

Sensation Seeking and Mass Media Usage
Author: Babocsay Ádám

The Background

The lecture examines the relationships between media usage and personality. Both traditional mass communication devices and the 'new media' such as the mobile telephone, computer and the internet are discussed. Paradigms of Contents and Effects and Uses and Gratifications are used as an explanatory framework. The former conceives the media user as a passive recipient whom the effects of media go through without filtering, processing. As opposed to this the latter emphasises that the relationship between the media user and the media is dynamic, interactive, and the media user has a primary role in it.

The theory of sensation seeking is used to interpret media usage. *Sensation seeking is defined as a personality trait by Zuckerman in his summary publication, which appears in the needs for diverse, new, complex stimulus and taking physical or social risks of the sensation seekers.* The paper presented here reviews the role of sensation seeking in media usage.

The Research

Complex correlations of media gratifications, media usage, demographic variables and sensation seeking are examined on a sample of Hungarian population aged between 18 and 45 to generalise and extend the results of previous research projects. Content preferences and the reasons of usage are presented in respect of new media devices in relation with the personality dimension.

According to our data, those who reach high scores in the given personality dimension do not attribute high priority to media usage in general, but newer media play an important role in their media usage.

Key Words

Media usage, personality, sensation seeking, Contents and Effects, Uses and Gratifications, gratification, content preference