may have opportunity for direct contact with a greater proportion of this potential audience than, say, a network film producer, effort should be made to explore this relationship. What is the context of the contact; what are the channels used; and what is its importance in terms of broadcast content?

In order to avoid misleading generalizations drawn from samples which are too homogeneous, research on the local broadcaster and his audience should incorporate representative broadcasters from radio and television stations--large and small, urban and rural, commercial and non-commercial.

Such a study has been designed and executed. Its methodology and findings are reported in the following chapters on SOME COMMUNICATION HABITS OF FARM BROADCASTERS.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION OF METHODOLOGY

This chapter on the methodology used in gathering the data is organized into eight sections: (1) the selection of a methodology, (2) the pre-pilot study, (3) the pilot questionnaire, (4) the selection of mailing list, (5) the cover letter, (6) the final questionnaire, (7) the follow-up letter, and (8) the returns.

The Selection of a Methodology

Two types of experience and interest related to this researcher provide the basis for the selection of methodology for this study. One pertains to the fact that he has had two years of experience as a non-commercial farm broadcaster and, consequently has had contact with an organization known as the National Association of Farm Broadcasters. The other pertains to the fact that he has an interest in the farm broadcaster as a specific genre of mass communicator and in the development of a conceptual relationship of mass communicators and their audiences. The two areas of experience and interest developed in parallel fashion, with the result that a study

embracing the farm broadcaster and problems of mass communicators and their audience emerged.

It became obvious quite early that a study of the relationship of the mass communicator with his audience, and more specifically, the relationship of the farm broadcaster with his audience and other reference groups, would require a national study. A 1969 membership directory of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters revealed that there are approximately two-hundred voting members--seemingly a very manageable number for a study. It was also apparent that a study of the entire population of farm broadcasters was both financially feasible and would avoid some of the obvious problems of sampling.

The two-hundred farm broadcasters are located from New York to California and from North Dakota to southern Texas. Because such geographical dispersion made the use of personal interviews quite impractical, the mail questionnaire appeared to be the most appropriate instrument.

The Pre-pilot Study

The NAFB Directory showed that over ninety percent of the membership is composed of commercial farm broadcasters. Because the bulk of this researcher's experience has been in non-commercial farm broadcasting, it became apparent that before a questionnaire could be meaningfully composed, some initial study had to be made of the commercial variety of farm broadcasters.

The first effort in this direction was to attend the 1969 Annual NAFB Convention in Chicago in November. There, through casual conversations with about ten broadcasters, and from information gleaned in numerous professional presentations, a "picture" of the commercial farm broadcaster began to come into focus. A more systematic inquiry was required, however.

Therefore, a series of on-the-job interviews was set up with all seven NAFB members in Michigan, one in Indiana, and three in Louisville, Kentucky (including the National President). Approximately one-half day was spent with each of these eleven farm broadcasters, watching the manner in which they put together their day's programming. These observations were followed by intensive, semi-structured interviews to formulate a more comprehensive picture of the total working week, as well as to locate variations in procedures so that these variations could be anticipated in the eventual questionnaire. At the close of each interview, the farm broadcaster was told to expect a "trial questionnaire" in the mail shortly. He was asked to fill it out and make any suggestions as to how its form and content could be improved.

A fifty-item, seven-page questionnaire was then mailed to a total of sixteen farm broadcasters, the list including those who had been interviewed either at the Chicago convention or on-the-job.

The sixteen persons selected to participate in the pilot study were chosen on the basis of three criteria: first, personal acquaintance; second, their potential contribution and cooperation; and third, their overall representativeness of the total population of farm broadcasters. In their number were both radio and television stations--very large and very small, commercial and non-commercial. It was important to grasp the great diversity of eventual respondents so that the questionnaire would not be grossly biased and slanted toward a small segment of the group.

Twelve of the sixteen returned the "trial questionnaire," their comments being very helpful and illuminating. In fact, it became necessary to make some drastic change. Most of the open-ended questions had to be abandoned because no one took the time to fill out that kind of question. In response to complaints about the length of the questionnaire, it was somewhat shortened. Finally, attempts were made to reduce an apparent radio bias in the form and content of the instrument.

After extensive rewriting, collapsing of categories, and making provision for both radio and television answers, a second questionnaire was drafted and printed. It was not re-tested, but was then mailed to the entire population of farm broadcasters.

The Selection of a Mailing List

In the 1969 directory, voting membership was accorded to both commercial and non-commercial farm broadcasters.

It was on the basis of this list that the mailing was initially to have been made. However, at the November convention in Chicago, all non-commercial farm broadcasters were deprived of their standing as voting members and placed on the list of Associate members. When the new membership list became available in March of 1970, the voting membership had been reduced to 166, all of whom were commercial farm broadcasters.

Because a very large number of the 240 Associate Members are not actually broadcasters, it was necessary to analyze this list person-by-person. It became apparent that only 13 are clearly full-time, non-commercial farm broadcasters; and these were added to the 166 previously designated. This brought the total number of the mailing to 179, and the questionnaires were mailed during the latter part of March.

Several respondents returned their questionnaires without having completed them, attaching a note which said that they did not actually broadcast programs, though a few did produce tapes for distribution.

The Cover Letter

The cover letter was produced by a photographic-printing process (Insty-Prints) on $8\frac{1}{2}$ x $4\frac{1}{2}$, white textured copy of the Michigan State University Department of Television and Radio letter head. Four phrases were underlined in red pencil: (1) SOME COMMUNICATION HABITS OF FARM BROADCASTERS, (2) shifting rural-urban mixture, (3) 20 minutes, and (4) simple

check-mark. Each letter was personally signed. The intention, of course, was to personalize it as much as possible.

The envelopes, also white and textured, were individually typed; and a postage stamp was affixed to each. The return envelope, which was of an attractive tan texture, was self-addressed and stamped. The object was to minimize the misplacing of the test instrument.

The respondent was asked to complete the questionnaire and to return it, if at all possible, within 48 hours.

The Final Questionnaire

The research instrument which was mailed to 179 farm broadcasters was made up of seventy-six variables, in thirty-six items, distributed in six major divisions. The six divisions included (1) general information about the station, farm programming, and communication of the farm broadcaster with station personnel; (2) on-the-air communication habits; (3) questions about the farm broadcaster and his audience; (4) communication habits in the area of sales, sponsors, and commercials; (5) communication habits at the meetings he attended, and (6) background questions about the demographic details of the farm broadcaster as a person.

The items were very professionally laid out on one sheet of $8\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 yellow daffodil textured paper, folded to make four pages. Most questions required only a simple check-mark to answer. A few required a single sentence or phrase, and

for two it was necessary to circle a number or insert a number in the blank. Answering the questionnaire required approximately 15-20 minutes.

The questionnaire used a variety of approaches to securing answers from the respondent. Most items were multiple choice. Others required ranking each item first, second, and third in relative importance. Seven-point semantic differential scales were employed for three questions of six components each. The respondent checked each component on scales of Useful-Not Useful, Very Important-Not Important, and Hi-Low. Some questions were the direct, "forced-choice" type while others required unstructured responses to see where the respondent's own values lay. And finally, provision was made so that answers could be given for radio and for television, realizing that the same question might have different answers when using the different media as frames of reference.

Forty-eight percent of the questionnaires had been returned by April 1st, when a follow-up letter was mailed.

The Follow-up Letter

By April 1st, eighty-six of the one-hundred seventy-nine questionnaires had been returned. On that date a brief follow-up letter was sent out to the nearly one-hundred farm broadcasters whose questionnaire had not then been received. Photo-printed on standard 8½ x 11 letterhead, it began with "thanks" to all who had already completed theirs, and then

addressed those who had intended to participate but whose questionnaires might somehow have become mislaid. A second questionnaire accompanied this letter.

Again, each letter was hand-signed. The return, self-addressed envelopes were white this time, instead of tan.

The Returns

Questionnaires continued coming into the departmental office daily between March 31st and April 13th, when the 124th questionnaire was recorded. In all, 69% of the 179 questionnaires found their way back to East Lansing. If adjustments are made, taking into account one questionnaire sent to a NAFB member in India, and the three university farm editors who did no broadcasting, the percentage of returns can be reported at 70%.

(Note: an additional 5 returns came on April 19th, raising the level of returns to 72%. These, however, were not included in the analysis.)

CHAPTER III

A REPORT OF FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE SURVEY ITEMS

The organizational basis for this chapter is derived from the six major divisions used in the questionnaire. The results for each of the thirty-six questions will be presented in sequence, and only the larger response clusters will be reported here.

The complete data represent the responses of one-hundred twenty-two separate individuals, one-hundred eleven of whom use radio and fifty-eight of whom use television. The percentages quoted, therefore, relate to two separate categories--radio and television--not to the total group of one-hundred twenty-two.

In those cases where the percentages for the item do not equal 100%, three possible factors can be considered: (1) responses with small percentages have been omitted, (2) responses are missing because some individuals failed to answer the item, and (3) multiple responses were permitted for the item.[1]

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[1]In cases where too many responses to an item were given, a coin was flipped to determine which response was to be coded.

General Information

1. Are the broadcasts commercial or non-commercial?

Given the opportunity to declare their farm broadcasts either "commercial" or "non-commercial," 95% of the radio and 93% of the TV farm broadcasters replied that they are "commercial".

	Radio		TV	
	No.	%	No.	%
Commercial	105	94.6	54	93.1
Non-Commercial	6	5.4	4	6.9

2. What is the power of your radio station?

Slightly more than one-half of the radio men broadcast from stations of 5,000 watts power; 20% utilize the full-power 50,000 watt facilities; and 18% use either 1,000 or 10,000 watt radio stations.

