A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON OF MEDIA USES AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

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摘要

媒介使用與滿足說是近年相當受重視的傳播理論假說。本研究欲以此說為基礎，來比較中美兩國的媒介暴露、滿足尋求、是否避免媒介內容與其國際政治知識的相關程度。結果發現中美受測者閱讀報紙的時間與其國際政治知識的多寡無關，但中國人收視電視時間與其國際政治知識呈正相關。對美國受測者而言，其滿足需求與各種新聞的收視和其國際政治知識呈正相關，亦即其愈有媒介的需求，愈會從各種不同媒介內容中尋求滿足，而國際政治的知識程度愈高。但對中國受試者而言，使用滿足說、媒介暴露與其國際政治知識的多寡之相關並不清楚，值得更進一步的探討。

ABSTRACT

As a postindustrial society, the United States has one of the most developed media systems in the world. Taiwan, on the other hand, is a developing country with a remarkable success in the economic and social development which contribute to the establishment of a “media-rich” society. This study attempted to examine the media exposure, gratifications sought and avoidance behavior considered relevant to international political knowledge of 225 American residents at Chicago and 234 Chinese living at Taipei, Taiwan.

One purpose of this study was to explore empirical aspects of the media uses and gratifications typologies related to international news in the United States and Taiwan. A factor analysis had produced three factor solutions for both samples, which were labelled avoidance, communication utility and surveillance.

This study also hypothesized that media use, gratifications and avoidances of international news was related to levels of knowledge of international affairs. This study found no relationship between respondents’ newspaper exposure time and their knowledge of international affairs for either sample. But there was a positive relationship between Chinese respondents’ television exposure time and the international political knowledge.

The results appeared to coincide with the findings of McLeod et al. and Becker, who suggest that media gratifications and avoidances are not merely surrogates for media use or exposure. This study confirmed that gratification needs predicted the exposure of various kinds of news and knowledge positively and avoidances in the opposite direction for the American sample, but not for the Chinese sample.
INTRODUCTION

The uses and gratifications approach has recently been established as an important orientation in the study of mass media audiences. The uses and gratifications approach argues that audiences are not passively waiting for the media to exert undifferentiated influence. Instead, audiences are seen as active, goal directed individuals, possessing particular needs, and knowingly selecting the communication channels and messages most likely to fulfill those needs.

The demonstration of differential mass media uses and effects based on varying gratifications sought by individuals has been the subject of a number of empirical studies, which emphasized political communication (Blumler and McOuail, 1969; McLeod and Becker, 1974; McLeod, Luetscher and McDonald, 1980). These studies have shown ties between gratifications and exposure, political attitudes, political knowledge, and perceptions of salient issues in a number of different communication contexts and national settings.

Other research also shows that audience motives serve as well as traditional demographic variables in explaining media use habits and motives can be viewed, more importantly, as a means of understanding the ways in which traditional demographic predications have influenced media use (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979; Becker and Fruit, 1982).

While most of the works to date have dealt with positive orientations such as gratifications sought from media, it is no less logical to suppose that the adverse reactions of audience members to various aspects of media content may also determine the exposure (McLeod and Becker, 1974).

This study attempts to deal with the relationships of media gratifications, avoidances, and international political knowledge in both Taiwan and the United states.

As a "media-rich" society, the United States has one of the highest levels of newspaper circulation rates and literacy levels as well as the largest number of television sets and radios per capita in the world. But according to many related studies (Erskine, 1963; Hero, 1959; Hyman and Steately, 1947; Robinson, 1967; Chu and Lingwood, 1973), American citizens, surrounded by mass media, are ill-informed on international issues, the knowledge of which is essential to the operation of a democratic society and to the position of the United States as the leading power of the world.

Taiwan, on the other hand, is a developing country with 19 million Chinese living in the islands at Far East Asia. Having been acclaimed as an "economic
miracle" in the world, Taiwan achieved a remarkable success in the economic and social developments in last three decades. Heavily dependent on international trade and cooperation, the Chinese living in Taiwan tend to pay more attention to international affairs in the media. Especially since the normalization of diplomatic relationships between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC), the citizens of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan have shown a great deal of concern for Sino-American relations as well as other international politics (Maykovitch, 1982).

