

# **Media Uses and Gratifications: A Review**

**By Bernard Nnamdi Emenyeonu**

## **Abstract**

The issues of how the media affect people, and what people do with the media have presented perennial and perplexing questions for communication scholars. Some of the research results in these areas are more controversial than useful. Uses and gratification studies straddle the two domains of media effects and people's employment of the media. The field of gratifications research holds great promise in the continual search for comprehensive knowledge on how and why we use the media. Drawing from a wide range of local and international literature, this unit presents copious evidence to show that gratifications research has universal application in many contexts, including development communication.

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# **Utilité et Satisfaction Tirées des Médias: Revue**

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## **Résumé**

Les problèmes de savoir l'effet qu'ont les média sur les gens et ce que les gens font des média ont toujours et de façon embarrassante retenu l'attention des spécialistes de la communication. Certains résultats de recherche dans ces domaines sont plus objet de polémiques qu'utiles. Des usages et des études d'évaluation touchent les deux domaines à savoir l'effet des média et l'emploi des médias par le public. Le domaine de la recherche / évaluation est très promettant dans la recherche permanente pour savoir à fond comment et pourquoi nous utilisons les média. A partir d'un large éventail de documents produits aux niveaux local et international, cet article présente suffisamment de preuves qui montrent que la recherche / évaluation. Peut être appliquée universellement dans beaucoup de situations, y compris en communication au service du développement.

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## Introduction

Following widespread disillusionment and disagreement over the primordial communication paradigms which, for the most part, probed what the communication media did to people, and conclusions that the people were a mass of monolithic, passive and gullible receptacles of any communication cue that came their way, the limited effects model emerged as a more acceptable explanation of communication effects, influence and behaviour. As a sharp departure from the past, one of the new models that were to emerge under the limited effects school proffered a new profile of the receiver as an active and discerning member of the audience who selectively resorted to communications and media which are most likely to fulfill his/her communication needs (Lometti, Reeves and Bybee, 1979).

The mass media, especially in an era of a rapid rate of media saturation, cannot afford to be homogeneous in structure and quality of contents of programmes of each medium as Health (1968) noted, are most likely to give it a unique personality. Due to these distinguishing characteristics, the audience is provided with an opportunity to make a wide range of media selections. Such choices could be between one newspaper and another, between a gossip magazine and an elite news magazine, between two or more radio stations, between radio and television, and among various television stations in a locality or among various contents in a medium.

This approach to the study of the media behaviour of individuals which posits that people bend the media to their needs more readily than the media overpower them, (Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1973) and which is known as the *Uses and Gratification Research* is the subject explored in this paper. The aim is to present a thorough review of the body of literature available in uses and gratifications research beginning from the earliest research efforts to the present day approaches with a view to

highlighting the methodological evolutions in this area of communication theory formation.

### **Antecedents in the Evolution of the Uses and Gratification Model of Communication Research**

Studies which can be incontrovertibly referred to as the forerunners of the uses and gratifications research were largely functionalist and psychological in content and devoid of any intention to measure media or communication gratifications. The functionalist studies were, for the most part, aimed at merely eliciting media functions from respondents through the use of open-ended questionnaires. Herzog (1941), for example, requested a sample of television viewers to list the benefits they derived from watching soap operas while Suchman (1942) investigated his respondents' motives for developing interest in serious music programmes on radio. In their own study, Wolfe and Fiske (1949) focused on children and why they had an avid appetite for comics. Yet under the functionalist approach, Berelson (1949) studied the functions of newspaper reading. In each of these enquiries, a list of roles played by certain specific contents or media (as mentioned by respondents) was recorded. The modal responses at that time included obtaining information or advice for daily living, providing a framework for one's day, preparing oneself for the demands of upward mobility, and being reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974).

From the psychological front came studies such as those of Fromm (1941) which came out with the psychological functions of "cat and mouse" movies, and Warner and Henry (1948) who reported the status-giving functions of soap operas. The more complex of these psychological studies dwelt on an investigation between media use and psychological or social attributes such as social status, social integration or isolation and psychological disposition. For example, Rileys (1951) showed that children who were well integrated with their peers used adventure stories



differently from their mates who were socially isolated. Also on this plane, Friedson (1953) and Johnstone (1961) in their separate studies reported that relative force of attachment to parents and peers could influence differential patterns of media preferences. In some other researches which were carried out at different times but with similar objectives, Riaccoby (1954), Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961) and Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince (1958) investigated the level of association between child acceptance (at home and school) and patterns of media exposure. Furthermore, Horton and Wohl (1956) tried to determine the para-social functions of the media for isolated people while Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) suggested that opinion leaders had great attentiveness to the media, largely for purposes of fulfilling the expectations of their followers' value orientations.

