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ABSTRACT
              Evidence is presented that people select mass
communication content on the basis of interpersonal contact they
anticipate having. Examinations of the results from a variety of
earlier field studies showed consistently positive relationships
between amount of interpersonal discussion and exposure to relevant
mass media messages. In a secondary analysis of news exposure data,
the number of groups with which individuals discussed news events was
associated with the amount of time they spent reading newspapers and
magazines. Another secondary analysis yielded strong correlations
between frequency of talking about a political campaign and level of
exposure to campaign coverage in the electronic and print media. An
experiment investigating news information seeking in a sample of high
school students showed that students who expected to participate in
an informal discussion with other students about national, local, or
school problems tended to select a greater amount of the appropriate
type of news (either national or local items) in the course of their
normal mass media use, but they did not actively seek out additional
media sources. (Author/JK)

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AS A DETERMINANT OF
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE PATTERNS

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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AS A DETERMINANT OF MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE PATTERNS

This paper presents evidence indicating that anticipated interpersonal communication activities lead to the selection of socially useful mass communication content. Information gained at one point in time may have utility for a variety of subsequent communicatory situations, such as everyday informal interaction with family, friends, and co-workers. Content may be specifically sought out to provide raw material for direct re-communication, or routinely acquired for a short-term storage and possible use in general conversation.

Examination of results from a variety of field studies showed consistently positive relationships between amount of interpersonal discussion and exposure to relevant mass media messages. In a secondary analysis of news exposure data, the number of groups with which individuals discussed news events was associated with the amount of time spent reading newspapers and magazines; another secondary analysis yielded strong correlations between frequency of talking about a political campaign and level of exposure to campaign coverage in the electronic and print media.

An experimental test of news information seeking in a sample of high school students supported the hypothesized model which specified anticipated interaction as a causal factor in this relationship. The independent variable was the manipulated expectation of participating in an informal discussion with several other students about either national, local, or school social-political problems. The dependent variable was the actual level of exposure to relevant information in newspapers, magazines, TV and radio in the days preceding the anticipated discussion. Subjects in the experimental conditions tended to select a greater amount of the appropriate type of news (either national or local items) in the course of their normal mass media use; however, active efforts to be exposed to additional media sources did not occur to a significant extent.

Most studies exploring the determinants of mass communication information

seeking have given little attention to the possible social utility of media

content for an individual's subsequent interpersonal communication activities.

Research dealing with the basic reasons for media exposure has generally

emphasized intrapersonal factors such as respite, reinforcement, problem-solving,

curiosity, warning, interpretation, vicarious involvement, and dissonance

reduction. [1]

Chaffee and McLeod (1970) observed that a person's communicatory behavior

can not be isolated from the rest of his social life, and that mass media use

should be considered in the larger context of one's coorientational relation-

ships with other people. They suggested a more thorough investigation of

processes of communication at the molecular level of analysis, as these factors

might explain more variance than predictors at the atomic and molar levels of

analysis.

Mass communication content can be conceived as yielding both immediate

intrinsic rewards and instrumental utilities for decision-making, task attainment,

or social relations. This paper focuses on the concept of communicatory utility,

defined as the subjective estimate of anticipated usefulness of information for

future informal interaction with family, friends, co-workers and acquaintances.

This report describes the conceptualization and initial evidence from a research project assessing the explanatory power of various types of communicatory utility in accounting for the amount and nature of information sought from mass media sources. The first section attempts to establish the importance of communicatory utility in mass communications research with a lengthy review of the literature, particularly those studies examining exposure patterns to news content. This is followed by a presentation of original findings from an experiment and two secondary analyses of survey data, demonstrating the relationship between news media use and interpersonal discussion of news events.

Background

Although few studies have specifically linked mass media use to expected conversational experiences, social scientists have frequently called attention to this relationship and a variety of indirect evidence lends support to the utility proposition. More than 30 years ago, researchers pointed to the role of social relations in understanding why people attend mass communications. Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw (1940) argued that primary and secondary groups provide finer and more meaningful explanations for the selection and interpretation of books and periodicals. They distinguished between intrapersonal motives and the interpersonal motives of social prestige and security, where readers seek to win praise for the information they can display or keep up on currently discussed topics.

Wright's (1960) functional inventory also proposed that mass communicated news can bestow prestige on individuals who keep themselves informed about current events, as they enhance their standing within a group by conforming to the norm of "being informed."

Bereison's (1949) examination of the uses of a newspaper illustrates the social prestige function of mass communication exposure:

> "Another group of readers seem to use the newspaper because it enables them to appear informed in social gatherings. Thus the newspaper has conversational value. Readers not only can learn what has happened and then report it to their associates, but can also find opinions and interpretations for use in discussions of public affairs. It is obvious how this use of the newspaper serves to increase the reader's prestige among his fellows."[3]

Although "social prestige" is a more limited and specialized motivation than the desire to initiate or maintain routine informal interaction, these studies did show that subsequent communication behavior has important implications for mass media exposure.

Early contributions were also made by investigators working from a group relations perspective. Riley and Flowerman (1951) hypothesized that "kinds of media materials preferred, as well as reasons for such preference, are affected by the individual's group affiliations." They criticised mass media researchers for conceiving the audience as a series of discrete individuals characterized only by personal attributes such as age, sex, socio-economic status, religion, and personality factors. They proposed a framework featuring the "inter-communicating group" that supported an interpersonal, verbal exchange of ideas on common problems. Schramm (1954) made a similar distinction between "statistical groups" imposed by the outside observer and "functional groups" that work together for some purpose. He said that these latter groups provide a setting for discussion and evaluation of mass communication content.

Riley and Flowerman's studies indicated that pre-adolescents who were more closely integrated into friendship groups tended to select different kinds of radio programs and comic books. Those who frequently communicated with peers chose mass media content more in terms of its practical "social utility" for getting along in the everyday activities of group life.

In addition, Riley and Riley (1951) reported that the same mass media materials were used differently by school children in varying social positions. The peer group member preferred action-adventure radio shows because the stories gave them ideas for group activities, while those with lower peer integration enjoyed the thrills and excitement of the stories. Riley and Riley also discovered that "seekers" who were attempting to gain fuller integration had the strongest need for socially useful media information; girls in this situation selected more mass media materials dealing with dating, romance, and the opposite sex than the highly integrated girls.

Freidson (1953) attacked the popular concept of the anonymous, spatially separated mass audience, and argued that "much audience behavior takes place in a complex network of local social activity." He suggested that mass communication selection patterns arise out of the stimulation of organized social processes along with the usual personal interests:

> "Thus, an adequate concept of the audience must include some idea of its social character, some idea that being a member of a local audience is a social activity in which interaction with others before, during, and after any single occasion of spectatorship has created definite shared expectations and predisposing definitions."

Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) proposed three great classes of reasons why children use television: entertainment, (incidental) learning, and social utility. One aspect of social utility is the conversational value of program content, as "The previous evening's television programs provide an excellent common ground of shared experience for conversation at school. If you can't talk about the new programs or the new stars, you simply aren't up to date with your peer groups; thus television has direct social utility." In addition, they showed that students who discussed news events with other people were much more likely to use the media for reality seeking [high exposure to print media and low exposure to television]. These data are presented in Table 1.