In Taiwan, there are 35 dailies with an estimated 4-7 million circulation. By 1979, 30 radio companies operating 146 stations and using 302 transmitters, with combined power of 5,481,045 kw. There are three television networks, with varying degrees of financial support from the government or parties, which operate on a self-supporting basis, dependent on advertising revenue. A 1975 survey showed that the program composition of the three television services was 47.3% entertainment, 18.9% culture and education, 14.5% news, 11.6% public service, and 7.2% advertisements ("Quick TV Facts," 1975). Most mass media in Taiwan are concentrated in Taipei, the seat of the present-day government of the Republic of China.

As in the United States, Taiwan's radio and television are chiefly entertainment media. Independent research has shown that city dwellers and rural peasants alike obtain their daily news more often from newspapers than from either radio or television (Hsu, 1978). Regrettably, however, little empirical research has been conducted in Taiwan to show the media use and political orientations of Chinese living there. Moreover, no effort has ever been made to compare the Chinese living at Taiwan and those living in America with regard to their media behavior and political communication effects.

To this author's knowledge, no research has been conducted to find out whether people's knowledge of international affairs is related to their varying gratifications sought or avoided. The few studies related to this topic have been concerned with demonstrating the correlation between education, media exposure and knowledge (Robinson, 1967; McLeod et al., 1968; Chu and Lingwood, 1973). The purpose of this research is to examine the media gratifications sought and avoided considered relevant to international political knowledge in both Taiwan and the United States.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Several studies have explored the effects of media exposure and media use in
shaping people’s political interests and knowledge of politics. An early study (McLeod et al., 1968) simply reaffirmed that political awareness could be stimulated by increasing exposure to the mass media. The increasing exposure then led to greater political knowledge. And researchers generally agreed that there are interrelationships between media exposure, political interests, knowledge and participation in public affairs.

Chaffee and his colleagues (1970) in a study of the 1968 presidential campaign found that mass communication did play a role in political socialization. The respondents in their study attributed both informative and opinion-making powers to the media. Atkin et al.’s study (1976) established this more definitively when they found that the relationship between media exposure and usage and political knowledge and interest was a mutually causative one, e.g. exposure produced increases in interest of information and these variables in turn increased exposure in a reciprocal fashion. This finding was confirmed in 1976 by Barbie, who studied the citizen participation in elections in Yugoslavia and concluded that political knowledge increased absolutely with media exposure and political knowledge was positively related to citizen’s political participation. Other recent studies also showed that the mass media served as important influences on voters as sources of information and as guide for affective and behavioral orientation (Berman and Stookey, 1980; Tan, 1980; Kazee, 1981).

Concurrently, other research studies examined the social and psychological variables behind the exposure of political information of various media. Some psychological variables, such as authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, alienation, and conservatism were listed by Chu and Lingwood (1973) as important factors related to foreign affairs knowledge. And education, socio-economic background, and sex were proved to be influential on a person’s political interest and knowledge, as evidenced in the work of Barbie (1976), Kippax and Murry (1980) and others. Chu and Lingwood (1973) also indicated that physical contacts with foreign culture, friendship with foreigners, use of social participation through voluntary organization memberships were also attributive to the understanding and knowledge toward foreign affairs.

Apart from these demographic variables which have been shown to influence a person’s media exposure and usage, many researchers are more interested in investigating the reasons why some people are more likely to be exposed to certain communication channels and messages, while others are not.

The “uses and gratifications” approach suggests that people may be actively involved or exposed to mass media in order to meet certain needs or gratifications.
Katz, Gurevitch and Hass (1973) studied the use of the mass media from "important things" and thought the "use" is based on the extent to which individuals attempt to connect themselves or disconnect themselves from other people. They suggested three types of connections which can be formed: instrumental, affective, and integrative.