	Radio	
(1) 500	3	2.7
(2) 1,000	13	11.7
(3) 5,000	57	51.4
(4) 10,000	7	6.3
(5) 50,000	27	24.3

3. Please identify each program produced by your farm department, inserting the appropriate information in the spaces below. Include programs produced for distribution.

Item number three of the questionnaire asked the respondent to identify each program title produced by his farm

department. The purpose of this question was to see what urban-, or consumer-orientation could be inferred from program titles alone. The titles show that their orientation is primarily towards the farmer: 74% TV and 69% radio listed no titles suggesting anyone other than the producer of agricultural products. However, nearly one-fifth of both radio and TV farm broadcasters listed one title, such as the most frequent one, "Town and Country". Only 5% radio and 5% TV listed two or more such titles.

	Radio		TV	
(1) 0	76	68.5	43	74.1
(2) 1	25	22.5	12	20.7
(3) 2	4	3.6	3	5.2
(4) 3	1	0.9	0	0.0
(5) 4	1	0.9	0	0.0
(6) 5	1	0.9	0	0.0

4. How much of your farm department's programming is designed for a non-farm audience? Check separate percentages for radio and TV.

With the realization that program titles might mask the communicator's intentions, the farm broadcaster was asked how much of his programming was intended for a non-farm audience. Fully one-half of the respondents indicate that less than one-quarter of their programming is designed for anyone other than the farmer. However, nearly one-third indicate that between a quarter and a half of their so-called farm broadcasts are consciously aimed at the urban audience.

A surprising 15% design 50-74% of their "farm" programming for this non-farm audience. The television farm directors have more of the urban-oriented programs, perhaps because of the limited range of their broadcast signal.

An interesting rationale for the strategy of urban orientation is given by a 30 year farm broadcaster of a 50,000 watt radio station:

> Faced with the need of attracting the largest possible listening audience each hour of the broadcast day, many radio stations look with question upon aiming their programs toward a specific segment of the potential listeners, especially when that segment represents only ten to twenty per cent of an area's population.[2]

	Radio		TV	
(1) 0-24%	63	56.8	21	36.2
(2) 25-49%	37	33.3	15	25.9
(3) 50-74%	8	7.2	18	31.0
(4) 75-100%	2	1.8	2	3.5

5. Much of the work that a farm broadcaster does is general preparation for any and all shows that he produces; but, which of the following statements most accurately describes the specific preparation usually made for the average show? Check one statement for radio and one for TV.

Another dimension of general information was explored in a questionnaire item that asked which of three statements most accurately described the specific preparation usually made for the average broadcast. Among both radio and TV respondents, more than two-thirds say, "Most of the shows follow a regular routine, so I am able to organize each show

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[2]From a promotional booklet, "Evaluation of Modern Farm Broadcasting," by Jay Gould, WOWO Farm Service Director (Ft. Wayne, Indiana), p. 3.

in a fairly short time." One-fifth from both media, by contrast, describe their preparation as careful, lengthy and detailed for each specific show. The data confirm that more careful attention is required of television broadcasts than of radio.

	Radio		TV	
(1) My secretary, or an assistant handles most of the day-to-day details for each show. I usually look over the materials shortly before going on-the-air.	2	1.8	4	6.9
(2) Most of the shows follow a regular routine, so I am able to organize each show in a fairly short time.	87	78.4	35	60.3
(3) Each show is carefully planned, and many hours of preparation are specifically devoted to the preparation of a definite show.	20	18.0	19	32.8

6. What do you talk most frequently about with people in your station who are not in the farm department? Check one.

The farm broadcaster was asked what he most frequently talks about with station personnel not in his farm department. The ranking is the same for both radio and TV: over 55% talk most about sales, secondly about formats and specific program content, and nearly one in five admits to "passing the time of day with the usual coffee chatter."

	Radio		TV	
(1) sales	63	57.8	31	53.5
(2) (3) format & content	27	24.3	17	29.3
(4) the usual coffee chatter	21	18.9	10	17.2

7. In which of the following areas do you feel your management most wants you to improve? Check one.

When asked in which of five areas he feels that his station's management most wants him to improve, "program sponsorship (sales)" polls 35% for both radio and TV. One-fourth of the radio broadcasters rank "personal audience contact" as the most-needed improvement; whereas, one-fourth in TV list "production quality".

	Radio		TV	
(1) production quality	23	20.7	16	27.6
(2) personal audience contact	27	24.3	11	19.0
(3) program sponsorship (sales)	39	35.1	20	34.9
(4) content changes	9	8.1	2	3.5

Some Communication Habits On-the-Air

In a series of four questions, the farm broadcaster was asked: (1) what impression his audience has of the style with which he communicates, (2) how he presents material, (3) how he obtains his program guests, and (4) to what extent he interacts with his quests on-the-air.

1. As your audience views or listens to your programs, which of the following impressions of the way you conduct your broadcasts are they most likely to get? Check one for radio and one for TV.

Both radio and TV respondents check "The farm broadcaster speaks directly to me most of the time," as their number one impression of how the audience perceives their style. Interestingly, however, the percentage is nearly

half-again as large for radio broadcasters. When given the alternative "impressions"--(1) "The farm broadcaster lets me overhear his conversation with others most of the time," or (2) "The farm broadcaster provides the opportunity for others to speak to me most of the time,"--"others" was chosen more frequently by TV than by radio broadcasters, suggesting that in radio the dialogue form of presentation may be used more frequently than in TV.

	Radio		TV	
	No.	%	No.	%
(1) "The farm broadcaster speaks directly to me most of the time."	87	78.4	34	58.6
(2) "The farm broadcaster lets me overhear his conversation with others most of the time.	12	10.8	9	15.5
(3) "The farm broadcaster provides the opportunity for others to speak to me most of the time"	9	8.1	13	22.4

2. You speak directly to your audience in several ways. In which of the following ways do you speak most of the time? Check one for radio and one for TV.

The next question looked more carefully at the direct form of addressing the audience, and asked how material is most frequently presented. The most frequent mode used by TV broadcasters is to speak from notes which they have made, followed by the mode of re-wording printed material. Radio broadcasters operate in the reverse fashion, preferring the

re-worded method to that of preparing notes. Nearly one-fifth of the TV men choose "speaking without notes" as their way of presenting material, while among their radio counterparts only one-third as many "look straight into the mike". Also among the radio broadcasters, 7% read the material "as is".

	Radio		TV	
(1) you speak from notes you have made	44	39.7	26	44.8
(2) you speak without notes	7	6.3	11	19.0
(3) you read printed material "as is"	8	7.2	0	0.0
(4) you re-word printed material	52	46.9	21	36.2

3. <u>You have other people on your programs from time to time. What arrangements are made? Check as many as are applicable, for radio and TV. (Note: a coding error reduced the responses to one per medium)</u>

When asked what arrangements are usually made for procuring guests for their programs, both radio and TV farm broadcasters responded similarly. In each group nearly half contact participants on a weekly or monthly basis. One-third enlist "regulars" whom they schedule for indefinite periods of time. Six per cent of radio and 9% of the TV group arrange regular time slots but allow someone outside of the station to select the actual participants.

	Radio		TV	
(1) you enlist regular participants who are scheduled for indefinite periods of time	43	38.7	20	34.5
(2) you contact participants on a weekly or monthly basis	47	42.3	27	46.6
(3) you arrange regular time slots but let someone outside the station select the participants	10	9.0	4	6.9

4. How are these participants usually handled? Check one.

Roughly 70% of both radio and TV interact continuously with their program guests, as opposed to introducing them and then allowing them to present their material uninterruptedly.

	Radio		TV	
(1) you introduce them but usually allow them to present their material uninterrupted	29	26.1	11	19.0
(2) you continuously interact with them	78	70.3	40	69.0

The Farm Broadcaster and His Audience

In a series of six questions, the farm broadcaster was asked: (1) in which ways his audience most frequently participates in his programs, (2) how useful various sources are in forming a picture of the audience, (3) which surveys he has had access to in the past five years, (4) what use he has made

of the survey information, (5) what percentage of his audience he believes does not live on a farm, and (6) what factor he thinks most fully accounts for the size of this non-farm audience.

1. In which of the following ways does your audience most frequently participate in your programs? Check one for radio and one for TV.

While 42% of the radio broadcasters chose "They send in announcements of meetings" as the most frequent way their audience participants in the programming, 47% of the TV broadcasters selected "They are mentioned or interviewed because they are newsworthy enough". The answer, "They request information which is then given one-the-air," was chosen as the largest participatory method by 26% of the TV, and 19% of the radio respondents.

	Radio		TV	
(1) they send in announcements of meetings	47	42.3	8	13.8
(2) they request information which is then given on-the-air	21	18.9	15	25.9
(3) they are mentioned or interviewed because they are newsworthy enough	40	36.0	27	46.6
(4) they are part of the "live" audience present during remote broadcasts	3	2.7	2	3.5

2. How useful are the following sources in forming a picture of your audience? Indicate the relative usefulness of each source by placing check marks on the scale provided for each.

In light of the literature reviewed for this research project, it has been of particular interest to learn the relative usefulness of various sources in forming a "picture" of the audience. The mean scores from a seven-point semantic differential scale, labeled "Useful-Not Useful", allow the six sources to be ranked in the following fashion:

Radio broadcasters: (1) comments at meetings, (2) general experience, (3) mail requests, (4) reports from sponsors, (5) phone calls, and (6) audience surveys.