Several smaller investigations demonstrate the importance of the anticipated
use of informaticnal and entertainment content from the mass media. Robinson
(1941) reported that the introduction of the radio to farm families often served
to increase the amount of intra-family contact with frequent discussions of
program content. He also observed a high correlation between listening to
serious radio shows and attendance at women's club meetings; more than half of
the members said they used the radio in connection with their club activities.
Bogart (1955) found that many of the superficial conversations among working
class males consisted of topics originating in newspaper comic pages. Turner
(1958) proposed that newspaper reading functions to provide background informa-
tion for social conversation. Her typology of newspaper readers included one
type who was well adjusted in his social roles and read widely to obtain material
for furthering social interaction. Davison (1960) hypothesized that incoming
information is stored by the individual for possible use in his expected social
environment. He asked a group of veteran government foreign affairs officials
to recall newspaper headlines from a poster after a brief exposure period.
Although Davison expected that they would remember those headlines referring to
professionally relevant matters, the officials tended to recall interpersonally
useful headlines: "The headline that was remembered most often was a dramatic
one of a type that would be likely to provide conversational material."

Lazarsfeld's hypothesis that ideas flow in a two-step pattern from the media
to "opinion leaders" and then to the less active sectors of society has led to
a number of investigations relevant to the communicatory utility question. Most
studies have found that opinion leaders [who by definition actively participate
in face-to-face discussions where previously obtained information is highly
useful] tend to be more highly exposed to mass media content relating to their
area of influence. In the original opinion leader study, (Lazarsfeld, Berelson,

and Gaudet, 1948), cpinion leaders read more newspapers and magazines and
listened to the radio more often than others; 90% conversed about the campaign,
compared to only 58% of the general population. Of more importance is the find-
ing that opinion leaders with lower interest in the campaign still exposed
themselves to almost as much political content as opinion leaders who were
greatly interested, while the rest of the respondents showed a sharp drop in
exposure from high to low interest groups. These data are presented in Table 2.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) reported that opinion leaders in various areas
read more books and magazines than non-leaders, and had greater exposure to
sources of specifically relevant information: fashion leaders read fashion
magazines more than twice as often as the general population, and public affairs
leaders exceeded non-leaders in newsmagazine readership. Furthermore, leaders
in one area were usually less exposed to messages relating to those areas
outside their specialization.[4]

Merton (1949) found that local and cosmopolitan influentials had distinctly
different patterns of media exposure, due to varying motives for selecting mass
communication materials. For example, cosmopolitans were uniformly high in
readership of news magazines that provided the "stuff of conversation" among
the gatherings of like-minded cosmopolitans. He pointed out that influentials
could strengthen their social position by dispensing information and opinions
when the occasion demands. He concluded:

> "The analysis of the functions of mass communications require prior
> analysis of the social roles which determine the uses to which these
> communications can and will be put. Had the social contexts of inter-
> personal influence not been explored, we could not have anticipated
> the selection of _Time_ by one type of influential and its rejection by
> another."

Troldahl's (1966) factor analytic study of 23 types of teenage communica-
tion behavior produced four major two-step flow patterns. The "print-media
two-step" factor accounts for 11% of the total variability in their media

behavior. Respondents exhibiting this pattern read newspapers and magazines heavily, especially content pertaining to "persons your own age." They tended to bring this media material into their conversations with friends, often discussing what they had read recently. Very similar patterns with respect to the other media accounted for smaller portions of the variance: the "book two-step flow" (8%), the "television two-step flow" (7%), and the "teen movie two-step flow" (7%). He concluded that whatever mass medium a teenager consumes heavily, he also tends to talk with friends about the content he has been exposed to in that medium.

The news diffusion literature indirectly relates to the study of communicatory utility. While Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) characterized the initial transmission of new information from opinion leaders to uninformed others as the "relay function," evidence from field studies failed to support this point for most types of news material. As a rule, relatively few persons obtained their initial information of important news events from personal contacts (Larsen and Hill, 1954; Deutschmann and Danielson, 1960; Greenberg, 1964). However, Greenberg did show that personal sources of initial knowledge played a larger role for either extremely dramatic events or minor news stories. Indeed, an individual's receptivity to obscure news may be affected by the possibility that he can pass it along to others with similar special interests.

News diffusion studies did indicate that opinion leaders may serve a "supplementation" function by contributing additional information about an event after initial awareness from media sources. Thus, they participate in "reinforcement" conversations with others who also know something about the news topic. Empirical investigations have generally discovered that more than half of the sample have interpersonal discussions, even though they do not first learn about an important event this way.

Suggestive evidence about the relative importance of social vs. intra-
personal determinants of political information seeking comes from several
election studies. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) took a distinctly
molecular approach in explaining mass communication behavior in Elmira, dis-
cussing the "mutual-effect relationship" between media exposure and inter-
personal discussion of the campaign. In particular, they found that the more
people talk about politics, the more they are likely to read and listen to
political material. Among those who could remember discussing the campaign
during October, 59% were high in media exposure, while 29% of the non-
discussants were highly exposed. Respondents who were members of organizations
consistently exposed themselves to more media content across each level of
campaign interest; this was explained in terms of the multiplicity of social
contacts stimulating those with greater organizational activities. The authors
concluded that "the amount of attention to political materials in the mass
media must derive in good measure from the amount of stimulation exercised upon
him by the social environment."

Key (1961) analysed data from the Survey Research Center's 1956 national
election study, and found a strong correlation between the number of media used
and "talking to people to persuade them to vote for one of the parties or
candidates." Converse (1962) obtained a similar pattern with SRC's 1960 voters.
More than half of the respondents who drew information from four media could be
classified as political opinion givers, while the proportion of opinion givers
dropped monotonically to 15% among those exposed to one medium. Becker and
Preston (1969) discovered that the type of political activity correlating the
strongest with media usage in the 1964 SRC study was attempted personal per-
suasion, as shown in Table 3.

In a study featuring an explicit information "seeking" measure, Chaffee a. McLeod (1967) compared the predictive power of several cognitive orientational variables against coorientational discussion variables. During the "naturally counterbalanced" gubernatorial and congressional campaigns of 1966, Madison, Wisconsin, respondents were interviewed about their voting plans, perceptions of the campaign, and interpersonal discussion of campaign events and issues. Each person was also given a list of clearly partisan candidate pamphlet titles (along with one impartial multi-candidate title), and they were asked to indicate which pamphlet they wanted sent to their house.

Their analysis showed that more variation in overall information seeking behavior was explained by coorientational than individual predictors. The data presented in Table 4 show that respondents who discussed the campaign most frequently were most likely to request pamphlets. There was a curvilinear relationship between relative campaign interest and information seeking, with more requests among respondents who were interested about the same amount as their friends. As Table 4 indicates, this finding held primarily among those who reported some discussion of the campaign with friends. The measure most directly relevant to the question of potential communicatory utility was an item asking about the liklihood of future discussion of the campaign. Respondents who expected to talk about these political events in the weeks before Election Day tended to request more pamphlets of all types than those anticipating no discussion.[5]

Conceptualization

As the individual continuously attempts to maximize satisfaction,
his communication behavior is determined by a complex set of needs for
knowledge and enjoyment produced by perceived discrepancies between his
present condition and various goal states. The "need to know" exists for
the individual when he wants to decrease cognitive uncertainty, while
the enjoyment need occurs when he desires to increase pleasure. Depending
on the magnitude and nature of the discrepancies felt by the individual,
existing or elicitible messages have varying degrees of both informational
or entertainment value for him. The role of the entertainment component
will not be considered here, since this paper focuses on the informational
uses of mass media content. Borrowing from information theory, information
is defined in terms of uncertainty reduction; it represents something
that the receiver does no: already know.