McQuail et al. (1972) suggested diversion, personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance needs in the study of patterns of gratifications derived by listeners and viewers of several broadcasting programs. This was reinforced by Robinson (1972) who reviewed a series of related studies of viewing behavior and suggested a similar description (utilitarian, ego-defensive, value expressive, informative) of the possible functions of television. McLeod and Becker (1974) studied the television gratifications and avoidances during the 1972 presidential campaign and found seven dimensions, which they labelled surveillance, excitement, reinforcement, guidance, anticipation, relaxation, and alienation. And Blumler (1979) suggested three basic audience orientations related to media use and media influence: cognitive, diversion, and personal identity.

Cross-nationally cultural differences were studied by Levy (1977) when he examined the applicability of the typologies of uses and gratifications in British and American culture. His data showed that the empirical basis of British typology for television news and gratifications was not replicated in the U.S. and concluded that different expectations and need-satisfactions of the American viewers could result the different patterns of uses and gratifications.

While many studies attempted to formulate typologies of media uses and gratifications, more recent studies have shared increasing concerns in investigating motivations and functions of mass media usage while exploring preliminary links between media use and the consequences of media behavior (Rubin, 1981). Greenberg (1974) identified and examined several motivations for television viewing of British children and adolescents and correlated these reasons for television use with sociodemographic attributes, media behaviors, and aggressive attitudes. Rubin (1981) also investigated the relationships between demographic variables and television viewing motivations and relationships between viewing motivations and viewing behaviors.

Significant work has also been undertaken to examine the motivations behind use of the news content of the various media (Blumler and McQuail, 1969; McLeod and Becker, 1974; Gantz, 1978; Palmgreen et al., 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981; Becker and Fruit, 1982; Davis and Woodall, 1982).

Gantz (1978) stated that one learned best when actively seeking some par-
ticular information. In his study, Gantz has found that recall of news items should be a "function of the gratifications sought from exposure to the newscast." Davis and Woodall (1982) predicted that persons who have specific media expectations will be more likely to use media in certain ways and perceived specific gratifications. Their study showed that persons who reported higher media expectations were likely to pay attention to the news program and to watch television news regularly. Becker and Fruit (1982) found that the level of need for information, both on a local and national level, could predict newspaper use as well as use of other sources of public affairs information, such as television news. In contrast, the need for relaxation would not predict the use of the news content of the media.

Some researchers speculated whether the members of different cultures would have distinct functional orientations toward the media. In their Israeli study, Katz et al. (1973) examined the potential linkages between media-related needs and the audience members' evaluations of the roles of the various media in gratifying these needs. And the researchers found the media were said to be useful in gratifying "escapist" needs and in providing a means for comparing oneself to others. Having replicated the Katz et al.'s study, Kippax and Murray (1980) found the similar patterns of need gratification and media helpfulness between Israeli and Australian respondents. But Israeli and Australian respondents expressed different need importances. Weaver et al. (1980) also replicated the Katz et al.'s research to study the role of personal needs in predicting media use in both Holland and the U.S. Weaver et al. found there were similarities in the salience of the different needs, frequency of media use and specific media used in response to the different needs among the Holland and the U.S. respondents.

The present investigation follows the studies made by Blumler and McQuail (1969) and McLeod and Becker (1974) dealing with the media uses and gratifications and political campaigns. In their studies, the investigators identified several media gratifications and avoidances items for news reading and watching and correlated these reasons for media use with other sociodemographic variables, media exposure behaviors, voting and political participations. This study will attempt to examine the relationships between people’s motivations to use or avoid international news from the media and their knowledge of international affairs in both Taiwan and the United States.

Avoidances, like gratifications, will be studied as an antecedent variable which relate to a person’s media behavior and international political knowledge. McLeod and Becker (1974) have questioned whether the avoidance dimensions are simply the mirror images of the corresponding gratifications in the study of presidential
campaign of 1972 and found out that the avoidances seem to predict better than gratifications on such relatively passive effects as election night media use and campaign interest as well as different types of accuracy. They suggested more attention should be devoted to the active avoidance behaviors of the audience because “these ‘negative’ orientations seem to delineate media effects”. The basic hypothesis of this study is that media use, gratifications and avoidances with regard to international news exposure is related to levels of knowledge of international affairs in both countries. It is assumed that media exposure and media gratifications are related to the international political knowledge positively and that media avoidances are negatively related to international political knowledge.