TV broadcasters: (1) comments at meetings, (2) general experience, (3) mail requests, (4,5: a tie) reports from sponsors and audience surveys, and (6) phone calls.

	Radio	TV
(1) mail requests	m = 5.6	m = 5.0
(2) phone calls	m = 5.2	m = 4.6
(3) reports from sponsors	m = 5.3	m = 4.8
(4) comments at meetings	m = 6.2	m = 5.6
(5) general experience	m = 5.8	m = 5.6
(6) audience surveys	m = 4.8	m = 4.8

3. Which of the following surveys have you had access to in the past five years? Check all appropriate items.

Both radio and TV broadcasters checked similar surveys to which they have had access in the past five years. Using the average number of "checks" counted for each survey source,

the following ranking has been made: (1) National Association of Farm Broadcasters' 1967 Farm Radio Study, (2) professionally-administered audience survey, (3) United States Census of Agriculture data, and (4) Standard Rate and Data broadcast market information. More than one-half of the radio men have had access to station-administered audience surveys, whereas only one-third of the TV men have had similar access. Two individuals wrote in an extra category, entitled "client-sponsored survey".

	Radio		TV	
(1) professionally-administered audience survey	78	70.3	40	69.0
(2) 1967 NAFB Farm Radio Study	87	78.4	44	76.0
(3) Standard Rate & Data	52	47.0	25	43.1
(4) station-administered audience survey	52	46.9	20	34.9
(5) United States Census of Agriculture data	68	61.3	35	60.3
(6) no access to any survey information	5	4.5	3	5.2
(7) --a write-in--client-sponsored survey	1	0.9	1	1.7

4. What use has been made of the audience survey information? Check all appropriate items.

It is important not only to know which surveys these farm broadcasters have had access to, but also to determine

the use to which they have been put. Over three-fourths of the TV, and four-fifths of the radio broadcasters indicate that the sales department uses the information. One-third of all respondents mentioned format and content changes as a result of the surveys, and approximately one-fifth published the survey results. While nearly one-fourth of the radio broadcasters added or dropped programs as a result, only one in eight among the TV broadcasters used the surveys in this manner.

	Radio		TV	
(1) no use was made	8	7.2	6	10.3
(2) farm programs were added__ or dropped__	26	23.4	7	12.1
(3) formats and content were changed	41	37.0	21	36.2
(4) sales department used the information	90	81.1	44	75.9
(5) farm department published the information	25	22.6	12	20.7

5. What percentage of your audience, would you guess, does not live on a farm? Check one for radio and one for TV.

It is estimated by eighty per cent of all respondents that 26-75% of their audience does not live on a farm. Because of ambiguity in the question, however, this item is difficult to analyze. The respondent may have interpreted the term "audience" to mean either (1) the potential audience,

i.e., those persons living within the signal coverage of his station, or (2) the actual listening audience.

	Radio		TV	
(1) 0-25%	11	9.9	1	1.7
(2) 26-50%	59	53.2	30	51.7
(3) 51-75%	30	27.0	18	31.0
(4) 76-99%	10	9.0	9	15.5

6. Which of the following accounts most for the size of your non-farm audience? Check one for radio and one for TV.

The preceding question's ambiguity may have been redeemed, however, by the following question which asks, "Which of the following accounts most for the size of your non-farm audience?" The nature of the alternatives strongly suggest that the term "audience" is being used to refer to an actual audience, and not a potential one. Whatever the case, nearly 40% of both radio and TV respondents replied that "program content and orientation" account most for the size of their non-farm audience. One in four of the TV broadcasters list "time of the day your show is on" as the number one factor; whereas, one in four of the radio communicators rank"coverage area of broadcast signal" as the most significant factor.

	Radio		TV	
(1) time of the day your show is on	28	25.2	16	27.6
(2) program content and orientation	45	40.5	22	38.0

	Radio		TV	
(3) coverage area of broadcast signal	30	27.0	9	15.5
(4) location in the program schedule	6	5.4	10	17.2

The Farm Broadcaster and His Sponsors

Four questions were asked in this area: (1) personal involvement in sales, (2) services to sponsors, (3) amount of sponsored farm programming, and (4) the reason for continuing farm broadcasting.

1. To what extent are you personally involved in sales? Check only one.

The largest group of both radio and TV farm broadcasters report that they service commercial accounts occasionally. The second largest group has extensive sales responsibility, and fewer than one-fifth have no personal involvement in sales.

	Radio		TV	
	No.	%	No.	%
(1) no involvement	18	16.2	11	19.0
(2) occasionally service accounts	47	42.3	21	36.2
(3) extensive sales responsibility	27	24.3	14	24.1

2. How important are the following services to your sponsors? Indicate the relative importance of each by checking the scale provided for each service.

In order to explore the sponsor-broadcaster relationship more thoroughly, a seven-point semantic differential scale between Important-Unimportant was constructed to measure the relative importance which each broadcaster attached to various possible "services" which he could render to the sponsor. Mean scores have been used for ranking. Both radio and TV broadcasters agree on the relative importance of the first three factors, which, placed in order of importance are (1) delivering the largest possible audience, (2) presenting the commercials personally, i.e., as opposed to letting a non-farm department announcer present them, and (3) providing the sponsor with information about the audience. The mean scores are too close on the remaining "services" to rank them, but they include: prohibiting all competing accounts, giving free announcements about sponsor-related events, and making personal appearances for all sponsor events.

	Radio	TV
(1) presenting the commercials yourself	m = 6.1	m = 5.7
(2) prohibiting all competing accounts	m = 4.4	m = 4.3
(3) giving free announcements about sponsor events	m = 4.5	m = 4.5
(4) making appearances for all sponsor events	m = 4.7	m = 4.2

	Radio	TV
(5) delivering the largest possible audience	m = 6.6	m = 6.5
(6) providing sponsor information about the audience	m = 5.3	m = 5.4

3. How much of your farm programming is usually sold? Check one for radio and one for TV.

When asked, "How much of your farm programming is usually sold?" nearly half of the radio and a fourth of the TV broadcasters answered, 80-100%. These have been classified "High Success". One-fourth of both radio and TV respondents list 60-80% of their farm programming sold, and they have been classified "Medium Success". The "Low Success" group is composed of 25% TV and only 4% radio broadcasters. Unfortunately, however, 17% radio and 22% TV failed to answer this question. (Note: six categories were collapsed into three)

	Radio		TV	
(1) less than 60%	4	3.6	16	27.6
(2) 60-80%	28	25.2	14	24.1
(3) 81-100%	60	54.1	15	25.9

4. What is the biggest reason for your station's continuing with farm broadcasting? Check one for radio and one for TV.

When asked "What is the biggest reason for your station's continuing with farm broadcasting?" radio broadcasters indicated the money-making aspect of their programming much more frequently than did the TV broadcasters. TV ranked "farmers

constitute a majority in the coverage area" above "it is a money-making venture.

	Radio		TV	
(1) promises to the FCC: needed for license renewal	13	11.7	14	24.1
(2) it is a money making venture	50	45.1	12	20.7
(3) farmers constitute a majority in your coverage area	27	24.3	18	31.0
(4) there's no good way to fire a man who's done so well for so long	1	0.9	2	3.5

The Farm Broadcaster and His Meetings

Farm broadcasters tend to travel extensively and to attend numerous meetings: some are with producers such as the farmer; some are with sponsors who demonstrate their products and services; and some meetings are with consumers, who are primarily urban.

Six questions were asked of the farm broadcaster: (1) to determine the frequency with which he attends meetings, (2) to ascertain his organizational position with the farm broadcasting department, (3) to see which types of meetings he most frequently attends, (4) to determine what he does most frequently at these meetings, (5) to seek out the relative importance of several reasons which he might have for going to these meetings, and (6) to find out the extent to which

he perceives himself to be similar to, or different from, others who attend these meetings.

1. As a farm broadcaster, how many meetings have you averaged per week? Insert a number in each space.

One ingredient in the communication process is a channel for communication. In an effort to determine the extent to which the "meeting" is used as a channel of communication for the farm broadcaster and a portion of his potential broadcast audience, he was asked the average number of meetings attended per week (a) in the past year, and (b) when he first began as a farm broadcaster.

The differences between (a) and (b) are negligible for both radio and TV broadcasters. The TV broadcasters average 2.91 and 2.92 meetings weekly, while the radio communicators average 2.7 and 2.6 meetings per week. However, because these are mean scores, the wide range of meetings attended is somewhat masked. Some broadcasters average 5-6 meetings weekly, while many go to only one. (Note: the means are presented here)

	Radio	TV
(1) meetings in the past year or so	m = 2.7	m = 2.
(2) meetings when you first began	m = 2.6	m = 2.9

2. Are you the top man on your station's farm staff? Check one.

In most cases, the respondents were one-man departments of farm broadcasting. This partially explains why 67% of TV and 80% of radio broadcasters can say they are the top man on their station's farm staff.

	Radio		TV	
	No.	%	No.	%
(1) yes	89	80.2	44	75.9
(2) no (Please specify:_____)	22	19.8	14	24.1

3. You attend some kinds of meetings more frequently than others. Rank the following 1-2-3 in order of frequency.

Broadcasters from both media ranked similarly the types of meetings they attend. Most of them ranked first the producer-related meetings, i.e., when farmers come together. Sponsor-related meetings rated second, and consumer-related meetings placed third. It is not clear from this data, however, the importance which is attached to each kind. The farm broadcaster may go to more producer-related meetings because there are many more available than there are of the other two varieties.