There are four basic elements of the communication model employed
here: the individual ($\underline{A}$); a coorienting other ($\underline{B}$) with whom $\underline{A}$ communicates
directly; mediated sources of information ($\underline{C}$); and objects and their attributes
($\underline{X}$) in the immediate and extended environment. An object is something
that exists psychologically (a concept, event, thing, or person that one
thinks about and reacts to), and an attribute is any quality that the
object can possess to some degree (including characteristics of the object
or something it does or has happen to it).

A message is a shared-meaning symbolic abstraction (referring to
X) that is transmitted into a channel; if there is an intent to influence,
then it is a purposive message. In orientational communication, $\underline{A}$ is
oriented toward $\underline{C}$ and toward $\underline{X}$, and decodes messages from $\underline{C}$ about $\underline{X}$.

Mediated source C may be any individual or institutionalized team, such as a newspaper columnist or a network news department. In coorientational communication, A and B are simultaneously oriented toward each other and toward X, and they encode and decode A-X and B-X messages.

A's act of exposure to a C-X message is treated as a dependent variable in this analysis, a function of his estimate of the rewards expected from knowledge gain and the costs associated with message acquisition and processing.

Messages can provide both consummatory gratifications and instrumental utilities for the individual. Information may be needed to help answer an implicit or explicit "question" that A poses in response to several types of cognitive uncertainty. These uncertainty states arise when he perceives an inadequate level of knowledge after reprocessing stored information from previous experience. Specific questions may be activated by a message cue encountered during mass media scanning activities, or may be due to a prior internal or external instigation to move toward the message.

The basic building blocks contributing to increased certainty are cognitions: discrete pieces of information about an X. These may be combined into more complex cognitive sturctures such as beliefs, values, and attitudes, and may serve to direct behavior. Two factors tend to channel the individual's possible range of uncertainties toward particular X's. First, his personal interests determine many of the intrinsic goal states which define discrepancies in knowledge to be reduced. In a similar fashion, extrinsic uncertainties are defined by requirements for adaptation to everyday environmental and psychological problems.

The expectation of instrumental rewards from information exposure depends on the estimated utility of a message for helping to resolve

uncertainty relating to A's anticipated adaptive responses to his surroundings
or his psychological adjustments to past behavioral and cognitive activities.
Various types of uncertainty can be arrayed along a cognitive -- behavior
continuum ranging from orientations to decisions to performances.

An orientation is any belief, attitude, value, emotion, opinion, or
ability judgment comprising various cognitions. Orientations typically have as
a referent an X that the individual has experienced or expects to encounter,
although they also refer to ambiguous stimuli in some cases.

Pre-orientational Uncertainty occurs when the individual is faced with
an object or situation (however distant) and is unsure how to relate to it.
He needs clarification to help form an attitude (do I like or dislike this
new object?), reduce emotional ambiguity (what do I feel as a result of this
threat?), or calculate the impact of an object or event (what will happen to
the bus service if a subsidy isn't appropriated?).
External information gives cognitions that can be used in defining
which orientation toward X is objectively correct or appropriate to the social
climate. In this uncertainty state, the orientations of other people are
particularly useful; when observation of others does not provide adequate tension
reduction, then messages may be acquired.
Post-Orientational Uncertainty occurs when the individual is not
sufficiently sure that his current beliefs, attitudes, emotions, or values are
correct or socially appropriate. He may also want to evaluate or appraise the
accuracy of his ability estimations. Basically, he desires to know if he holds
the right orientations. Informational messages may contain descriptions of
physical evidence that contribute to his uncertainty reduction. If physical
reality is not available, a social basis can be used for subjective validation
of orientations.
Pre-Decisional Uncertainty arises whenever the individual's current
habits, attitudes, repertoire of conflict resolution strategies, and accumulated
stock of knowledge are not adequate as a basis for selecting one alternative
from among the various possibilities. There is a lack of knowledge to satisfac-
torally discriminate between possible courses of action or inaction when the
individual is asking "what is the right alternative to choose?" External infor-
mation can serve both to produce alternatives and to clarify their relative
desirability.
Post-Decisional Uncertainty may begin once the decision has been completed
and there is an irreversible commitment to the chosen alternative. The question
that the individual wants to answer is "did I make the correct (or most
socially appropriate) decision?" Due to his commitment to the decision, the
individual usually wants to allay his doubts with an affirmative answer to
this question; he wants to be reassured that the most rewarding alternative was
chosen. This is the classic case of cognitive dissonance where the bad features
of the chosen alternative and the good points of the unchosen possibilities are
in an inconsistent relationship with the decision act.

Pre-Performance Uncertainty involves the individual's lack of knowledge
needed to satisfactorally accomplish an action sequence. He needs to know many
details that are involved in carrying out an activity that he desires or deems
necessary to undertake. Two specific types of uncertainty that fit into this
category are task uncertainty and communicatory uncertainty. The former relates
to questions about how to enact any overt behavior pattern except informal
communication (including formal communication activities such as lecturing,
debating, or book writing). As the individual approaches a non-routine task,
he is often without sufficient information about relevant objects and attributes
for satisfactory performance. Here, A is motivated to acquire new material
in order to increase his knowledge or understanding of the activity he is
undertaking.[7] Communicatory uncertainty is discussed below.

Post-Performance Uncertainty completes the paradigm. Here, the individual
inquires "did I do well?" and probably wants a flattering answer if he is in
an exclusively post-performance state. The most important case of this is the
asking of evaluation from coorienting sources after a public performance.

Although information may have utility for reducing these types of

uncertainty, the individual always faces an expenditure of effort and/or

resources in his message handling activity. The relative importance of the cost

components vary according to the individual's mode of transaction: either a

self-initiated search for a message, a cue-elicited receptivity to a message,

or a yielding acceptance of an intrusive message.

Acquisition costs involve the expenditures of time, money, and psycho-

logical effort necessary to attain contact with a message. If the individual is

in a search mode, the message accessibility is a critical factor. Accessibility

of a message relates to the ease of obtaining it once the need for the message

is felt. This situational obtainability can be illustrated with reference to

an electronic vs. a print media advertisement; at any given time, it is usually

much easier to acquire a message from the ever-accessible newspaper or maga-

zine advertisment than the intermittently accessible radio or TV commercial.

In the recpptivity mode, the overall prominence of the message is of central

concern. Prominence is composed of availability (frequency of encounter and

length) and pervasiveness (intensity and animation of stimuli). This latter

component can be illustrated by the active quality of television commercials

relative to print messages, or the attention-gaining quality of a large well-

spaced newspaper want-ad that stands out in contrast from the other classified ads.

Processing costs are constant across the various modes of transaction. This factor describes the amount of effort to decode the message once contact has been made. The total processing costs are usually calculated at the start of exposure, and thus represent a second hurdle that the message must pass.

The dependent variable of exposure encompasses three modes of transaction: information search, receptivity, and yielding. "Information seeking" subsumes the first two modes; it involves exposure to a message when the expected informational reward value is greater than the negative costs value.