Of all these antecedents to the real Uses and Gratifications studies, Atkins (1973) seems to have come most closely to terms with the functionalist perspective of communication behaviour when he proposed the "Instrumental Utilities and Information Seeking" model. In it he deposed that "an individual will select a media message when the perceived reward value is greater than the efforts expended in gaining it".

A common denominator of these early research efforts was that they suggested that people with different value orientations were likely to use the media differently. Thus, though they were not elementally designed to measure gratifications, and were fraught with serious methodological constraints (as will be examined later), these studies were enormously inspirational to the modern-day enquirers of media uses and gratifications.

### **Uses and Gratification Studies Today: A Compendium of Methodological Innovations**

The floodgate to a flurry of deliberate empirical enquiries on the uses and gratifications paradigm was opened by the pioneering works of Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in the early 1970s (Katz, 1979). Ever since then, that flurry has spread

apace to various parts of the world.

A broad overview of the studies reveals a predominant concentration in the areas of media use or functions as well as programme choice. Some other studies have investigated relationships such as those existing between programme type or medium and uses, between specific needs and extent of gratification, as well as between demographic and psychographic variables on one hand, and viewing or reading habits, on the other hand.

Apparently seeking new routes to media gratifications research, some researchers have evolved the novel methodological design whereby gratifications sought by individuals are correlated with gratifications they obtained while others have taken the "deprivation approach" by which they aim at indirectly measuring gratifications through deprivations suffered in the absence of the relevant media or contents. In addition to all the above, there are studies on factors intervening in individual programme selection.

The typology of uses and gratifications studies is not easily exhaustible. For the purpose of this paper, an attempt will be made to reflect most of the identified typologies in the review that now follows, if only as an insight into the vast and fecund field of gratifications research.

### **Media Usage or Function and Content Choice**

The curiosity over why people patronize the mass media or what benefits they seek from media use has generated enormous empirical activism among communication researchers.

Way back in the 1940s, Reader (1941) undertook a survey of subscribers of two US rural magazines - *The Farm Science Reporter* and *Iowa Farm Economist* - in which 70 per cent of his respondents indicated their preference for illustrated articles, thus establishing the popularity of pictures on publications. A similar finding emerged from Swanson's (1955) study of US dailies readers, using the contents of 130 US dailies. He grouped



all newspaper contents under two broad classes of form - whether the content was a photograph, a cartoon, a feature, an advert etc. - and subject matter topics such as health, crime, science etc. He found that relative to form, cartoons and photographs were most read while literary materials, general news and non-news information were the least read. Under subject matter, it was found that the following topics were read: war, defence, fire disasters, human interest, weather, individuals, major crimes, social significance, consumer information and scientific information, in that order of preference. The least read subjects were finance, agriculture, country correspondence, religion/church/morals, minor crimes, governments, sports, fine art/music/literature, social relation and taxes.

Berelson (1954) had also identified the following as specific reasons why people read newspapers:

- information and interpretation, especially in public affairs,
- practical aid to living
- escape (through comics and human interest materials)
- general vicarious feelings derived from sensational stories, scandals and gossip.

In a similar investigation of the utilitarian underpinnings of media use, Atkin (1972) reported that the conversational usefulness in news stories for purposes of interaction with family, friends, co-workers and acquaintances was prominent among other interpersonal factors that motivated media exposure among most media users. The study done by Wang (1977) had similar results. She examined factors responsible for differential selection of newspaper contents among readers and discovered that people tend to read the items which they perceived to be of most utility to them. Specifically, her findings indicated that hospital reports, obituaries, local news and grocery advertisements, in that order, were perceived by the respondents she studied to have the greatest utility. National and international news items read were those the reader related to himself, his relations or his locality. Feature articles were read for information and entertainment.

Beside the gratifications so far identified in the above studies, people patronize the mass media for guidance. This was demonstrated in a study of the input of information to economic development among a sample of Columbia farmers (Grunig, 1960). This study suggested that information-seeking among the respondents was associated with problem-solving, decision-making and good management.

Adopting a new methodological conceptualisation in the determination of functions of media use, Jeffers (1975) divided the goals of media behaviour into three, namely:

a) Media-seeking goal - the situation in which the individual is merely attracted to the media for the media's own sake without regard to content, needs or any other reason.

b) Content-seeking goal - media behaviour influenced by specific contents.

c) Non-seeking - where the individual makes no deliberate attempt towards media consumption. (What he gets is thrust upon him by relations and associates in daily interactions).