RESEARCH METHOD

Building on the work of Blumler and McQuail (1969) and McLeod and Becker (1974), the researcher has devised a total of 14 questionnaire items to measure various possible motivations for either using or avoiding content about international affairs. Six items consist of reasons for reading or watching international news, and the other eight items are reasons for not reading or watching. Fourteen items have been subjected to a factor analysis to assess what the overall pattern of dimensions of use and avoidance is for both samples. The results of this factor are presented in Table 1.

To measure knowledge of international affairs, the researcher has consulted with two political scientists to design 25 current events questions representing five different areas around the world, including the important political events and developments regarding Poland, Middle East, US-USSR relations, Falkland Crisis, and China occurring in 1982 primarily. For the Chinese respondents, the five questions dealing with Chinese political issues have been replaced by asking five American domestic political issues. The 25 items have been scored as correct and incorrect responses.

Media exposure has been divided into measures of time spent with a given medium and frequency and attention to various kinds of news content. Exposure to newspapers has been measured by the frequency of reading newspapers within a day; exposure to television is indicated by the number of hours spent watching. Local news exposure, national news exposure, international news exposure and the exposure of editorials have been measured by determining the frequency and attention to the news stories or programs from newspapers and television.

A random sample of 225 North Chicago households was selected from the
neighborhood telephone directory as American sample. Interviewers were instructed to alternatively take the male or female member of the household. Personal interviews were conducted in January, 1983. The sample frame was restricted to the north side of the city. It was understood that such a restriction on the sample would result in an above average eduction and household income, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Ideally, a random sample is desired to study perspectives differentiated by demographics at Taipei. Because of budgetary and time limitations, a purposive sample was selected including occupations strategic to the type of analysis: civil servants, independent practitioners, college students, teachers, businessmen, and workers at Taipei. Questionnaires were mailed to samples gathered from different organization and association directories, and one public school and one private institutions at Taipei. The return rate from these mailed questionnaire was 23%.

The purpose of this research is to examine media exposure, gratifications sought and avoided behaviors considered relevant to international knowledge. The specific research objectives are:

1. To compare the uses and avoidances of the international news from the media in the two countries.
2. To relate the uses and avoidances of the international news from the media to the frequency and kind of mass media use in the two countries.
3. To relate the uses and avoidances of the international news from the media to the knowledge of international affairs in two countries.

RESULTS

Factor Analysis

The total of fourteen questionnaire items to measure various possible motivations for either using or avoiding media content about international affairs have been factor analyzed with principal axes, utilizing R² communality estimates, and varimax rotation. The results of the N-factor analyses which minimum eigenvalue for factoring was 1.0 were both three factors, which explained 55.5% of the variance for the American sample and 51.3% of the variance for the Chinese sample.

To facilitate the comparison, the two solutions are presented together in Table 1. Examination of the loadings led to each factor being named to reflect the items loading on the factor. After a description of each factor, the similarities and differences in the factor structure will be reported.
A Cross-National Comparison of Media Uses and International Political Knowledge