Information search is defined as that acquisition behavior purposefully initiated by the individual in response to an explicit question about X. The individual actively approaches a particular mass media source with the overt intention of becoming exposed either to the general content or a particular message (i.e., he turns on the evening news broadcast or looks up a reference book). The existence of the information field must be previously known to the individual, either on the basis of external cues or previous learning. An individual's search activity typically involves movement to a given mass medium for the purpose of obtaining general information about a variety of topics, as in the case of reading news magazines. However, he may pursue a particular source in order to find information about a single topic, as in the case of watching a newscast to learn about a specific event.

Information receptivity describes an openness to question formulation as a result of X-related cues encountered during movement through the message environment. This movement includes generalized search behavior (i.e., newspaper reading for non-specific purposes) or everyday contact with message cues while pursuing other goals; thus, there may be either a systematic or random contact

with eliciting cues during the individual's normal activities. When messages
are encountered, selection occurs if the message-induced question arouses some
type of uncertainty. This is premeditated behavior of a lower order, since the
exposure decision is generally based on routine scanning for relevant indexing
cues immediately before actual exposure (i.e., the individual reads a particular
news story on the basis of a headline, or listens closely to a radio newscast
during the course of attending regular entertainment programming).

Information yielding includes exposure acts where the reward value is
zero or negative (i.e., the message has no utility, or may actually increase
uncertainty by introducing confusion or dissonance) while the acquisition
costs are positive (i.e., it requires more effort to avoid a pervasive message
than to obtain it). Yielding acceptance relates to the minimal decoding of an
incoming communication encountered in the environment, such as an advertising
message or a segment of television programming.

Communicatory Utility and Information Seeking

Communicatory uncertainty is the cognitive state of incomplete familiar-
ity with a potential conversation topic. To the extent that information can
provide the user with initial knowledge about a new event, or supplementary
material about a topic that the person knows something about, the information
has communicatory utility. Information that an individual obtains at one point
in time may be useful in a variety of subsequent communicatory situations,
including both the everyday informal interaction with friends, relatives and
co-workers, and conversational communication during special occasions such as
a party or organization meeting. Infromation from mass media or interpersonal
sources can be used as raw material for direct exchange with another person,
or can be combined with previous knowledge to yield new conversational material.

Greenberg (1963) proposed that communication content in informal channels may be dichotomized into information [material that is directly relayed] and valenced information [personal ideas and opinions]. An individual who expects to play an active role in interpersonal communication on a given topic must depend on external information sources for both types of output. A person who plans to be only a passive spectator to an informal conversation on a topic needs at least a minimal level or information to satisfactorally comprehend the discussion, and must also rely on some previous information source.

At the time information seeking occurs, the individual may take into account the potential usefulness of the information for these types of communication situations. When he explicitly selects material in anticipation of a particular target conversation, the information has "specific communicatory utility." When information seeking contributes mainly to the overall level of stored knowledge on a given topic or general topic area, there is "generalized communicatory utility."

The key factor in both specific and generalized communicatory utility is the likelihood that the individual will participate in any face-to-face communication on a topic. [Note: When the individual does perceive that there is a chance that the topic will be discussed in the near future, he may take into account many potential factors, which combine to produce different types of specific or generalized communicatory uncertainty and lead to different patterns of information seeking. The major variables that can play a role in determining utility of information are outlined in Appendix A, but will not be considered in this introductory examination].

The likelihood of subsequent conversational interaction is the central variable in the three empirical studies presented in this paper. These investiga-

tions deal with the relationship between informal discussion of news events and
seeking of news information from the mass media. In two secondary analyses, the
likelihood variable is measured by the frequency of talking about the news
and level of social interaction.In a simple experimental test, the subjects'
expectation of informally discussing a specific news topic is manipulated.[8]

Correlational Evidence

Relevant findings dealing with mass media exposure patterns are drawn from
data collected in a survey focusing on alienation and mass media use (McLeod,
Ward, and Tancill, 1965). A probability sample of 167 Madison, Wisconsin, adults
were asked which mass media they used, how much they used them, what was used
within a given medium, and what gratifications were obtained.[9] Respondents
reported how many newspapers they read, how much time they spent attending
television, radio and newspapers in an average day [for magazines, how much
time per week], and whether each of nine gratifications associated with news
reading applied to them generally, a little, or not at all.

In addition, respondents indicated how regularly they discussed the news
with their family, friends, co-workers, and chance acquaintances. Questions
dealing with the number of organizational memberships, office-holding in
organizations, frequency of visits with friends, and self-designated opinion
leadership indirectly measured the likelihood of news discussion. The two
sets of items available for analysis are presented in Appendix B.

The secondary analysis of these data shows that the number of groups with
which news is discussed "often" is significantly associated with the number of
newspapers read daily [$r = +.20$, $p<.05$], and correlates positively with the
amount of time spent reading both newspapers [+.15] and magazines [+.14]. The
two newspaper correlations are unaffected when socio-economic status is
partialled out, and decrease only slightly when education is controlled. The

mean differences between the levels of discussion frequency and these media

variables are presented in Table 5. This table also shows that exposure to the

primarily entertainment media relates to discussion frequency in a different

pattern: the number of groups with which news is talked about correlates

negatively with time spent watching television [-.28, p<.05] and correlates

negligibly with radio listening time [+.06].

Both the number of newspapers read and the time spent with newspapers have

a stronger relationship with discussion frequency than with the standard

demographic variables such as education, income, occupational level, age, or

sex, and the more oblique interpersonal variables. For magazine reading time,

only education and income correlate more strongly than frequency of news

discussion.

Among the other social variables, there is a consistently positive

relationship with the print media. The number of visits with friends correlates

positively with number of newspapers [+.11], and with time spent reading news-

papers [+.15] and magazines [+.12]. Holding an organization office shows a

similar pattern [+.09, +.10, +.10], as does self-reported designation as an

opinion leader on news affairs [mean differences are presented in Table 5].

Another secondary analysis examines this relationship for the special

case of news about a current election campaign. Variables relating to political

discussion and exposure to mass media election coverage were measured in a

statewide survey of Wisconsin voters during the 1968 Presidential campaign.

Interviews with 1,293 voters were conducted by the Wisconsin Survey Research

Laboratory as part of a larger investigation of parent-child communication

patterns and political socialization, under the direction of Jack M. McLeod and

Steven H. Chaffee. Respondents were parents of a stratified probability sample

of seventh and tenth grade students in five communities ranging in population

from 18,000 to 68,000.

The key information seeking variables dealt with the frequency of exposure to news about the political campaign in newspapers and magazines, and the amount of viewing of the Republican and Democratic conventions on television. (All items are described in Table 8). In addition, election information seeking was measured indirectly by reports of exposure levels for network TV news broadcasts, news specials, and public affairs interview shows. The main communicatory variable was the frequency of discussing the campaign with family and friends; in addition, respondents were asked if they had tried to talk someone into voting for their candidate, and how often they have family talks about general political topics. These three measures were summed to obtain a Political Discussion Index.

Table 8 shows that the frequency of discussing the current campaign strongly correlates with exposure to campaign coverage in the print media [r = +.49], convention viewing [+.29], and watching news and public affairs programming [+.24]. (Due to the large number of respondents, any correlation larger than +.13 is statistically significant at the .001 level). The other two discussion variables are less strongly related to information seeking, ranging from +.08 to +.25.