Two specific results emerged from Jeffer's analysis. Television viewing was found to be three-quarters content-seeking while two-thirds of newspaper reading was motivated by media-seeking (just for the sake of newspaper reading). Furthermore, a larger percentage of younger people were found to expose themselves to the mass media for media-seeking while middle-aged people tended toward mixed patterns of media-seeking and content-seeking. The elderly people tended most consistently toward content-seeking.

Another research which involved a similar methodological pattern of isolation of media variables was carried out by Rubin and Pearse (1987). In a study of "Audience Activity and TV News Gratification", they established two basic patterns of media use, namely:

a) Ritualized/Non-serious uses - media use out of mere habit for purposes such as relaxation, time-filling and pass-time. This, according to their findings, was common among children and socially apathetic adults.



b) Instrumental/serious use – intentional, selective and purposive use of the media for specific goals such as excitement or entertaining information.

Perhaps the most comprehensive list of motives for media use among people was derived from Blumler and McQuail's (1968) study. They reported that media use is motivated by some or all of the following gratifications: surveillance, guidance, anticipated communication, excitement, reinforcement and so on. The apparent lapse in such a listing is that the dominant gratification is not conclusively determined.

As if taking up the challenge to plug that hole, Becker (1978) sought to determine which gratifications were rated highest or most salient among media users. Such gratifications as mentioned by the respondents he studied were surveillance and guidance. Other gratifications like reinforcement, excitement and communicatory utility received less rating.

The investigation of interaction between personal needs and media use emerged as a more complex method of generating reliable data on media use or functions. The novelty in this design was to determine not just what gratifications motivated media use but to trace which media were used to obtain satisfaction for which needs by what group of people. The proponents of this approach, Wilhoit and de Bock (1980) undertook a survey of 786 American and 413 Dutch residents, using well-structured questionnaires aimed at measuring the saliences of various needs, the most preferred medium for each need, frequency of media use to gratify needs and levels of satisfaction obtained from the mass media.

They found that the urge to keep tabs on issues and the need for relaxation were the most salient for both American and Dutch samples. Among the Dutch respondents, these two needs were closely followed by the need to be entertained and the need to monitor other people's opinions. In the American sample, the need to have influence ranked second after the first two needs. Furthermore, television was found to be the most frequently used in search of gratification of four out of six needs in the



Dutch sample and four out of nine needs in the American. In terms of the need to monitor other's opinions, the Dutch relied on television while the Americans chose both television and newspapers. Conversely, Americans used both newspapers and television for the need to have influence while the Dutch used newspapers only. Generally, television was found to be more sought after for satisfaction of cognitive and personal identity in the Netherlands than in the United States.

Larsen's (1982 ) study of media use was also designed after Wilhoit and de Bock's approach. In the study which dwelt on university students, he reported that newspapers took a pre-eminent position as a source of information to the students on national news; the phonograph was the primary medium for relaxation and enjoyment while television ranked highest as a source of information on international news and as a medium for excitement, entertainment, companionship and escape.

### **The Media Deprivations Approach**

Uses and gratifications research which used media deprivation for a to explore its implications for functionality and media dependence seems to have been triggered by Berelson's (1949) study of what New Yorkers missed when their favourite newspapers were not on the newsstands. Newspapers, according to his discovery, served more diversionary purposes than cognitive ones. This conclusion was based on the finding that the respondents could not point fingers to specific content which they missed. They could only explain how disoriented they were due to the absence of the favoured papers. Other works whose methodology followed the deprivation approach were done by Kimball, 1959; Tan, 1977; de Bock, 1980; and Cohen, 1981, and Windahl, Hojerback and Hedinsson (1986). Seizing the opportunity offered by striking media workers in Sweden, the trio studied the degree of dependence on and affinity for television of adolescents in the city of Vaxjo. About 62 per cent of their respondents indicated they were deprived by the strike.



## **Democratic/Psychographic Factors and Patterns of Programme Choice**

The investigation of patterns of programme choice by viewers based on certain factors constitutes another area of profound research interest in the entire uses and gratifications studies. The mediating factors include demographic and psychographic variables, availability of viewers for programmes they prefer, the viewer's environment and the scheduling patterns of television stations.