Table 1. Factorial Solutions for American and Chinese Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>American Sample</th>
<th>Chinese Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. to know what current international affairs are</td>
<td>-.21 .19 .72</td>
<td>-.12 -.13 .80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. to judge what international political leaders are like</td>
<td>-.20 .32 .69</td>
<td>-.08 .37 .42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. to keep up with the main issues of the day</td>
<td>-.23 .41 .23</td>
<td>.07 -.02 .56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. to give me something to talk about with others</td>
<td>.06 .56 .03</td>
<td>.08 .56 .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. to use what I learn in political discussions</td>
<td>-.05 .75 .17</td>
<td>.04 .75 -.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. to get information that support my position</td>
<td>.14 .67 .15</td>
<td>.08 .72 -.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Because I am not much interested in politics</td>
<td>.55 -.20 -.16</td>
<td>.56 -.19 .07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Because I’m not interested in what happens outside the U.S. (Taiwan)</td>
<td>.72 -.01 -.08</td>
<td>.69 .00 -.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Because I can’t always trust what international politicians tell me</td>
<td>.52 -.02 .01</td>
<td>.39 .00 -.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. because I prefer to relax when watching and/or reading the newspaper</td>
<td>.72 .01 -.18</td>
<td>.56 .11 -.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. because I try to forget about problems happening outside the U.S. (Taiwan)</td>
<td>.81 -.03 .02</td>
<td>.40 .35 -.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. because I’d rather spend my time (reading) other non-political programs (stories in the paper)</td>
<td>.55 .04 -.20</td>
<td>.48 .14 -.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. because it’s hard to figure out what the programs (stories) are all about</td>
<td>.53 .02 -.16</td>
<td>.50 .20 -.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. because the programs hardly tell me anything new</td>
<td>.59 -.04 .06</td>
<td>.38 .10 .12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of Total Variance explained by factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Sample</th>
<th>Chinese Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total variance accounted for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Sample</th>
<th>Chinese Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor I

For both American and Chinese samples, this factor is clearly an Avoidance cluster, picking up the primary loadings of each of the eight avoidance items for both samples. For the American sample, it accounts for 29.5% of the total variance. For the Chinese sample, Avoidance accounts for 24.9% of the total variance.
Factor II

For both samples, factor II is a communication utility factor which accounts 17.7% of the total variance for the American sample and 14.8% of the total variance for Chinese sample. For the American sample, this factor consists of four gratification items that are closely linked to the reinforcement and communicatory functions used in political news studies. Three communication utility items were loaded ranging .56 up for the Chinese sample.

Factor III

For both American and Chinese samples, this factor represents Surveillance, that is, seeking and using information to deal with one's environment. Surveillance accounts 8.3% of the total variance for American sample and 11.6% of the total variance for Chinese sample. The only difference between the two groups is the absence of one item: "to keep up with the main issues of the day" in American sample's factor.

Discussion

The gross similarities in the two factorial solutions suggest that there are no perceived differences between the American sample and Chinese sample regarding their reasons for using or avoiding international news from the media. Two pairs of factors have identical legitimate items with similar loadings.

Becker (1979) has found that people have at least three distinct dimensions of motivations toward political materials, including avoidance motivations, vote guidance and surveillance, and reinforcement, excitement, communicatory utility, etc. The factor analysis of this study has produced three factor solutions for both samples. For both American and Chinese samples, Factor I is clearly an avoidance cluster, that is, avoiding international political news from the media. The second factor picks up the reinforcement, guidance and communicatory utility items while the third factor picks up the surveillance items. It, then, can conclude that the factorial patterns of gratifications and avoidances of both samples in this study coincide with those of previous studies.

Table 2 shows the correlations between each of gratification and avoidance dimensions, measures of media exposure time, measures of exposure to different news content, and international political knowledge, age and education of the two samples. The three gratification/avoidance indices have been reordered so that they begin with surveillance measures, followed by communication factor and
Table 2. Correlations Between Media Exposure Variables, Gratifications, and Avoidances for Chinese and American Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Exposure</th>
<th>Gratifications</th>
<th>Avoidances</th>
<th>International Knowledge</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media Exposure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newspaper exposure time</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>television exposure time</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local news</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national news</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>international news</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>editorials &amp; newsmagazines</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gratifications</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surveillance</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication utility</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoidances</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>-.43**</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>international knowledge</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
avoidance factor.

*Media Gratifications*

*Surveillance*

For the American sample, it appears that using media to know current affairs and to judge political leaders is tied to increased exposure of local news \( (r = .41, p < .01) \), national news \( (r = .63, p < .01) \), international news \( (r = .66, p < .01) \), and editorials \( (r = .38, p < .01) \). It has also been found that the older the American respondents, the more surveillance needs they want to be gratified from the media, the more knowledge of international affairs they have.