	Radio	TV
(1) consumer-related meetings	m = 2.5	m = 2.3
(2) producer-related meetings	m = 1.2	m = 1.2
(3) sponsor-related meetings	m = 2.2	m = 2.3

4. What do you do most frequently at these meetings? Check only one item.

When asked what he most frequently does at these meetings, both the radio and the TV farm broadcasters' responses were

the same. They fell into the following ranking: (1) record and film interviews, (2) speak or emcee, (3) mingle informally, (4) enlarge acquaintances, and (5) take notes. While this question asked them to check only one activity which they most frequently performed at these meetings, the next question sought to determine the relative importance of several activities.

	Radio		TV	
(1) speak or emcee	20	18.0	12	20.7
(2) record or film interviews	53	47.8	27	46.6
(3) mingle informally	19	17.1	8	13.8
(4) take notes	2	1.8	2	3.5
(5) make presentations	0	0.0	0	0.0
(6) enlarge acquaintances	13	11.7	6	10.3

5. How important is each of the following possible reasons for your going to these meetings? Check each item.

Using again the semantic differential scales between the polar adjectives of Very Important and Unimportant, the following ranking was achieved: (a) to gather information for use in broadcasts, (2) to build an audience "by being seen", and (3) to contact current or potential sponsors. (Note, also, that the first mean is the lowest; in fact, it has the highest mean were it not inverted for coding purposes.)

	Radio	TV
(1) to gather information for your broadcasts	m = 1.67	m = 1.7

	Radio	TV
(2) to build an audience "by being seen"	m = 5.6	m = 5.3
(3) to contact current or potential sponsors	m = 4.1	m = 3.5

6. How do you compare yourself with the majority of persons who attend these meetings? Check each item.

Asked to compare themselves with the majority of persons who attend these meetings, both radio and TV broadcasters rated themselves (1) younger, (2) more educated, (3) similar in income, and (4) the same in religious commitment. It is difficult to evaluate (3) and (4) because, for one, the income question confuses gross and net income, and because few persons are probably willing to admit to being irreligious.

	Radio		TV	
(1) in age:				
more	14	12.6	7	12.1
less	48	43.2	28	48.3
same	46	41.4	22	38.0
(2) in education				
more	63	56.8	37	63.8
less	3	2.7	1	1.7
same	40	36.0	19	32.8
(3) in income				
more	26	23.4	17	29.3
less	23	20.7	7	12.1
same	58	52.3	33	56.9
(4) in religious commitment				
more	7	6.3	4	6.9
less	14	12.6	7	12.1
same	82	73.9	41	70.7

The Farm Broadcaster As A Person

Nine questions were asked in this final section, involving (1) age, (2) formal education, (3) father's primary occupation, (4) previous occupation of the farm broadcaster, (5) years as a farm broadcaster (total, and at present station), (6) location of dwelling place, (7) orientation in terms of honors and awards, (8) orientation in terms of indications of success, and (9) self-assessment on six professional skills.

1. Your age is in the 20's, 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's. Check one.

In terms of age, the farm broadcasters (54%) are in either their 30's or 40's. Some 20% are in their 50's, and about 15% are in their 20's. Another 10% are in their 60's.

	Radio		TV	
	No.	%	No.	%
(1) 20's	16	14.4	9	15.5
(2) 30's	30	27.0	16	27.6
(3) 40's	31	27.9	13	22.4
(4) 50's	23	20.7	14	24.1
(5) 60's	11	9.9	6	10.5
(6) 70's	0	0.0	0	0.0

2. Your highest year of formal education was (what)? Circle only one number.

In terms of formal education, roughly 45% of all farm broadcasters are college graduates, and 23% (radio) and 31%

(TV) have some graduate education. Another 20% (radio) and 16% (TV) have some college background, while 12% (radio) and 9% (TV) are high school graduates. Fewer than 1% of the radio farm broadcasters have less than a high school diploma.

	Radio		TV	
(1) some high school	1	0.9	0	0.0
(2) high school grad	13	11.7	5	8.6
(3) some college	22	19.8	9	15.5
(4) college grad	49	44.1	26	44.9
(5) graduate school	25	22.5	18	31.0

3. What was your father's primary occupation at the time you left home? Check only one.

It is not surprising that 70% (radio) and 78% (TV) come from homes where the father was a farmer or rancher. Fathers of 18% of the radio farm broadcasters, however, were urban employees, while only 10% of the fathers of TV broadcasters were similarly employed.

	Radio		TV	
(1) farmer/rancher	78	70.3	45	77.6
(2) urban employee	20	18.0	6	10.3
(3) other (specify:_____)	13	11.7	7	12.1

4. What was the last job you had before becoming a farm broadcaster? Please be as specific as possible.

In an effort to determine the vocational background of the farm broadcasters, they were asked, What was the last job you had before becoming a farm broadcaster? Surprisingly,

one-third of the radio men and nearly half of the TV men came from some area of communication arts, i.e., radio, TV, journalism, entertainment, etc. TV men tend to come more from backgrounds of extension service than agri-business; whereas, radio broadcasters came more from agri-business than extension service backgrounds. Coming directly out of school were 5% of the radio men and 9% of the TV. (Note: the answers were coded afterwards)

	Radio		TV	
(1) agri-business	30	27.0	9	15.5
(2) extension service	18	16.2	13	22.4
(3) communication arts	43	38.7	27	46.6
(4) student	5	4.5	5	8.6
(5) other	14	12.6	4	6.9

5. How many years have you been a farm broadcaster? At your present station?

When asked how many years they have been farm broadcasters, one-fourth of the TV men replied 0-5 years; one-fifth have had 6-10 years. Over one-fifth have had more than 21 years. In radio, the bulk (48%) have had either fewer than 5 or more than 21 years. The remaining three categories are fairly evenly distributed.

Nearly half of both radio and TV farm broadcasters have been at their present station fewer than 5 years.

	Radio		TV	
(1) total				
0-5	30	27.0	15	25.9
6-10	22	19.8	12	20.7
11-15	18	16.2	10	17.2
16-20	17	15.3	9	15.5
21+	24	21.6	12	20.7
(2) at your present station				
0-5	49	44.1	26	44.9
6-10	18	16.2	10	17.2
11-15	14	12.6	6	10.3
16-20	14	12.6	10	17.2
21+	15	13.5	5	8.6

6. What is the nature of the property on which you live now? Check only one.

The reasons for asking about the nature of the property was to find out the "culture" in which the farm broadcaster and his family are living. Is is thought that an urban culture might tend to alienate him from the mores, values, and rural habits. As was expected, nearly half of both radio and TV farm broadcasters live in the city, while another one-fifth live in the small towns. Only 20% of the radio and 14% of the TV farm broadcasters live on a farm or ranch.

	Radio		TV	
(1) suburban acreage	17	15.3	9	15.5
(2) small town lot	20	18.0	8	13.8
(3) city lot	52	46.9	33	56.9
(4) farm or ranch	22	19.8	8	13.8

7. What honor or award have you received of which you are most proud? Please be as specific as possible.

The largest category of awards and honors, for both radio and TV, is at the Regional and State level. Roughly 15% of both groups indicated that they were most proud of some National or International award or honor, and fewer than 5% mentioned an office in their national organization. (Note: answers were coded for geographical scope)

	Radio		TV	
(1) NAFB office	4	3.6	3	5.2
(2) National/International	15	13.5	9	15.5
(3) Regional/State	49	44.1	21	36.2
(4) Local	12	10.8	6	10.3
(5) Miscellaneous	5	4.5	2	3.5

8. What are the three best indications of your success as a farm broadcaster? There are probably many, but choose the three which you think best tell the story.

The farm broadcasters were asked to write the three best indications of their success as farm broadcasters. The replies to this open-end question fell roughly into six categories: (1) program sales, (2) years as a farm broadcaster, (3) audience-oriented replies, (4) professionally-oriented replies, (5) indications of personal income level, and (6) a miscellaneous "other" category. The two most frequently mentioned categories of success indicators, which tied, are Professional and Audience-oriented replies. Program Sales ranked second, and the miscellaneous category collected about

one-third of the designations.

	Radio		TV	
(1) program sales	60	54.1	29	50.0
(2) years	12	10.8	5	8.6
(3) audience orientation	81	73.0	43	74.1
(4) professional orientation	81	73.0	45	77.6
(5) personal income	13	11.7	4	6.9
(6) other	32	28.8	20	34.5

9. How do you rate yourself on the following items? Check each item.

The final item on the questionnaire asked the farm broadcaster to rate his competence on six items related to professional skills. He was asked to check them on a semantic differential scale between the polar adjectives labeled "hi" and "low". The six items were ranked in the following way, using the mean scores for each item: (1) face-to-face contacts with your audience, (2) polish in program production and preparation, (3) skill as a newsman, (4) expertise in agricultural knowledge, (5) salesmanship, and (6) skill as an entertainer.

	Radio	TV
(1) expertise in agricultural knowledge	m = 5.5	m = 5.5
(2) salesmanship	m = 5.5	m = 5.3
(3) Skill as an entertainer	m = 4.3	m = 4.2
(4) face-to-face contacts with your audience	m = 6.0	m = 5.9

	Radio	TV
(5) skill as a newsman	m = 5.5	m = 5.5
(6) polish in program production & preparation	m = 5.6	m = 5.4

In this chapter, little attention has been given to the possible reasons for variations in response, and no attention has been given to the question, "Which communication habits are most highly correlated with a farm broadcaster's success?" For answers to these kinds of questions, the following chapter is presented.

CHAPTER IV

A REPORT OF FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE HYPOTHESES

Introduction

In contrast to Chapter III, which illustrates the distribution of responses to each questionnaire item, this chapter is designed to report the relationships which exist among these items, particularly in terms of the variable designated "Success".