Of all these, there have emerged two dominant perspectives on programme choice. The one is premised on the uses and gratifications approach – the assumption that “programme choice is a rational action motivated by expectancy of gratification” (Ogunmodede, 1988). In other words, programme selection would be influenced by programme contents which best satisfy specific needs. The other dwells on models of choice in which individual choice is influenced by available programme content.

Following loud protests over the lack of an empirically established causal link between programme preference and choice, Webster and Wakshlagh (1982) diverted their own attention to the province of factors intervening between individual preference and final choice (in the context of viewing programmes). The two researchers analyzed the influence of group viewing on programme choice by identifying and isolating both solitary and group viewing and by examining the effect of each pattern on programme type loyalty. (Programme type loyalty entails a tendency for viewers to either seek out or avoid programmes) they found that group viewing alone did not abate programme type loyalty. However, when heads of households viewed programmes with a group whose composition varied, programme type loyalty decreased. In a related study, Tereza Domzal and Jerome Kernan (1983) sought to determine the impact of television audience segmentation according to need gratification instead of demographics on programme choice. The assumption here was that programme choice was contingent on information

about what needs television fulfilled and what satisfaction it brought. They re-established the existence of three classes of viewers already predicted by Glick and Levy (1962). These classes are those who accommodate it.

Each of these classes selected programmes differently though the entire sample embodying all three classes was homogeneous.

Contributing to the body of findings in this area, McDonald (1986) hypothesized that other household members would influence the individual's choice of television programmes watched by an individual. In the study, viewing patterns as well as factors predicting television viewing were examined. Also examined were factors such as extent of peer co-viewing and viewing-inertia. The analysis showed that viewing was more likely done with people similar to one eg. mates or peers. The conclusion, therefore, was that co-viewing may be a salient factor in viewing pattern or programme selection.

Still on the psychographic perspective, some researchers have devoted efforts to the investigation of the influence of the lifestyle on viewing patterns. Studies such as those done by Eastman, 1979 and 1986 analyzed how the psychographic variable of light/heavy viewing affects what is viewed or is affected by already set patterns of viewing.

### **Factors Affecting Individual Media Use or Content Selection**

Research endeavours in this direction were inspired by earlier studies, especially in the 1930s, which found non-use of media among people of lower socio-economic status (Gallup, 1930; Nafzinger, 1930). This situation was explained to have arisen from the lack of resources and cognitive skills due to low education and the lack of social contacts and leisure time on the part of the low socio-economic people. Schramm and White (1949) confirmed the above result. In their analysis of factors influencing newspaper readership, they reported that, in general readership had a positive association with education, age and economic status. Other studies by Katz et al. 1973, 1974;



Okpata, 1980, and Burgoon 1980, all generated similar findings. But Chaffe and Choe (1981) disagreed with the foregoing results. They contended that the traditional structural factors have become inadequate explanations of newspaper readership, was declining simultaneously with a remarkable rise in levels of education and economic prosperity. Based on their analysis, they suggested three "dynamic" factors which either individually or co-jointly determined media use and non-use. These were:

a) Traditional structural factors – those which arose from the individual's location within the social structure and which were generally beyond his control, for example, income, age, and education.

b) Transitional factors – those which arose from the individual's life cycle changes such as marital status, parental status, residence etc. Those whose pattern of media use were not influenced by structural changes (a) above might be affected by transitional variables.

c) Self-imposed factors - these were residing in the individual's personality, relating in particular to his interest or apathy in the services offered by the mass media.

The environmental factor as a determinant of media use was introduced by Cobb (1986). She reported that environmental factors were the most influential in newspaper usage among young persons. For adolescents, the following predictors of newspaper readership were listed:

- Perception of time to read the newspaper.
- Availability of newspaper in the home.
- Usage of other media.
- Perception of time spent by parents in newspaper reading.
- Newspaper-related attitudes.
- Demographics (race, sex and grades).

Contrary to popular findings in this area, Jeffers' (1975 )

of functions of media behaviour found among other things that education, age, sex and marital status did not appear to be valid indicators of individual media consumption patterns in several media. This 'iconoclastic' finding conflicted directly with results of Lyness (1952) and Schramm and White (1949). The former reported that attention given to the mass media increased with age and that boys and girls showed a marked preference for different subject matters across different media while the latter showed that age strongly determined preference for different media contents.