As expected, the respondent's level of interest in the campaign and his economic and educational background tended to be positively related to the exposure variables (Table 8). Therefore, these factors were statistically controlled to eliminate their effect on the discussion-exposure relationship. This analysis shows a decrease in the magnitude of the correlations, although they remain significantly positive. The partial correlation between print media exposure and the Political Discussion Index is +.28, compared to a +.48

raw correlation. For the television viewing indices, the correlations drop from +.26 to +.15 and +.24 to +.15.

These findings demonstrate a consistent association between social interaction and mass media exposure on a particular topic, even with other predictors partialed out. The data indicating that the correlations remain strong when personal interest is controlled lends support to the notion that communicatory utility may make an important independent contribution to news selection patterns.

Experimental Evidence

To test the strength and causal direction underlying these suggestive survey findings, a simple experiment was designed to examine the relationship between discussion and information seeking. In this study, the independent variable is the manipulated expectation of participating in a small, informal discussion about a given topic area. The dependent variable is the actual amount of exposure to mass media news information between the manipulation and the target date for the discussion. The study design sought to avoid the weaknesses of artificial information seeking behavior (such as paper and pencil forced-choice preferences from a listing of available information items), by creating a situation where information seeking could be realistically assessed during the period after the manipulation was introduced.

Hypothesis: When there is a high expectation of discussing a topic, there will be (a) greater information search for messages dealing with the proposed topic, and (b) more information receptivity to relevant messages in the course of normal media use. The baseline for comparing these levels of information seeking is provided by a control group expecting no discussion on the topic area.

Subjects were 69 high school seniors enrolled in an introductory sociology class in Middleton, Wisconsin. This course dealt with salient societal problems and current events, providing an appropriate setting for the manipulated discussion situations. The class assembled as a large lecture group each Monday and met in three smaller quiz sections on Thursdays and Fridays. On Monday, the regular course instructor announced that the forthcoming Thursday sections would break up into 3-man discussion groups and devote part of the period to informal "rapping" about current social problems. He emphasized that the interaction would be unstructured and ungraded, in order to avoid inducing a formal communication task where students would merely perform an assigned encoding activity required of them. The experimenter was not present at the time the manipulation was introduced to avoid sensitizing the students.

The overall class was divided into 26 small "buzz groups" according to the alphabetical order in each quiz section. This grouping procedure sidestepped problems of explaining why a given student was placed in a particular group, and also tended to cut across established friendship patterns. The 26 groups were randomly assigned into one of three conditions, depending on the designated discussion topic. One-third of the students were told they would be discussing national social problems (National condition), another third were to talk about social problems in the Madison area (Local condition), and the final segment were told to discuss social problems within Middleton High School (School condition). These topic assignments were presented orally by the instructor and repeated on a ditto information sheet passed out to the students. This sheet listed both the 3-man groupings and the topic area for discussion, along with a brief description of the topic and suggestions of particular events within the topic area. [Subjects in the National condition were instructed to concentrate on social problems on the national scene that were currently in the news, such as Governor Kirk's attempt to block desegregation of Florida schools, or the identity of President Nixon's next Supreme Court nominee; the Local Ss were to deal with such problems as prosecution of University of Wisconsin strike leaders or difficulties in locating a suitable rock festival site; those in the School condition were restricted to problems within the high school, such as which pupils should be able to use the student center or what should be done with smoking students].

The manipulation effectively limited the School group to conversational material that did not appear in the mass media, and they formed the Primary control group. The Local Ss could seek information in the local mass media outlets, particularly the six o'clock and ten o'clock news telecasts, the local page of the two Madison newspapers, and the brief radio newscasts on stations catering to the teenage market [news on these broadcasts was predominantly local in nature]. The National Ss could attend the national media, such as the network news telecasts, newsmagazines, and the editorial page of the Madison newspapers. Therefore, either the National Ss or the Local Ss could be combined with the School Ss to form an Overall control condition when analysing exposure to communications that were not applicable to their communicatory utility needs. In addition, both the National and Local groups could use certain parts of the local newspapers for relevant information; in the cases of front page reading and number of newspapers read, the School control group stood alone and the two experimental groups were combined for analysis.

The nature of this sociology course made the manipulation plausible to the students, who normally expected a variety of unusual informal assignments in their quiz sections. None of the students raised any questions about the legitimacy of the proposed discussion groups.

The dependent measures were obtained during the administration of a
questionnaire purportedly dealing with attitudes toward television violence.
Upon entering the classroom for the Thursday session, students were told that
since the period would be partially devoted to the buzz groups, it would also
be a good time to sample their opinions about the 'social problem' of violence
on TV. The experimenter took control of the administration details, as the
regular instructor explained that he had agreed to turn over the class for a
brief survey. After a number of filler items devoted to TV violence, Ss were
asked to report their media use patterns, first for an "average day" and then
for each of the past two days. [This transition was smoothly accomplished;
debriefing interviews indicated that students did not suspect any connection
between the Monday manipulation and the subsequent questionnaire about their
general media behavior. The concealment of the actual purpose of the survey
was especially important because of sensitization problems, since word of the
project might diffuse to members of other quiz sections meeting at a later time].

The results are presented individually for each dependent measure, grouped
into broad categories of national and local social problems. The mean exposure
levels for the experimental and control groups are shown in Table 6a and 6b.
Since the direction of all differences are predicted, a one-tailed t test is
applied in each case.

I. Exposure to news about national social problems--

    (a) "Did you read any magazines in the last few days? Which ones?" The
        national newsmagazines or opinion magazines mentioned by the Ss were
        totaled. The National group did not read significantly more than the
        Overall control group.

    (b) "How much of these sections of the newspaper did you read yesterday?"
        The editorial page was one of eight sections listed, and Ss indicated
        whether they had read most, some or none of it. The National group
        read 'more than the Overall control group ($p < .10$).

    (c) "Which TV shows did you watch yesterday, and how much did you watch?"
        The national news broadcasts (Cronkite, Huntley-Brinkley, Reynolds-
        Smith, and 60 Minutes) were included in the checklist of all programs
        appearing after 5 P.M. This question was repeated for the "day
        before yesterday," and the total amount of viewing was summed using
        the most-some-none scale for each program. The National Ss did not
        watch significantly more newscasts than the others.

    (d) "Can you remember the topics of some of the newspaper stories you
        read yesterday?" The relevant stories dealing with national social
        problems were totaled. National Ss mentioned more nationally relevant
        topics than the other Ss ($p < .05$).

II. Exposure to news about local social problems--

    (a) "Most radio stations have news broadcasts once an hour. About how
        many of these newscasts did you listen to closely yesterday?" The
        number of radio news shows was reported. Local Ss listened to
        substantially more primarily local newscasts than combined control Ss
        ($p < .10$).

    (b) "How much of these sections of the newspaper did you read yesterday?"
        The area news page was one of eight sections listed, and Ss indicated
        whether they had read most, some, or none of it. The Local Ss read
        significantly more of this newspaper section than the Overall control
        group ($p < .05$).

