

Uses & Gratifications Theory

People *use* the media to fulfill certain *gratifications* (needs).



Uses and Gratifications Theory

How and why we make our choices for media consumption?

1. About theory

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) proposes that people choose to consume certain kinds of media because they expect to obtain specific gratifications as a result of those selections.

In contrast to other theories about media, UGT focuses on the media consumer rather than the media itself or the messages the media conveys.

While other theories see people as passive recipients of media messages, UGT sees people as active consumers of media who are aware of the reasons they choose to consume media.

2. History of Theory

The origins of UGT can be traced back to the 1940s when communication scholars initially sought to study why specific media and content appealed to different people. The theory was further expanded in the 1970s when researchers started examining not just the gratifications that consumers sought but the gratifications they actually obtained.

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

The theory is often credited to Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz's work in 1974. Uses and gratifications theory, first advanced in the 1940s by Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1944), attempts to explain the reasons people use mass media and the different types



Elihu Katz

of gratification they receive from it. Gratifications, simply stated, are rewards or satisfactions obtained by the individual. The theory relies on the belief that the audience is not merely a group of passive media consumers, but that they play an active role in selecting different media to meet their needs (Infante, Rancer & Womack, 1997; Lowery & De Fleur, 1983). The theory came into prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s at a time when researchers realized that traditional effects theories did not adequately explain audience experiences with mass media (Blumler, 1979; Swanson, 1979).

Jay G Blumler



3. Assumptions of Uses and Gratifications Theory

Based on these notions, uses and gratifications theory specifies a set of five assumptions about media consumption.

The assumptions are:

- A. Media use is **motivated** and goal-oriented. People always have a reason for consuming media, even if it's simply habit or entertainment.
- B. People select media based on their **expectation** that it will satisfy specific wants and **needs**.
- C. Media use is driven by individual social and psychological **factors**.

D. Media compete with other forms of communication, especially in-person communication, for selection and use in the fulfillment of needs and desires.

E. Because people are **active** media users, media messages don't exert especially strong effects on people.

4. Needs gratified by media use

- **Cognitive needs**, or the need to acquire information and knowledge or improve understanding
- **Affective needs**, or the need to have aesthetic or emotional experiences, or the need to strengthen confidence, status, or credibility, the need to relax...
- **Social integrative needs**, or the need to strengthen relationships with friends and family (Vinney, 2024)

Exercise 1

- What is the main idea of uses and gratifications theory?
- Talk about the influence in this theory ?
- When did the theory appear and who are its scientists?
- What does the theory focus on?
- What are the new ideas that the theory brings?
- What types of gratifications do the media achieve according to the theory?

Exercise 2

- Extract some terms of the theory and then translate them into Arabic
- Translate to Arabic:

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

users as passive– users as active agents who have control over their media consumption.– aware of their reasons for selecting different media options.– the satisfaction–desires

Exercise 3

Find the missing word on followings sentences

- ✚ Mediais goal-directed. People are motivated to consume media.
- ✚ Media is selected based on the expectation that it will satisfy specific and desires.
- ✚ Media influence on behavior is filtered through social and psychological Thus, personality and social context impact the media choices one makes and one's interpretation of media messages.

Exercise 4

Classify the following terms in the table :

Motivations– consuming media– companionship– passing the time– choices– entertainment

uses	gratifications