### **Gratifications Sought Versus Gratifications Obtained**

Employing the discrepancy model which holds that exposure to a medium is dependent on the absolute discrepancy between the gratifications which the individual is seeking and the extent to which he believes he is obtaining them, Palmgreen et al (1979) led the way in the "Gratifications Sought - Gratifications Obtained (G.S. - G.O) model of gratifications research. The first in the series of G.S - G.O studies was the study of exposure to the Kentucky Educational Television (KET). Listing eight gratifications said to be of salience to most television viewers, the researchers asked their subjects to assess the extent to which KET had provided or satisfied those needs for them. Those who had not been viewing KET were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought it would satisfy those needs. Both viewers and non-viewers said they were getting less than they expected from KET especially in terms of relaxation, forgetting of problems, passing time and companionship. Thus, from this approach, it was concluded that people do not at all times get the amount of gratification they seek from television.

Taking a cue from this study but inculcating some modifications in relation to type of programme, political communication and specific programmes, other measurements including those of the proponents have yielded an avalanche of findings in the GS - G.O model. Such studies include Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1980; Palmgreen, Rayburn and Wenner, 1981; McLeod, Bybee



and Durall, 1982; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1982, 1983; Wenner, 1982; and Rayburn, Palmgreen and Acker, 1984.

### **Local Studies**

The review presented so far reveals a preponderance of studies done abroad, the United States in particular. This has been done deliberately as a means of isolating indigenous research efforts with a view to giving them a special play which can enable one to assess how fertile or fetid the area is.

Osadolor et al (1984) investigated media use among urban youths in Nigeria. Generally, the youths preferred television to newspaper or radio. In all the media, however, the contents mostly cherished by the youths were current affairs, news and political debates.

Another urban-based study of uses and gratifications was done by Nwuneli (1984) who sought to probe media usage by the urban poor. A major finding of this survey was that income and education were associated with media exposure. In particular, film viewing and education had no association.

In his own study, Olumuyiwa (1986) surveyed readership of evening newspapers among residents of Lagos State and found that cartoons rated highest on a scale of 21 news and feature items.

Still on audience preference of media contents, Egbuonu (1986), using subject matter as criteria, reported that among income staff, (US\$ 09 and above) people on campus prefer newspaper matters dealing with government, politics and economics in that order. Science, medicine, law, technical and financial market reports were least preferred. In the same vein, Amadi (1986) studied magazine preferences among students of the University of Nigeria. The kinds of articles most enjoyed by the students were found to be news and interpretation of trends and events, reports on industry and commerce, and suggestions on how to do things. Contrary to expectations, romance magazines were not preferred to serious news magazines.

Investigating uses and gratifications of the print media seems



to have attracted the fancy of many local researchers as can be seen from the foregoing. Enemuoh (1988) added to this area with his analysis of economic news items and needs gratification of newspaper readers. Like Berelson, he asked the question, What would newspaper readers miss if all economic news contents of the newspapers were expunged? Labour and employment attracted the highest readership by respondents and the reasons for reading economic items were indicated in this order of preference: To know what is happening (surveillance), to be able to discuss with family and friends (communicatory utility), to know what to gain personally (personal utility), to feel that the economy is picking up (reinforcement).

Nwanruo (1989) in her own study sought to determine the needs readers expect to satisfy by perusing religious publications, using *The Leader* as an example. *The Leader*, she discovered was widely read with a majority of these readers indicating that they enjoyed reading religious news content. This item was followed by news on government and politics. As to whether these needs are satisfied by the newspaper, Nwanruo concluded that the fact that a majority of the readers expressed loyalty to the paper and also indicated they would feel a loss any time they missed it, meant that *The Leader* satisfied those needs.

Anazonwu (1989) also analyzed readers' attitudes to magazines in terms of what gratifications they seek from specie of the print media. Most significant in his findings were the associations between age, socio-economic status and gender with readership of magazines in Nigeria.

So far for the print media. Turning the search-light on the electronic media, Amu-Nnadi et al (1986) analyzed the soap opera, "Mirror in the Sun" and found that a generality of Nigerian university students derived satisfaction from the programme with more of the females than the males rating it as highly entertaining.

In a more detailed study, Ogunmodede (1988) explored the viewing habits of Nigerian adults. Nigerian adults, she discovered, put television to the following uses: knowing what others think, entertainment, obtaining up-to-date information, relax-



ation, fighting loneliness, passing time and having influence in that order. The gratification manifestly obtained from television primarily as entertainment medium. Most of them also actively seek variety on their sets by frequently moving their dials to other stations where they perceive their needs are better served. Finally, she found that a majority of her respondents had a positive attitude towards state television stations but a negative one towards NTA.