For the Chinese sample, surveillance factor is positively related to the frequency and attention paid to local news \( (r = .24, p < .01) \), national news \( (r = .32, p < .01) \), international news \( (r = .33, p < .01) \), and editorials \( (r = .20, p < .01) \). And the higher the educational level of Chinese respondents, the more surveillance needs they want to be gratified from the media.

*Communication Utility*

For the American sample, the more people use international news for keeping up with the main issue, having something to talk about, and reinforcing their political positions, the more attention and time they would spend to gain access to local news \( (r = .31, p < .01) \), national news \( (r = .41, p < .01) \), international news \( (r = .43, p < .01) \), and editorials \( (r = .38, p < .01) \). There are, however, no relationships between American respondents' communication utility factor with their age, education and international political knowledge.

For the Chinese sample, the result shows that there are no relationships between respondents' communication utility needs with their exposure and attention to different news content. This factor, however, is negatively related to respondents' educational level. This study also finds the more communication utility needs Chinese respondents want to be gratified from the media, the more knowledge of international affairs they have \( (r = .27, p < .01) \).

*Avoidances*

For both samples, the avoidance factor represents a complex situation in that it combines different negative loadings for all the avoided items. Those items which indicate the respondents' avoidance of international news because of their having no interest in politics, no interest in what happened outside the country, preferring to
relax, rather spending time with other non-political stories/programs, and feeling it's hard to figure out what the programs are all about are all clustered here. This factor is negatively related to American respondents's exposure of local news (r = -.30, p < .01), national news (r = -.43, p < .01), international news (r = -.18, p < .01), and editorials (r = -.15, p < .05).

For the Chinese sample, this factor is also negatively related to the frequency and attention paid to national news (r = -.20, p < .01), international news (r = -.18, p < .01), and editorials (r = -.15, p < .05). It has found that the higher the educational level of the respondents, the less they will avoid international news from the media.

As far as the international political knowledge is concerned, the result of the study shows a negative relationship between American respondents' avoidance factor and knowledge (r = -.23, p < .01) while there is a positive relationship between Chinese respondents' avoidance factor and knowledge (r = .20, p < .01).

**Media Exposure Time**

While some researchers treat gratifications and avoidances the same as media exposure, this study separated these variables and explored the relationships between newspaper exposure, television exposure and gratifications sought and avoidances.

The result shows that there are positive relationships between American and Chinese samples' newspaper exposure time and frequency and attention paid to national news, international news, and editorials. There is also a relationship between American respondents' newspaper exposure time and their local news exposure. It has been found, however, there is no relationship between newspaper exposure time and respondent' international political knowledge for both samples.

There are no relationships between American respondents' television exposure time and the frequency and attention paid to various kinds of news contents. For the Chinese sample, however, the more they watch television, the more attention and time they spend on reading and watching local news (r = .27, p < .01), national news (r = .16, p < .05), and editorials (r = .22, p < .01). And the more they watch television, the more international political knowledge they have (r = .18, p < .01).

For both samples, the respondents' communication utility factor is positively related to their newspaper exposure time which indicate the respondents who use international news for communication purpose tend to read more newspapers than other people.

**Age and Education**
For the American sample, this study supports the common wisdom that a person's education and age are positively related to his/her political interest and knowledge. The result of this study shows there are positive relationships between American respondents' age, education and international political knowledge ($r = .18$, $.27$, $p < .01$). The age of Chinese respondents' is also positively related to their knowledge of international affairs. There is, however, no relationship between Chinese respondents' educational level and the knowledge of international political affairs.

CONCLUSIONS

Chaffee and Izearay (1975, p. 393) have proposed a continuum of levels of independent variables in media-effects analysis, which would range from (a) sheer structural availability of the media, to (b) simple exposure to a medium, to (c) specific exposure to “news” content, to (d) more specific exposure to particular kinds of news, such as politics, and finally to (e) generalized motivational patterns of use and avoidance that cut across media. They thought level (a) would be powerful predictors in an underdeveloped society, and level (e) would be more important in postindustrial societies.