(c) "Which TV shows did you watch yesterday, and how much did you watch?"
The local news broadcasts (Six O'Clock and Ten O'Clock Local News)
were summed over the two days measured, according to the most-some-
none scale. Local Ss watched only slightly more local news coverage
than the others.

(d) "Can you remember the topic of some of the stories you read yester-
day?" The relevant stories dealing with local social problems were
totaled. Local Ss mentioned significantly more locally relevant
topics than the others (p<.05).

III. Exposure to news about either national or local social problems--

(a) "Did you read a newspaper yesterday? (If yes) Which newspaper(s)?"
The number of newspapers read was reported. There were no differences
between the three conditions on the mean number of newspapers.

(b) "How much of these sections of the newspaper did you read yesterday?"
The front page was one of eight sections listed, and Ss indicated
whether they had read most, some, or none of it. The combined
National and Local group read more than the School control group
(p<.10).

IV. Participation in interpersonal conversations about social problems--

In the context of questioning the students on their interpersonal communi-

cation about television violence, they were also asked to indicate how often

they talked with friends about news stories on TV or in newspapers. This was

followed by an item intended to gauge the amount of information seeking from

interpersonal sources:

"Can you remember any particular news stories you have talked about
lately? What are they? Who did you talk to?" The relevant stories dealing
with national or local social problems were totaled. The National Ss reported
that they talked about national topics more often than the Overall control
group (p<.10), and the Local group said they conversed about local social
problems significantly more frequently than the others (p<.05).

It is unclear, however, whether this finding indicates interpersonal

information seeking in preparation for the informal discussion situation, or

a heightened level of interpersonal expression on those topics about which they

were currently informed.

V. Overall information seeking activity--

The basic pattern of mass media use that emerges from these data is one of strong receptivity to useful content but very little active information search. Apparently the students expended the small amount of extra effort needed to choose relevant material in the course of their regular mass media use (i.e., selecting out specific news stories within the newspaper, but not trying to read additional newspapers; or listening to radio newscasts while tuned to the entertainment programming, but not bothering to turn on the TV news shows). On the other hand, active seeking of various media sources did not occur to a significant degree in this study. These two sets of findings appear distinctly for both experimental groups with regard to mass media exposure; the level of information seeking activity is difficult to determine in the case of interpersonal communication, however.

Discussion:

A wide range of evidence from correlational investigations has consistently shown a positive association between the amount of interpersonal discussion and exposure to relevant mass media materials. This relationship was illustrated in the case of news information seeking with supportive findings from a secondary analysis of survey data. An experimental test of information seeking on current events topics supported the hypothesized model that the anticipated communicatory situation directly affects selection of mass media content. Taken as a whole, the findings indicate that the expectation of conversational interaction at least partially accounts for the empirical relationship.

The main purpose of this preliminary study is to demonstrate the potential significance of the communicatory utility factor in understanding mass media information seeking. While there are typically a number of interacting

variables influencing media selection patterns, this factor is seldom accorded
prime consideration. Evidence presented here indicates that communicatory
utility may indeed combine with other determinants to affect exposure choice,
and may also account for otherwise puzzling information selection patterns
[see Festinger's discussion of utility as a confounding variable, in Festinger,
1964].

Important questions about the strength and range of this effect still need
to be answered. The null findings on the $_{active}$ seeking measures may have been
due to either weaknesses in the manipulation operationalization or a character-
istic limitation in the potency of the communicatory utility process. It may
be that the communicatory rewards are so slight that they offset only a minor
amount of extra effort expended on information seeking activity. The range of
information topics affected by this factor is not yet known, with the present
findings limited to information seeking on major news stories. Data relating
to this point are provided by an ongoing investigation of teenagers' viewing
of TV entertainment programming. One item in a questionnaire completed by 225
sixth and ninth graders in Middleton, Wisconsin, asked if the students watch
some shows that they don't really like because their friends want to talk about
them the next day. A total of 22% agreed that this statement described them.
On another question asking if TV programs provide interesting things to talk
about with friends, 33% of the students said "often," 64% replied "sometimes,"
and only 3% indicated "never."

The level of manifest motivation involved in information seeking due to
communicatory utility is difficult to assess; apparently conscious movement
toward media material for direct re-communication purposes is a relatively
infrequent behavior. For instance, Table 7 shows that reading newspapers "to
give me something to talk about with others" was only a moderately important

reason for general newspaper exposure. The most pervasive effect of this factor might actually operate in a more indirect and diffuse fashion, as users routinely seek information for short-term storage without a target conversation clearly in mind. Media content exposure may serve a primarily latent function in this model, with purposeful seeking playing a minor supplementary role. Among the pre-eminent reasons for newspaper reading in Table 7, "for information," "to help me keep up," and "for interpretation of important events" are each related to communicatory utility in an indirect manner. Information selection for these manifest reasons may be substantially determined by communicatory utility considerations.

The importance of this factor may be contingent on individual differences. Probably many people use the mass media for purely internal satisfactions, while more socially oriented individuals use information for communicatory purposes. Thus, communicatory utility may be a significant determinent of content selection patterns for certain types of media users, and have no effect on others. Future research should attempt to explore the nature of the social contingency.

Subsequent studies should also concentrate on the various coorientational variables affecting the particular pattern of information seeking, rather than sheer amount of exposure. Mass media materials may have varying kinds of communicatory utility, depending on the communication situation anticipated by the individual (See Appendix A). Particular attention must be given to the supportiveness and complexity of information sought under various circumstances.

Footnotes

1   For a brief survey of the primary approaches to studying the motivational basis for information seeking, see Parker and Paisley (1966). Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw (1940) and Berelson (1949) also dealt with various reasons why people use the printed media.

2   This definition follows from the work of Paisley and Parker (1966), who defined information broadly in the information theory sense. Thus they considered any act of attending the mass media or interrogating other people or observing the environment as information seeking.

3   Two comments from respondents illuminate the utility factor: "You have to read in order to keep up a conversation with other people. It is embarrassing not to know if you are in company who discuss the news," and "Not that I am uneasy about what's happening but I like to know about the country so when people ask you questions you don't feel dumb and silly." From Berelson (1949).

4   After examining some of the data relating to the two-step flow hypothesis, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) concluded: "There is need to inquire not only into the media exposure patterns of opinion leaders and the extent to which their own opinions and decisions are shaped by the media, but also into the different kinds of 'uses' to which the media are put by leaders in each realm, as compared to non-leaders."

5   The Chaffee and McLeod findings were limited in several ways, as some of the relationships between information requests and social utility were studied on an ad hoc basis after the research had been planned and the data collected. The authors noted that their investigation was restricted by the small number of predictor variables and the inadequate sampling of operational definitions of individual predictors, social predictors, and information seeking. The data allowed only a superficial examination of the complexity and supportiveness of information sought by respondents. In addition, this study focused on political communication exclusively, as the study was executed as part of a pre-election survey. Nevertheless, the approach employed and the results obtained are instructive for subsequent research efforts, and provide strong evidence supporting the communicatory utility notion.

6   This definition of decisional uncertainty is similar to Carter's (1965) evaluative mode and Festinger's (1957) pre-decisional conflict, in that cognitive conflict arises when a person is unable to discriminate between alternative objects. When an individual's degree of uncertainty is discrepant from his criterion uncertainty level, he may be motivated to seek information (this is a departure from Carter and Festinger, who posit an absolute discrepancy that is basically qualitative). Seeking is unbiased in this decisional mode, since any type of information may contribute to a reduction of uncertainty about objects under consideration. The degree of conflict (a function of the relative discrepancy and the importance of the decision) is hypothesized to increase the size and scope of the information search, and affect the selection of specific content material that contributes most to uncertainty reduction.