This chapter is organized on the basis of two broad hypotheses:

I. Sponsor-related communication habits are highly correlated with one's success in obtaining program sponsorship.

II. There exist significant differences in both communication habits and personal attributes between the various levels of success.

In Part I of this chapter, the findings will be presented which support, or fail to support, a series of low-level hypotheses which are postulated to show high positive correlation with the variable of "Success". In operational terms, the word "Success" refers to the farm broadcaster's response to the question, "How much of your farm programming is usually sold? Check one for radio and one for TV." The percentage checked by the farm broadcaster was then coded in one of three

categories, indicating High Success, Medium Success, or Low Success.

The remaining variables of the questionnaire have been coded so that correlations can be computed between each item and the variable designated "Success". The nonparametric test of correlation used in Part I is "C", the Contingency Coefficient.

In essence, if the probability, associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as large as the observed value of the statistic, is equal to or less than the predetermined level of significance, then the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion is reached that the observed association in the sample is not the result of chance but rather represents a genuine relation in the population.

The level of significance has been set at the .05 level; and in the following pages of Part I, both the Contingency Coefficient and the exact level of significance are reported for hypotheses which are confirmed, or supported.

Part I

Each of the following 24 hypotheses was predicted to have a high positive correlation with the degree of success, as indicated by the percentage of farm programming usually sold. For ease in understanding, the hypotheses are presented in three groups: the hypotheses in the first group were not supported by the data, those in the second group found partial

support, and those in the third group were completely supported.

Group I: The Unsupported Hypotheses

1. **GREATER DEGREE OF APPARENT INFORMALITY IN PROGRAM PRESENTATION**

   Finding: The data failed to confirm this hypothesis.

2. **GREATER DEGREE OF PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SELECTION OF PROGRAM GUESTS**

   Finding: The data failed to confirm this hypothesis.

3. **HIGHER AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

   Finding: The data failed to confirm this hypothesis.

4. **MORE EXTENSIVE SALES RESPONSIBILITIES**

   Finding: The data failed to support this hypothesis.

5. **HIGHER AVERAGE NUMBER OF WEEKLY MEETINGS ATTENDED**

   Finding: The data failed to confirm this hypothesis.

6. **GREATER PROMINENCE OF THE FARM BROADCASTER AT MEETINGS**

   Finding: The data failed to support this hypothesis.

7. **GREATER GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT OF RECOGNITION AND HONOR FOR THE FARM BROADCASTER**

   Finding: The data fail to support the idea that the more successful farm broadcasters receive awards and honors from greater distances and at higher organizational levels than others.

8. **GREATER LONGEVITY AS A FARM BROADCASTER**

   Finding: The data fail to support the idea that the more successful farm broadcasters have been around longer.

9. **SELF RATING OF HIGH ON PERSONAL SALESMANSHIP**

   Finding: The data failed to support this hypothesis.

10. **SELF RATING OF HIGH ON FACE-TO-FACE AUDIENCE CONTACTS**

    Finding: The data indicated no correlation with this variable and the farm broadcaster's degree of success.

Group II: The Partially-Supported Hypotheses

1. **MORE SEEING AND BEING SEEN THAN GATHERING INFORMATION AT MEETINGS**

   Finding: The data indicate a significant correlation between degree of success and the item "to contact current or potential sponsors", with a C = .49 at the .001 level. However, neither "building an audience 'by being seen'" nor "gathering information for use in programming" was shown to have a significant correlation with success.

2. **IN COMPARISON TO THOSE AT THE MEETINGS, THE FARM BROADCASTER IS (1) SIMILAR IN AGE, (2) SIMILAR IN INCOME, (3) MORE EDUCATED, AND (4) LESS RELIGIOUSLY COMMITTED.**

   Finding: The data support only the variable of comparable age, yielding a Contingency Coefficient of .37 at the .01 level of significance.

3. **SIMILARITY WITH THE AUDIENCE OF HOME AND EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND**

   Finding: The data support only the similarity of home background, as indicated by the item which shows the farm broadcaster's father to have been a farmer or rancher (C = .30 at .02 level).

Group III: The Supported Hypotheses

1. **HIGH STATION CONCERN WITH SALES**

   Finding: This was supported with a C = .27 at the .05 level of significance.

2. **DIRECTNESS WITH WHICH BROADCAST AUDIENCE IS ADDRESSED**

   Finding: This was supported with a C = .30 at the .05 level.

3. **HIGHER INTERACTION WITH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

   Finding: This was supported with a C = .36 at the .001 level.

4. **GREATER USE OF FACE-TO-FACE CHANNELS OF FEEDBACK FROM THE AUDIENCE**

   Finding: The data supported this hypothesis, giving to the item "reports from sponsors" a C = .50 at the .001 level of significance, and giving to the item "general experience" with the audience a C = .41 at the .02 level.

5. **HIGHER RANKING OF SPONSOR-RELATED MEETINGS**

   Finding: The data supported this hypothesis, giving the ranking of sponsor-related meetings a C = .41 at the .001 level of significance.

6. **AWARENESS OF "SALES" AS AN UNSOLICITED INDICATION OF SUCCESS**

   Finding: Enough respondents listed "sales", when asked to write the three best indications of their success, that a Contingency Coefficient of .24 was obtained at the .02 level.

7. **SELF RATING OF HIGH ON AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE**

   Finding: This was supported, yielding a C = .39 at the .05 level of significance.

8. **PROFITABILITY THE BIGGEST REASON STATION KEEPS FARM PROGRAMMING**

   Finding: This was strongly confirmed with a Contingency Coefficient equal to .70 at the high .001 level of significance.

9. **HIGHER ACCESS TO AUDIENCE SURVEY DATA**

   Finding: This was supported, giving the item "professionally-administered audience survey" a C = .29, significant at the .01 level.

10. **MORE EXTENSIVE USE OF AUDIENCE SURVEY DATA**

    Finding: This was supported by two significant uses: the item "sales department used the information" obtained a C = .31 at the .001 level, and the item "farm department published the information" achieved a Contingency Coefficient of .29 at the .02 level.

11. **MORE SERVICES PROVIDED TO SPONSOR**

    Finding: This was the most strongly supported hypothesis of all. All six services to the sponsor received extremely high Contingency Coefficients and were significant at the .001 level. "Presenting the commercials yourself" had a C = .73, and "Prohibiting all competing accounts" had a C = .67. A C = .69 was achieved by the item "Giving free announcements about sponsor events", while "Making

appearances at all sponsor events" had a similar Coefficient. "Delivering the largest possible audience" earned the second largest strength of correlation with a C = .71, and "Providing sponsor information about the audience" polled a healthy C = .64.

In summary, it is evident from the data that there are other communication habits and personal attributes which correlate with one's success in obtaining program sponsorship. Because this study is both exploratory and hypothesis testing, it was thought to be important to measure the correlation strength of variables other than those which are obviously sponsor-related.

Only two sponsor-related communication habits, however, failed to reach the specified level of significance. It was thought that the more successful farm broadcasters would have more extensive sales responsibilities, but the data failed to confirm this idea. Also, it was predicted that the more successful farm broadcasters would rate themselves high on salesmanship. While they may have, the difference was not significant enough to set them apart from the less successful.

The remaining eight, sponsor-related communication habits were supported as hypothesized. In fact, the six separate items indicating various services which the farm broadcaster might give to the sponsor--each a separate communication habit--were not only supported, but at an extremely high level of correlation strength and significance.

In answer to the question, What do farm broadcasters do when not engaged in sponsor-related communication habits? it may be answered that the more successful farm broadcasters address their audiences more directly, interact with their guests extensively, find face-to-face channels of feedback important, work for stations who keep farm programming because of its profitability, and rate themselves high on agricultural knowledge.

Part II

In this part of the chapter, findings will be presented which indicate if there exists any significant difference in the communication habits and personal attributes among the three categories of "Success". These findings are based on tests of significant differences between the scores of each paired category of success and their values for the seventy-four variables of the survey instrument.

In other words, comparisons are made on the average score of, say, the variable "importance of the use of mail in forming a picture of the audience" for (1) those broadcasters who ranked as "High Success" and those who ranked as "Low Success". The three comparisons which are possible are (1) between High and Medium Success, (2) between High and Low Success, and (3) between Medium and Low Success.

It is assumed that there will be some differences between the groups, but to determine if the observed differances are too great to have been very likely caused by chance, three

parametric tests of significant differences are used: the Student-t test which assumes equal variances in the population parameters, the Student-t test which assumes unequal variances in the population parameters, and the F-test.

In the following four tables are listed those variables for which there exist significant differences when compared across the three groups of "Success". All variables so listed are significant at the .05 level or better. In each table the variable is listed, the levels of Success between which significant differences have been found are listed, and the exact level of significance is shown for each of the three tests.

Tables 1 and 2 are divided on the basis of the medium in which the observed difference was found: Table 1 is for Radio and Table 2, for TV.

Tables 3 and 4 differ from Tables 1 and 2 only on the basis of the measurement assumptions which underly the variables listed. The statistical tests of significance used in this section assume equal interval data. The variables listed in Tables 1 and 2 meet this requirement without qualification. For those remaining variables, however, for which there is some question at this point, caution has been exercised, and their significance has been separately presented in Tables 3 and 4.