As a postindustrial society, the United States has one of the most developed media systems in the world. Taiwan, on the other hand, is a developing country with a remarkable success in the economic and social development which contribute to the establishment of a “media-rich” society. This study attempted to examine the media exposure, gratifications sought and avoidance behavior considered relevant to international political knowledge of 225 American residents at Chicago and 234 Chinese living at Taipei, Taiwan.

One purpose of this study was to explore empirical aspects of the media uses and gratifications typologies related to international news in the United States and Taiwan. A factor analysis had produced three factor solutions for both samples, which were labelled avoidance, communication utility and surveillance. The gross similarities in the two factorial solutions suggested that there were no perceived differences between the American sample and the Chinese sample with regard to their reasons for using or avoiding international news from the media. The clustering of media orientation obtained in this study for both samples corresponded to the broad empirical and theoretical categories described by Becker (1979).

This study also hypothesized that media use, gratifications and avoidance of international news was related to levels of knowledge of international affairs. It
was further assumed that media exposure and media gratifications were related to
the international political knowledge positively and the media avoidances were
negatively related to international political knowledge.

In previous studies political effects, such as political interest and knowledge,
were proved to be linked to media exposure, but this study found no relationship
between respondents’ newspaper exposure time and their knowledge of international
affairs for either sample. There was also no relationship between American re-
spondents’ television exposure time and their knowledge of international affairs.
The results of this study, however, showed that Chinese respondents’ television
exposure was positively related to their knowledge of international affairs. It has
been discussed earlier that the television on Taiwan put more emphasis on news,
public affairs, culture and education. Therefore, it might not be surprising to see
television exposure was positively related to international political knowledge for
Chinese respondents.

For the American sample, the surveillance factor was positively related to
respondents’ knowledge while the avoidance factor was negatively related to their
knowledge of international affairs. For the Chinese sample, the communication
utility and avoidance factors were positively related to their international political
knowledge.

The results appeared to coincided with the findings of McLeod et al., (1974) and
Becker (1979), who suggest that media gratifications and avoidances are not merely
surrogates for media use or exposure. Furthermore, they propose that media
gratifications and avoidances are better predictors with which to examine political
effects. The present research obtained similar results for the American sample and
confirmed that gratification needs predicted the exposure of various kinds of news
and knowledge positively and avoidances in the opposite direction. For the Chinese
sample, surveillance factor is positively related to the exposure of different news
content and the avoidances in the opposite direction. But there was no relation-
ship between Chinese respondents’ communication utility needs and the exposure
of different news content.

McLeod et al. (1975) proved that audiences are often exposed to specific
content categories within a medium. This study found that gratifications sought
and avoidances did not seem to be news content specific. The evidence suggested
that people seeking a specific gratification from reading and watching other kinds
of news content. And the reasons for avoiding international news might be the same
reasons for not reading and watching other news-related materials.

This study found the assumptions of uses and gratifications worked very well
for American sample, but not for Chinese sample. Especially the relationships between Chinese respondents' gratifications sought, avoidances and international political knowledge were not so clear. On the one hand, since the media uses and gratifications approach involves the interaction of audience and media, an explanation might be sought in the cross-national difference between those two elements. On the other hand, the levels (c) and (d) in Chaffee et al.'s model of media-effect analysis might be more important than the level (e) in the study of media effects in the developing country like Taiwan.

This study dealt with the relationships of media gratifications sought, avoidances, and international political knowledge from an "audience-oriented" angle. It has been noticed that there is another perspective to look at this question by examining whether the mass media have offered "enough" of the right kind of information about international affairs or whether the mass media have set the agenda of international issues and events for the audience. A comparison of American and Chinese newscasts and audiences is well beyond the scope of this report, but further research may do well to put these variables into account. This study, lacking in sequential measurement over long periods of time, does not enable the researcher to disentangle causal sequences in any conclusive way.

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