7   Tasks may range along a continuum from necessary obligations (such as taking an exam) to more voluntary projects (such as taking a trip). This broad concept includes .   ᵒ   .   .   .   .   . ᵒ .
l᷄   ᵒ certain types of formal encoding activities such as debates or speeches (see Clarke and James, 1967). The individual seeks information to bridge the gap between his present level of certainty to a criterion level of knowledge or understanding about the task. The amount of the discrepancy and the importance of the task will combine to determine the extent of the information search, and the perceived task utility of a particular message will affect it's actual selection.

8   Since "specific" communicatory utility of mass media content is emphasized in the experiment, this particular type of utility will be briefly examined. In the case of specific communicatory utility, the individual seeks information for the manifest purpose of informing, entertaining, or discussing with a target person. Because he has a certain receiver in mind at the moment of information seeking, the liklihood of interaction is at a high level. The actual content selected depends on such coorientational factors as relative interest, estimated informa- tion level, and value congruence, along with the individual's own orientations toward the topic (See Appendix A). Another important variable is the expected mode of interaction: most commonly, the individual anticipates either information giving (relaying new mass media content) or opinion sharing (discussing a topic both parties are familiar with),
        This type of communicatory utility can apply to either a specific topic or a specific message in the mass media. The latter case provides the most direct link between information seeking and subsequent discussional usefulness. Applied to the information giving mode, an individual may listen carefully to a newscast describing a late-breaking event in order to relay it to others, or he may retell a joke he had heard on television while watching a particular show that provides humorous material. In the content sharing mode (termed opinion sharing by Troldahl and Van Dam, 1966), a specific message such as an editorial or news story previously read by both the individual and the target person becomes a topic of discussion; the individual seeks this message anticipating the discussion.

9   The researchers selected dwelling units from the city directory and randomly chose the respondent from within the household. They oversampled the central urban-renewal district of Madison in an attempt to obtain a more representative socio-economic composition. The interview completion rate was 83%, and the sample obtained did not differ substantially from the city census statistics.

10   Absences at either session led to the loss of nine subjects. There were three lost from the School Problems condition, two from the Local Problems condition, and four from the National Problems condition.

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Appendix A

Important Variables Affecting Information Seeking Behavior of Individual A

(1) A's orientational variables toward a specific topic or topic area
      (a) his level of interest
      (b) his general knowledge level
      (c) his attitude
      (d) his level of current information regarding
           a potentially communicable aspect of topic

(2) A's estimate of B's orientations toward the topic or topic area

(3) The relationship between A's orientations and his perception of
    B's orientations
      (a) relative interest
      (b) relative knowledge
      (c) value congruency
      (d) current information discrepancy between A's new
           information level and his estimate of B's level

(4) A's anticipated mode of communication with B, including role and objectives
      (a) persuasion: an attempt to influence B through the
           creation, reinforcement, or change of B's opinions
      (b) opinion sharing: reciprocal opinion giving and asking
      (c) information giving: relay of new material to B
      (d) passive listening: minimal comprehension of conversation
           on a topic with low interest or knowledge
      (e) non-participation: no expectation of active or
           passive communication on the topic

(5) A's estimate of the amount and importance of the interaction with B
      (a) amount: length and frequency of discussion on topic
      (b) importance: significance of the discussion

Appendix B

Questicnnaire Items for Secondary Analysis of McLeod, Ward and Tancill (1965)

Media Use Questions:

1. What newspapers do you read every day or almost every day?

2. Would you say you spend less than 1 hour, 1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours, 3 to 4 hours, or over 4 hours a day reading the newspapers?

3. How much do you watch television during an average day or evening: would you say under 1 hour, 1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours, 3 to 4 hours, or over 4 hours?

4. Would you say that you listen to radio less than 1 hour, 1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours, 3 to 4 hours, or over 4 hours each day?

5. Would you say that you spend less than 1 hour, 1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours, or more than 4 hours each week reading magazines?

Interpersonal Discussion Questions: (Direct and indirect)

1. Do you frequently (several times each week) discuss the news of the day with someone?

2. With whom of the following do you regularly discuss the news and how often; that is, Often, Occasionally, or Never? Family, Friends, Co-workers; Chance acquaintances, and Others.

3. Do friends, acquaintances, or co-workers ask for your opinions on matters in the news?

4. Do you belong to any lodges, fraternal organizations, church groups, business or social clubs that hold regular meetings in Madison? If so, what are they?

5. Have you held an office or been a committee chairman in any of these groups in the past five years?

6. How many friends do you get together with at least once a month?

Table 1

Discussion of News with Others, by Type of TV-Print Media Use

Discussing the News:	Low TV, Low Print	High TV, Low Print	Low TV, High Print	High TV, High Print
Sixth Grade:				
Yes	26%	22%	37%	35%
No	72%	76%	61%	64%
No answer	2%	2%	2%	1%
	(N=43)	(N=148)	(N=118)	(N=302)
Tenth Grade:				
Yes	36%	31%	53%	38%
No	63%	69%	45%	60%
No answer	1%	0%	2%	2%
	(N=135)	(N=137)	(N=159)	(N=166)

* Source: Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961), p. 286.

Chi square = 14.2, p<.01 for 6th grade
Chi square = 18.7, p<.001 for 10th grade

Table 2

Index of Exposure of Opinion Leaders and Others to the Formal Media[*]

Media use:	Great Interest in Campaign		Less Interest in Campaign	
	Opinion Leaders	Others	Opinion Leaders	Others
Mean Newspaper items	15.8	12.3	14.8	6.6
Mean Radio items	14.6	12.3	13.0	7.6
Mean Magazine items	20.6	14.1	15.8	4.0

* Source: Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1948), p. 51.

(Notice that the less interested opinion leaders had greater exposure than highly interested others).

Table 3

Relationships between Political Activity and Mass Media Usage[*]

Political Activity:	Media Usage Gamma	Media Usage Partial Gamma (Education, Income Controlled)	
Time of Voting Choice	.094	-.014	(N=1089)
Concern for Election Outcome	.213	.169	(N=1427)
Voting in Previous Elections	.286	.137	(N=1443)
Index of Political Efficacy	.311	.114	(N=1449)
Voting in 1964 Election	.418	.310	(N=1449)
Interest in Campaign	.438	.346	(N=1443)
Letters to Public Officials	.458	.301	(N=1447)
Political Persuasion Acts	.461	.348	(N=1447)

* Source: Becker and Preston (1969), p. 133. Secondary analysis of 1964 Election Study by Survey Research Center

Table 4

**Mean Percent Requesting Campaign Pamphlets,
by Comparative Interest and Discussion Frequency***

| | Low Discussion | | High Discussion | |
	Interest more or less than friends	Interest same as friends	Interest more or less than friends	Interest same as friends
Own candidate pamphlet	33%	31%	31%	50%
Opposition pamphlet	17%	21%	16%	35%
Multi-candidate pamphlet	68%	86%	84%	78%
More than one pamphlet	13%	23%	25%	38%
N: gubernatorial	42	40	45	93
N: congressional	49	80	37	54