It is interesting that for the most part radio and TV have a separate set of variables for which significant

Table 1. Significant Differences Between Paired Levels of Success for Radio Variables

Variables	Levels of Success	Three Tests of Significance		
		t(equal variance)	t(unequal)	F-test
Usefulness of mail in picturing audience	Hi < Med			.01
Usefulness of sponsor reports in picturing audience	Hi < Low Med < Low		.0000 .0000	
Usefulness of general experience in picturing audience	Hi < Low Low < Med		.003 .0004	.05
Importance of presenting commercials in person	Hi < Med			.03
Importance of giving sponsor free announcements	Med < Low		.02	
High self-rating on expertise in agricultural knowledge	Hi > Med Med < Low	.05	.05 .04	

Table 2. Significant Differences Between Paired Levels of Success for TV Variables

Variables	Levels of Success	Three Tests of Significance t(equal variance)	t(unequal)	F-test
Usefulness of comments from meetings in picturing audience	Hi < Med			.005
	Low < Med			.04
Importance of presenting commercials in person	Low < Med			.03
Importance of giving sponsor free announcements	Hi > low	.04	.03	
	Hi > Med	.02	.02	
Importance of making appearances for all sponsor events	Low < Med			.02
Importance of delivering largest audience	Hi > Low	.02	.02	
	Hi > Med	.02	.02	
Importance of getting information at meetings	Hi > Med			.001
	Low > Med			.005
Importance of being seen at meetings	Low < Med	.05	.03	.01
High self-rating on salesmanship	Hi > Med	.05	.04	
	Low > Med			.05

Table 3. Tentative Significant Differences Between Paired Levels of Success for Radio Variables

Variables	Levels of Success	Three Tests of Significance t(equal variance)	t(unequal)	F-test
Urban-consumer orientation of program titles	Hi < Low	.005		
Content designed for urban audience	Hi < Med Hi < Low	.03 .01	.04	
Access to professional audience survey	Hi > Low	.01	.02	
Access to Standard Rate and Data market information	Hi > Low Med > Low	.05 .03	.0000 .0000	
Access to Station-administered audience survey	Hi > Low Med > Low		.0000 .0000	
No access to audience survey data	Med < Low	.01		
No use of audience survey data	Hi < Low		.0000	
Percent of non-farm audience thought to be in total audience	Hi < Med	.04	.03	
Meetings attended when first a farm broadcaster	Hi > Med	.03	.0002	.0000
High ranking of attending sponsor-related meetings (< here indicates closer to number 1 ranking)	Hi < Low Med < Low		.05 .04	

Table 4. Tentative Significant Differences Between Paired Levels of Success for TV Variables

Variables	Levels of Success	Three Tests of Significance		
		t(equal variance)	t(unequal)	F-test
Access to professional audience survey	Hi > Low	.04	.03	
Publishing of survey data	Hi > Med		.05	
	Low > Med			.004
Percent of non-farm audience thought to be in total audience	Hi < Low	.003	.002	
	Low > Med	.01	.008	

differences can be seen between the three levels of Success. Both media are found to have significant differences on the two variables: (1) presenting commercials personally, and (2) giving free announcements for sponsor events. But, even for these two variables, the observed differences are not between the same pairs of success levels.

While the use of mail for forming a picture of the audience differs among the radio levels of success, the use of comments at meetings in forming a picture of the audience makes the difference among the TV levels of success.

For services to the sponsor, free announcements about sponsor events is significant in differentiating the levels of success in radio, but appearances at sponsor events is the more critical variable for the levels of success in TV.

Among the radio levels of success, general experience and agricultural expertise differ significantly; while, in TV, gathering information at meetings, being seen, and a high self-rating on salesmanship are the variables which separate the levels of success.

Tables 3 and 4 suggest other variables for which significant differences exist between the three levels of success, but because of the questions surrounding their level of measurement, they will not be reiterated here.

The data in Tables 1 and 2, however, provide abundant evidence in support of the second broad hypothesis, that there do exist significant differences in both communication habits and personal attributes between the various levels of success.

In the final chapter, a summary is made and conclusions are presented which indicate what these findings have added to the body of knowledge about the relationship of the communicator and his audience and the function which the communication habits shown here may have for the stability and equilibrium of the social system in which the United States farm broadcaster operates.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to draw together some of the more important findings of this study in a composite portrait of the more successful United States farm broadcaster. Then it will be necessary to ask of the study the same three questions used in the review of literature which provide an analytic framework for these new data. And finally, some of the questions raised by this study will be presented in terms of their potential for future research.

The Composite of Success

From the correlations of the questionnaire responses to the variable of "success", it can be said in summary that the more successful farm broadcasters tend to:

- . . . talk more frequently about sales than about any other topic when with other station personnel;
- . . . speak more directly to their broadcast audience;
- . . . interact more with their guests;
- . . . find reports from sponsors and their own personal experiences more useful in forming a picture of their audience;

- . . . have had greater access to professionally-administered audience surveys in the past five years;
- . . . have sales departments which make use of the audience surveys and have farm departments which publish the results;
- . . . give extensive service to their sponsors, including:

  presenting the commercials personally,
  prohibiting all competing accounts,
  giving free announcements about sponsor events,
  making appearances for all sponsor events,
  delivering the largest possible audience, and
  providing the sponsor with information about the audience;
- . . . work for stations whose biggest reason for continuing with farm broadcasting is because of the revenue which is generates;
- . . . rank sponsor-related meetings higher in priority;
- . . . give as a more important reason for going to meetings the contacting of current and potential sponsors;
- . . . come more frequently from homes where the father has been a farmer or rancher;
- . . . mention sales more frequently as one of the three best indications of their success as farm broadcasters; and
- . . . rate themselves higher in agricultural knowledge.

The Function of the Farm Broadcaster's Communication Habits

The data generated in this study are now subjected to the same type of analysis as was applied to the literature reviewed in Chapter III. Functional analysis asks (1) what is the repetitive item with which one is concerned, (2) what are the parameters of the system within which this item operates, and (3) what function does this recurring pattern of behavior have in the maintenance of the social system within which it is found?

This study of the United States farm broadcaster has focused on a number of repetitive items which have been labeled "communication habits". By definition a "habit" is a repetitive behavior, a recurring phenomenon. The communication habits of the farm broadcaster are reported in full in Chapter III, revealing not only how many persons checked any given communication habit or personal attribute, but what proportion of the whole for each medium responded in that way.

Of particular interest in this study have been the communication habits of a subset known as the "High Success" group. This category encompasses 54% of the radio farm broadcasters and 26% of the television farm broadcasters. These are the persons whose farm programming is sponsored 80%-or-more most of the time.

Part II of Chapter IV demonstrates that the communication habits differ significantly on a number of factors among the three levels of success. And these differences

frequently originate in factors which are not obviously sponsor-related. Part I of this chapter itemizes some of the ways in which the more successful farm broadcasters behave.

The second focus of analysis involves some delimitation of the social system within which these communication habits operate.

At the very outset of this study, as indicated in the research proposal, it was thought that communication habits of the farm broadcaster should be observed in his private, as well as his professional spheres of action. It was also thought that he ought to be observed in the context of his meeting with sponsors. But following a series of on-the-job interviews with a large cross-section of farm broadcasters, it became apparent that these men did not want their home life, or other such "personal" affairs scrutinized; and, furthermore, it became evident that the sponsor-communicator relationship is frequently a fragile, personal bond, which persists on bases other than factual knowledge about the effectiveness of the advertiser's investment.

One farm broadcaster confided that obtaining sponsors was a skill all its own, requiring person-to-person "skills", such as, using the sponsor's grandchildren in the filmed commercial, for example.

It has become necessary, therefore, within the limitations of this study to circumscribe the parameters of the

farm broadcasters' social system in a manner which excludes these two components--the private home life and the intimate sponsor-communicator habits.

Because of the nature of the research instrument, and the geographical scope of the study, it has also been necessary to exclude directly the broadcast audience and its relationship to the farm broadcaster.

For purposes of this analysis, then, the social system of this study can be said to have seven major components: the individual mass communicator, his radio and/or TV farm programming, the broadcast audience as a reference group of the mass communicator, the meetings which he attends, his sponsors as a reference group, his personal attributes and background, and the general context of the commercial broadcast station with its topics of conversation and general profit orientation. (The data clearly support DeFleur's thesis that the prevailing internal condition of the mass media is economic.)

Once having identified the repetitive behaviors under consideration, and the boundaries of the system within which they operate, the next task of the analysis is to determine the contribution which these recurring behaviors have for the maintenance and stability of the system.

It can be said that the state of equilibrium of a commercial broadcast station is one of profit-making. The "interest, convenience, and necessity" of the public

notwithstanding, a broadcast station is a business; and if it is unable to make a profit on its investment, it cannot long continue to serve its audience.

Radio broadcasters (45%) confessed that the biggest reason their station is continuing with farm programming is the profit which it brings to the station. This was thought to be the case for only 21% of the TV farm broadcasters, who (31%) ranked higher the reason that farmers constitute a majority in their station's coverage area.

Furthermore, when asked what the most frequent topic of conversation is among station personnel, 58% (radio) and 54% (TV) responded "sales".

It is not without reason, therefore, that an economic-orientation prevails in the system within which the commercial farm broadcaster works.

The question remains, What is the function of his communication habits for the maintaining of this equilibrium of profit-making?

The data show quite emphatically that the orientation of the more successful farm broadcaster is very much towards the sponsor. This is consistent with the findings in literature reviewed earlier. The mass communicator finds his more salient reference group in those who determine whether or not he can communicate at all. The TV producers had network executives and censors to please; the feature film creators had profit-minded executive producers to answer to; and the newspapermen had a publisher to satisfy.