The most recent study on uses and gratifications seems to be Oyinatumba's (1992) examination of gratifications sought by readers of Shell Development Company house journal. Using five gratifications statements, a simplified version of Becker's (1974) adaptation of the original Blumler and McQuail model, she found that surveillance (to know what is happening in the company) ranked highest among management and non-management staff, followed by guidance, reinforcement, communicatory utility and excitement in that order.

Some of the resounding weaknesses identifiable in uses and gratifications studies are as follows:

- 1) Most uses and gratifications studies were contented with merely eliciting statements about media gratifications from respondents, using unstructured instruments. No attempt was made to explore the links between the gratifications so detected and the psychological or sociological origins of the needs satisfied. Added to this is the lapse that there has been much investigation on the inter-relationships among the various media gratifications have not been valid enough to formulate theoretical statements.
- 2) In most studies, the gratifications associated with various media were merely inferred not explored.
- 3) A majority of studies have simply listed catalogues of gratifications without conclusively determining the dominant ones among the lot
- 4) The fact that people are active rather than passive in consumption of media fare seems to be under-estimated or even totally ignored in most uses and gratifications designs. There are attempts to investigate, identify and

explain the way in which persons use and interpret the content of messages and if these interpretations result in expected gratifications.

- 5) Still on the active audience, the notion of "activeness" presupposes utility (that mass communication has uses for people), intentionality (that media consumption is directed by prior motivation) and selectivity (that media behaviour reflects prior interests and preferences). These three milestones have not been fully explored in concert or separately with a view to explaining their implications for the media in uses and gratifications studies.
- 6) Related to the above, the question of the differential level of media audience activity has not been answered. In other words, it has not been possible to say with precision which medium offers or induces a high level of "audience activeness" than the others and in what contexts.
- 7) A major conceptual weakness in uses and gratifications measurements is that what constitutes or are components of the uses and gratifications are largely shrouded in ambivalence. Major concepts such as gratification, need, media use, for example, are not clearly operationalized in most studies.
- 8) Moreover, the relationship between message content and need satisfaction has not been cast in a testable format. These and other weaknesses have attracted scathing criticisms to uses and gratifications research. Becker (1979) for example, dismissed uses and gratifications research as both an unexamined methodology and atheoretical list of needs and values because no attempt was made to identify the gratification directly traceable to those needs in addition to the fact that the uses and gratifications studies lack a discernible theoretical framework. Another critic, Blumler (1979) saw the theory as "an accounting system", while Swanson (1979) described it as a jumble of nomenclature randomly employed and which fails to pursue its basic principle to its logical conclusion.



Regardless of its methodological constraints and the ensuing criticisms, uses and gratifications research cannot be immediately consigned to the wastebin. Even when it is fraught with imperfections, the theory has some practical relevance in both media management and development communication, especially in developing nations.

Relative to media management, the theory facilitates comparisons among different media and types of content in audience related terms rather than in technological, ideological, aesthetic or other elitist terms.

Furthermore, in so far as the theory simply aims at explaining the way in which individuals use communication among other resources to satisfy their needs or to achieve their goals, uses and gratifications studies offer highly instructive lessons to media managers and information policy-makers. Realising that audiences are active, these communication designers cannot but strive to give the audience what will be of benefit or utility to it. The need to do this has been all the more accentuated by the present climate of sporadic privatisation of the media in developing nations and the corresponding competition.

More than ever before, the global community predicted by Marshall McLuhan several decades ago is fastly becoming a reality in the present day. This is due largely to the preponderance of new communication technologies. The satellite disc for example, has invaded all crannies of developing countries. Very soon, the foreign programmes it carries will also invade homes, leaving our local stations and programmes a desolate endangered species. Through uses and gratifications surveys, this disaster can be averted. By having a firm grasp of the peculiar needs of readers, listeners and viewers in their various locations, mainly urban and rural, local media can then strive to provide such needs.

In terms, of effective use of the media for development communication, uses and gratifications results are equally relevant. As Leuven (1981) has noted, a comparison of the values profiles of the target audience makes it possible to

understand how different message categories appear to specialize in the enhancement of certain values. This in turn, leads to the consideration of the relative suitability of different media for different target audience. And this offers a very essential strategy for both development agents and development communication policy-makers.

Finally, even if it is largely a listing of audience preference for media, contents, needs felt, gratifications sought for, deprivations suffered, uses and gratifications research, at least created the awareness that how messages and media are used constitutes an intervening variable in the process of effects. This is one lesson development communicators cannot ignore in their profuse dissemination of development ideas through the mass media.

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