Mean Percent Requesting Pamphlets, by Expectation of Future Discussion*

	Low Liklihood of Discussion	High Liklihood of Discussion
Own candidate pamphlet	31%	41%
Opposition pamphlet	19%	27%
Multi-candidate pamphlet	72%	84%
More than one pamphlet	18%	31%
N: gubernatorial	70	151
N: congressional	99	122

* Source: Chaffee and McLeod (1967)

Table 5

Relationship between News Discussion and News Information Seeking

(Secondary analysis of data from McLeod, Ward and Tancill, 1965)

Media exposure:	Number groups discuss news with "often":		
	None N=54	One N=53	Two or more N=58
Number newspapers read daily	1.07	1.15	1.36*
Total time reading newspapers	1.28	1.43	1.52
Total time reading magazines	2.17	2.47	2.81
Total time watching television	3 24	2.81	2.34*
Total time listening to radio	2.13	2.47	2.29

Media exposure:	Frequency of news opinion leadership:		
	Not at all N=45	Occasionally N=89	Often N=24
Number newspapers read daily	1.02	1.20	1.54*
Total time reading newspapers	1.33	1.40	1.71
Total time reading magazines	2.02	2.56	3.17*
Total time watching television	3.09	2.65	2.78
Total time listening to radio	2.16	2.45	2.21

* $p < .05$, F test

Table 6a

Mean Amount of News Information Seeking on National and Local Social Problems

	Anticipated Discussion Topic			
	National Problems (N=23)	School Problems (N=24)	Local Problems (N=22)	

Recent Media Exposure on National Problems

Newsmagazines Read (mean number)	1.00	1.08	1.05	n.s.
National Television Newscasts (none=0, some=1, most=2)	1.04	.75	1.00	n.s.
Editorial Page Reading (none=0, some=1, most=2)	1.04	.83	.55	p<.10
Relevant News Stories Read (mean number)	.87	.37	.45	p<.05
	(exp),	(control)		

Recent Media Exposure on Local Problems

Radio Newscasts Attended (mean number)	1.87	1.67	2.55	p<.10
Local Television Newscasts (none=0, some=1, most=2)	1.39	1.54	1.64	n.s.
Area News Page Reading (none=0, some=1, most=2)	.83	.83	1.23	p<.05
Relevant News Stories Read (mean number)	.21	.12	.55	p<.05
	(control)		(exp)	

Note- For exposure to news about national social problems, "t" tests were performed on the means of the National group and the Combined control condition containing the Local and School Ss. A Combined control group of National and School Ss was constructed for local news.

Table 6b

Mean Amount of Information Seeking from Mass Media and Interpersonal Sources

Anticipated Discussion Topic

	National Problems (N=23)	Local Problems (N=22)	School Problems (N=24)	
Recent Media Exposure on National or Local Social Problems				
Newspapers Read (mean number)	.97	1.05	1.08	n.s.
Front Page News Reading (none=0, some=1, most=2)	1.43	1.55	1.21	p<.10
	(experimental)		(control)	
Participation in Interpersonal conversations about Social Problems				
Relevant Local News Stories Talked About Recently (mean number)	.23	.70	.37	p<.05
Relevant National News Stories Talked About Recently (mean number)	1.09	.78	.67	p<.10

Note- For exposure to news about either national or local social problems, "t" tests were performed on the means of the combined experimental group and the School control group. For interpersonal conversation, the control groups on each measure contained all Ss who were not anticipating discussion on that topic area.

Table 7

Relative Importance of Nine Reasons for Newspaper Reading

(Secondary analysis of data from McLeod, Ward and Tancill, 1965)

	Generally	A Little	Not at All
For information	92%	7%	1%
To help me keep up with things	88%	8%	4%
For interpretation of important events	67%	24%	9%
For the pleasure of reading	60%	22%	18%
To give me something to talk about with others	50%	31%	19%
To feel as though I am taking part in others' lives without actually being there	20%	25%	55%
To help me get away from daily worries	13%	25%	62%
As an aid in solving problems	10%	32%	58%
To bring some excitement into my life	14%	19%	67%

(N=167)

Table 8

Correlates of Exposure to Political Campaign News in the Mass Media

Correlation coefficient between level of exposure and	Level of exposure to		
	Newspaper and Magazine Campaign Coverage	TV Political Convention Coverage	TV News and Public Affairs Programming
Frequency of Discussing the Election Campaign	+.49	+.29	+.24
Frequency of Family Political Discussions	+.25	+.15	+.17
Attempted Political Persuasion	+.26	+.09	+.08
Index of Political Discussion (sum of three items above)	+.48	+.26	+.24
Level of Interest in Election Campaign	+.49	+.25	+.25
Amount of Education of Respondent	+.39	+.13	+.03
Amount of Income of Respondent Family	+.27	+.09	+.04
Partial correlation coefficient between level of exposure and Index of Political Discussion (controlling interest, income, and education)	+.28	+.15	+.15

Interview items:

Newspaper and Magazine Campaign Coverage -- "How often have you read newspaper articles about this election--very often, pretty often, sometimes, not too often, or never? Never = 1, through Very often = 5
"Do you recall reading anything about the campaigns in any magazines? How many magazine articles about the election campaigns would you say you have read --a good many, several, or just one or two?" Read nothing = 1, through A good many = 4. These two items were summed to form an index.

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

<u>TV Political Convention Coverage</u> -- "Did you happen to watch any of the
Republican convention on television a few weeks ago? Did you watch most
of it, some of it, or only a little of it?" Did not watch = 0, through
Most of it = 3. Same item repeated for Democratic convention.

<u>TV News and Public Affairs Programming</u> -- "About how often do you watch the
following kinds of television shows? Do you watch them very often, pretty
often, sometimes, not too often, or never?" National News Broadcasts.
News Specials. Interview Shows like 'Meet the Press'. Never = 0, through
Very often = 4

<u>Frequency of Discussing the Election Campaign</u> -- "About how often have you
discussed the election campaign with your family or friends? Would you say
very often, pretty often, sometimes, not too often, or never?" Never = 1,
through Very often = 5

<u>Frequency of Family Political Discussions</u> -- "How I would like to read a list
of things parents sometimes do with their children. For each, do you do it
very often, pretty often, sometimes, rarely, or never: How often do you
have family talks about topics like politics or religion where some persons
take different sides from others?" Never, Rarely = 1, Sometimes = 2, and
Pretty often, Very often = 3

<u>Attempted Political Persuasion</u> -- "During the election campaign this year have
you done any of the following things to help a candidate: Try to talk some-
one into voting your way?" No = 0, Yes = 2

<u>Level of Interest in Election Campaign</u> -- "Generally speaking, how interested
would you say you, yourself, are in the current election campaigns? Would
you say very interested, pretty interested, not too interested, or not at
all interested?" Not at all = 1, through Very interested = 4

<u>Amount of Education of Respondent</u> -- "What was the highest grade of school
or year of college you completed?" Less than eight grade = 0, through
Some graduate school = 8

<u>Amount of Income of Respondent Family</u> -- "What do you estimate your total
family income will be this year considering all sources such as rents, pro-
fits, wages, interest, and so on? Under $2,000 = 1, through $20,000 or
more = 8