Likewise with the commercial farm broadcaster, his service to the farm community is in large part a function of his success in obtaining sponsorship of his program.

The farm broadcaster differs in large degree from most of the mass communicators mentioned above however, for they, more than most mass communicators, are responsible not only for creation of content, and the presentation thereof, but also for securing financial backing. It must be remembered that only 16% of the radio, and 19% of the TV farm broadcasters indicated no personal involvement in sales.

Another significant difference for this special kind of mass communicator is the close relationship between specific sponsors, the communicator, and the audience. Sponsorship in print media, for example, is sponsorship of the entire publication, not sponsorship of any one of its creative staff. Even in broadcasting, the pattern is frequently found in which sponsors "buy time" or "participate" in whatever programming is available at the rate they are able to pay.

But, in the case of the commercial farm broadcaster, the sponsor, because of his product and his target audience, has a much more direct relationship with the producer of the specific mass media content. The sponsor knows that the farm broadcaster has greater face-to-face contact with potential members of the audience than almost any other person. The sponsor, in effect, is purchasing access to the

relationship between the farm broadcaster and his audience. It is a symbiotic relationship in which the farm broadcaster barters his access to the audience and to such programming components as weather, markets, and farm news, for sponsor support.

Status accrues to the farm broadcaster from the audience, because he is a broadcast personage; and status accrues to him from within the station and among his colleagues in proportion to the "profitability" of his programming. Without the profit, the activities, if not the very existence itself, of the farm broadcasts would probably diminish to nothing. It requires profits to be able to afford to send the farm broadcaster on his extensive travels and face-to-face contacts with the audience.

In conclusion, then, there is reason to believe that the relationship of the communicator and his audience, in the case of the farm broadcaster, is in large part correlated with the requirements of obtaining program sponsorship. The communicator-audience relationship is in large part a means to this financial end rather than an end in itself.

Lest these conclusions leave the reader with the impression that such a mutually beneficial relationship between the commercial broadcaster and his audience is somehow deceitful, and that the broadcaster is "using" his audience for personal ends, it should be remembered that this entire analysis is predicated on the biased assumption that

profit-making is the balanced state of the system. It should also be remembered that the data are derived from measures of correlation which do not demonstrate the time-order relationship of success and other communication habits.

It is possible that the relationship of the communicator and his audience in this context is the result of conscientious efforts on the part of an audience-oriented mass communicator, who, because of his success in meeting the needs of his public, has been justly rewarded by the ensuing investments of the sponsors.

There is a philosophical and rhetorical basis for suggesting that the purpose of communicating is to influence. Perhaps, however, communication researchers have been too quick to assume that the manifest audience--the broadcast audience in the case cited here--is the target to be influenced.

The research reviewed in Chapter I, and supported in measure by this study, suggest that secondary audiences, particularly those reference groups who hold the power to permit or deny access to the public are, in fact, the more salient targets of communication in many mass communication situations, particularly if the context is commercial.

If such is the case, more attention needs to be given to the communication relationship which exists among mass communicators and their sponsors, in which circumstances the mass media audiences may be benefiting only in some residual sense.

There is reason to believe, however, that economic rewards are helpful in encouraging the face-to-face contacts of the mass communicator and his audience. In this study, farm broadcasters ranked among the three most important services to the sponsor that of providing him with information about the audience. In fact, it is this very type of contact and first-hand knowledge about the audience which make the farm broadcaster such a valuable "salesman" for the sponsor; and, because of this relationship, the sponsor is willing to purchase commercials. The farm broadcaster, therefore, has at least this motivation to engage in face-to-face contacts with his audience. Whether motivated primarily by some altruistic regard for the welfare of the broadcast audience, or by the inducement of financial reward, the communicator-audience relationship which results is based on more fact and experience than might otherwise be possible in the absence of economic incentive.

Suggestions for Further Research

Because of the assumed influence of the economic incentive in the commercial broadcast situation, it would be well to control for commercial sponsorship while exploring the nature and extent of the communicator-audience relationship. Fewer than 6% of the participants in this study are non-commercial--a total of 10 persons; therefore, insufficient numbers would have made any comparisons between commercial and non-commercial farm broadcasting rather tenuous.

It would be possible, however, and very useful, to compare the communication habits of agricultural extension agents with those of the commercial broadcasters in this study. There are hundreds of county agents who are part-time, non-commercial broadcasters and who share many of the same relationships with the audience as their full-time, commercial broadcasting colleagues. Remember, too, that nearly one in five of the commercial farm broadcasters have come from backgrounds in extension service.

In addition to exploring the relative effect of commercial support on the communication habits of these two categories of broadcasters, it would further be useful to explore their relative emphasis on "change" as a desired response in their audience. In what ways do "commercials" and experiment station "bulletins" differ in their efforts to induce change in the audience? for example.

A second area which needs to be explored more fully is the use of the broadcaster's audience image in his day-to-day mass communication. This was to have been one of the facets of this study; but in the pre-test questionnaire, when asked to describe their audience in terms which they might use in a farm department brochure, the farm broadcasters refused to reply. An open-end question in an already lengthy questionnaire may have simply appeared to be too much work. On the other hand, their reluctance may be an indication of the elusive nature of a mass audience and their inability to articulate meaningful descriptions.

This dilemma is certainly not restricted to the broadcaster. An editor of Ladies' Home Journal remarked recently, before a meeting of social science researchers, that he conducts research on the size of his readership, how the audience makes and spends money, and how they read and respond to what is read; but . . .

> how does all this research help determine what I put in my magazine? Very little. It leads inevitably to an editor's idealized perception of his audience, to a gap between perception and reality, to the recognition that the proper editorial goal is to condition appetites as well as feed them. . . .[1]

More research is needed on the origin, function, and changes associated with the audience image in the mind of on-the-air broadcasters. Perhaps the participant-observer technique, coupled with in-depth interviews following a broadcast, would be appropriate methodologies.

A related area for further research is the exploration of the nature, function, and use of audience research. The most frequent use, as observed in this study, has been to take favorable information and publish it, using such information as a sales tool. In radio (81%), and in TV (76%), the farm broadcasters used the survey data in this manner.

One-third mentioned changing format or content as a result of their surveys, while 23% (radio) and 12% (TV) indicated that they had added or dropped farm programs as a result.

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[1]John Mack Carter, "Perceptions of a Mass Audience" in Behavioral Science and the Mass Media. Frederick T. C. Yu (ed.) New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968, p. 203.

Pressure is being brought by the more sophisticated advertising agencies to enlarge the qualititative dimensions of audience research. In the past, the farm director has been able to secure national accounts on the basis of general demographic data made available by the United States Census of Agriculture or broadcasting market reference works. Research is needed on the process of audience research in the mass media, as well as on the use to which such information is being put.

A final suggestion for further research is a follow-up on an observation made in the study of TV programmers' decision-making[2] in which Lewis noted that the programming executive of the larger stations are not so dependent on the comments of sponsors as are the smaller stations. It was suggested that the larger station might be more financially independent of individual sponsor pressures and that it might make decisions on bases other than those attached to the purse-strings. It would be interesting to know in what ways financial security, that is, a history of fully-sponsored farm programming, affects the communicator-audience relationship. Does the farm broadcaster, for example, attend fewer meetings once he has built a faithful retinue of sponsors? Does he reduce the emphasis on service to the sponsor? And do either his descriptions of the audience, or his content

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[2]Lewis, Journal of Broadcasting, p. 81.

designed for the audience, change significantly? The case study approach might be the most fruitful methodological approach in such research.

While these suggestions certainly do not exhaust the needs of research in this area, they do point to the significance of economic matters in broadcast communication. It is hoped that the answers to these intriguing questions will enable broadcast practitioners to increase the effectiveness of their communication, utilizing facts about the process rather than substitute fantasies.

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APPENDIX

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN 48823

DEPARTMENT OF TELEVISION AND RADIO • 322 UNION BUILDING

The information requested from you in the enclosed questionnaire will provide the most comprehensive survey of the U.S. Farm Broadcaster ever compiled. The information, which is being gathered and analyzed in connection with a Ph.D. project, will be presented at the next NAFB convention in Chicago. Also, a summary of the findings will be distributed to all members.

This study of SOME COMMUNICATION HABITS OF FARM BROADCASTERS is conducted after consultation with some sixteen members and officers of the NAFB, but is the idea and responsibility of this one person.

It is believed that this study will be helpful to all Farm Broadcasters who face the problem of encroaching urban influence, which complicates their communication responsibilities and practices. It also will be of aid to those persons working in the developing countries who are facing similar problems. Their populations are primarily rural; yet their broadcasters operate under strong urban influences. Your replies will indicate how U.S. Farm Broadcasters have responded to this shifting rural-urban mixture.

It should take you about 20 minutes to answer the 36 questions. Most require only a simple check-mark. If at all possible, please try to complete the questionnaire in the next 48 hours and return it in the enclosed envelope. Completing this says much for a busy man who makes time to help us solve some of the crucial communication problems of our time.

Warm regards,

Billy

March 1970

SOME COMMUNICATION HABITS OF FARM BROADCASTERS

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Are your farm broadcasts (1) __ commercial or (2) __ non-commercial? Check one.

2. What is the power of your radio station? Check one. (Skip if you use TV only.)

   (1) __ 500 (2) __ 1,000 (3) __ 5,000 (4) __ 10,000 (5) __ 50,000

3. Please identify each program produced by your farm department, inserting the appropriate information in the spaces below. Include programs produced for distribution.

PROGRAM TITLES	DAYS BROADCAST							HOURS		RADIO	TV
	M	T	W	T	F	SA	SU	from	to		

4. How much of your farm department's programming is designed for a non-farm audience? Check separate percentages for radio and TV.

   a. radio: (1) __ 0-24% (2) __ 25-49% (3) __ 50-74% (4) __ 75-100%

   b. TV : (1) __ 0-24% (2) __ 25-49% (3) __ 50-74% (4) __ 75-100%

5. Much of the work that a farm broadcaster does is general preparation for any and all shows that he produces; but, which of the following statements most accurately describes the specific preparation usually made for the average show? Check one statement for radio and one for TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	My secretary, or an assistant, handles most of the day-today details for each show. I usually look over the materials shortly before going on-the-air.
(2)	__	__	Most of the shows follow a regular routine, so I am able to organize each show in a fairly short time.
(3)	__	__	Each show is carefully planned, and many hours of preparation are specifically devoted to the preparation of a definite show.

6. What do you talk most frequently about with people in your station who are not in the farm department? Check one.

   (1) __ sales (2) __ format (3) __ specific program content (4) __ the usual coffee chatter

7. In which of the following areas do you feel your management most wants you to improve? Check one.

   (1) __ production quality (2) __ personal audience contact (3) __ program sponsorship (sales)

   (4) __ content changes (Please specify: _____)

II. This next section asks questions about some of your communication habits which occur while you are on-the-air.

1. As your audience views or listens to your programs, which of the following impressions of the way you conduct your broadcasts are they most likely to get? Check one for radio and one for TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	"The farm broadcaster speaks directly to me most of the time."
(2)	__	__	"The farm broadcaster lets me overhear his conversations with others most of the time."
(3)	__	__	"The farm broadcaster provides the opportunity for others to speak to me most of the time."

2. You speak directly to your audience in several ways. In which of the following ways do you speak most of the time? Check one for radio and one for TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	you speak from notes you have made
(2)	__	__	you speak without notes
(3)	__	__	you read printed material "as is"
(4)	__	__	you re-word printed material

3. You have other people on your programs from time to time. What arrangements are made? Check as many as are applicable, for radio and TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	you enlist regular participants who are scheduled for indefinite periods of time
(2)	__	__	you contact participants on a weekly or monthly basis
(3)	__	__	you arrange regular time slots but let someone outside the station select the participants

4. How are these participants usually handled? Check one.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	you introduce them but usually allow them to present their material uninterrupted
(2)	__	__	you continuously interact with them

III. This section asks questions about you and your audience.

1. In which of the following ways does your audience most frequently participate in your programs? Check one for radio and one for TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	they send in announcements of meetings
(2)	__	__	they request information which is then given on-the-air
(3)	__	__	they are mentioned or interviewed because they are newsworthy enough
(4)	__	__	they are part of the "live" audience present during remote broadcasts

2. How useful are the following sources in forming a picture of your audience? Indicate the relative usefulness of each source by placing check marks on the scale provided for each.

		a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	
(1) mail requests	USEFUL	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT USEFUL
(2) phone calls	USEFUL	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT USEFUL
(3) reports from sponsors	USEFUL	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT USEFUL
(4) comments at meetings	USEFUL	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT USEFUL
(5) general experience	USEFUL	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT USEFUL
(6) audience surveys	USEFUL	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT USEFUL

3. Which of the following surveys have you had access to in the past five years? Check all appropriate items.

(1) professionally-administered audience survey	__	(4) station-administered audience survey	__
(2) 1967 NAFB Farm Radio Study	__	(5) U.S. Census of Agriculture data	__
(3) Standard Rate & Data	__	(6) no access to any survey information	__

4. What use has been made of the audience survey information? Check all appropriate items.

(1) __ no use was made
(2) __ farm programs were added __ or dropped __
(3) __ formats and content were changed
(4) __ sales department used the information
(5) __ farm department published the information

5. What percentage of your audience, would you guess, does not live on a farm? Check one for radio and one for TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	0-25%
(2)	__	__	26-50%
(3)	__	__	51-75%
(4)	__	__	76-99%

6. Which of the following accounts most for the size of your non-farm audience? Check one for radio and one for TV.

	Radio	TV			Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	time of the day your show is on	(3)	__	__	coverage area of broadcast signal
(2)	__	__	program content and orientation	(4)	__	__	location in the program schedule

IV. If your station is non-commercial, omit this section and go on to section V. This section asks questions about your communication habits in the area of sales, sponsors, and commercials.

1. To what extent are you personally involved in sales? Check only one.

(1) __ no involvement (2) __ occasionally service accounts (3) __ extensive sales responsibility

2. How important are the following services to your sponsors? Indicate the relative importance of each by checking the scale provided for each service.

		a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	
(1) presenting the commercials yourself.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT IMPORT.
(2) prohibiting all competing accounts.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT IMPORT.
(3) giving free announcements about sponsor events.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT IMPORT.
(4) making appearances for all sponsor events.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT IMPORT.
(5) delivering the largest possible audience.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT IMPORT.
(6) providing sponsor information about the audience....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	NOT IMPORT.

3. How much of your farm programming is usually sold? Check one for radio and one for TV.

Radio.....(1) __ less than 50% (2) __ 50-60% (3) __ 60-70% (4) __ 70-80% (5) __ 80-90% (6) __ 90-100%

TV.....(1) __ less than 50% (2) __ 50-60% (3) __ 60-70% (4) __ 70-80% (5) __ 80-90% (6) __ 90-100%

4. What is the biggest reason for your station's continuing with farm broadcasting? Check one for radio: one for TV.

	Radio	TV	
(1)	__	__	promises to the FCC: needed for license renewal
(2)	__	__	it is a money-making venture
(3)	__	__	farmers constitute a majority in your coverage area
(4)	__	__	there's no good way to fire a man who's done so well for so long

V. This section asks questions about your communication habits at the meetings you attend.

1. As a farm broadcaster, how many meetings have you averaged per week? Insert a number in each space.

(1) _____ meetings in the past year or so (2) _____ meetings when you first began

2. Are you the top man on your station's farm staff? Check one.

(1) __ yes (2) __ no (PLEASE SPECIFY: _____)

3. You attend some kinds of meetings more frequently than others. Rank the following 1-2-3 in order of frequency.

(1) consumer-related meetings ____ (2) producer-related meetings ____ (3) sponsor-related meetings ____

4. What do you do most frequently at these meetings? Check only one item.

(1) __ speak or emcee (3) __ mingle informally (5) __ make presentations

(2) __ record or film interviews (4) __ take notes (6) __ enlarge acquaintances

5. How important is each of the following possible reasons for your going to these meetings? Check each item.

		a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	
(1) to gather information for your broadcasts.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	UNIMPORTANT
(2) to build an audience "by being seen".....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	UNIMPORTANT
(3) to contact current or potential sponsors.....	VERY IMPORTANT	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	UNIMPORTANT

6. How do you compare yourself with the majority of persons who attend these meetings? Check each item.

More	Less	Same		More	Less	Same	
__	__	__	(1) in age	__	__	__	(3) in income
__	__	__	(2) in education	__	__	__	(4) in religious commitment

VI. In this final section you are asked some background questions about yourself.

1. Your age is in the: (1) __ 20's (2) __ 30's (3) __ 40's (4) __ 50's (5) __ 60's (6) __ 70's. Check one.

2. Your highest year of formal education: (Circle only one number)

(1) High school 9 10 11 12 (2) College 1 2 3 4 (3) Graduate school 1 2 3

3. What was your father's primary occupation at the time you left home? Check only one.

(1) __ farmer/rancher (2) __ urban employee (3) __ other (SPECIFY:_____)

4. What was the last job you had before becoming a farm broadcaster? Please be as specific as possible. _____

_____

5. How many years have you been a farm broadcaster? _____ years. At your present station? _____ years.

6. What is the nature of the property on which you live now? Check only one.

(1) __ suburban acreage (2) __ small town lot (3) __ city lot (4) __ farm or ranch

7. What honor or award have you received of which you are most proud? Please be as specific as possible.

_____

8. What are the three best indications of your success as a farm broadcaster? There are probably many, but choose the three which you think best tells the story.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

9. How do you rate yourself on the following items. Check each item.

		a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	
(1) expertise in agricultural knowledge.....	HI	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	LOW
(2) salesmanship.....	HI	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	LOW
(3) skill as an entertainer.....	HI	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	LOW
(4) face-to-face contacts with your audience.....	HI	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	LOW
(5) skill as a newsman.....	HI	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	LOW
(6) polish in program production & preparation.....	HI	__	__	__	__	__	__	__	LOW

COMPLETING THIS BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE SAYS MUCH FOR A BUSY MAN WHO MAKES TIME TO EVALUATE HIS LIFE'S WORK. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SPLENDID COOPERATION. A SUMMARY OF NAFB'S COMMUNICATION HABITS WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE NEXT CHICAGO CONVENTION.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN 48823

DEPARTMENT OF TELEVISION AND RADIO · 322 UNION BUILDING

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A couple weeks ago I sent a questionnaire across the desk of 179 farm broadcasters. As of April 1, eighty-six of these men have returned theirs to me. If you have just put yours in the mail, then ignore this note and accept my sincere thanks for your help.

If, on the other hand, you intended to take the 20 minutes to make the necessary check marks, but somehow mislaid the questionnaire in the shuffle, I've enclosed another one for you.

Your participation provides us with vital information about how Farm Broadcasters are responding to population and audience shifts. The knowledge gained will be sent to you and to persons working with similar problems in the developing countries.

I know you must want to have a part in this vital undertaking.

Warm regards,

Billy Wolfe
April 1, 1970