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CABLE TELEVISION UTILIZATION IN LOGAN, UTAH

by

Kathryn Whittle

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

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in

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Approved:

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Dean of Graduate Studies

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1986

I dedicate this thesis to my long-suffering parents.

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Kathryn Whittle

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. SURVEY OF LITERATURE	4
Major Uses and Gratifications Research Studies	5
Cable Television and Uses and Gratifications Theory	17
Summary	20
III. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	22
Hypotheses	23
Descriptive Analysis of Cable Subscribers and Non-subscribers	23
Differences in Lifestyles for Cable Subscribers and Non-subscribers	23
Media Usage for Cable Subscribers and Non-subscribers	24
IV. METHODOLOGY	25
Sampling Method	25
The Survey	26
Statistical Tests Performed	27
V. FINDINGS.	28
VI. DISCUSSION	35
VII. CONCLUSIONS	41
Significant Trends in Testing Results	41
Implications for Further Research	44
REFERENCES	45

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Age by Subscription	28
2. Income by Subscription	29
3. Education by Subscription	30
4. Movie Attendance by Subscription	31
5. Sports Attendance by Subscription	32
6. Time Spent Watching TV by Subscription	33

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The recent expansion in the cable television industry has brought about a kind of media revolution. Many more types of programs are being made available to the public via cable than would have been possible through regular network broadcasting.

Cable television has the capability of importing distant signals from all over the country into the homes of thousands of American families. Viewers now have the opportunity of enjoying specialty-type programs and stations such as an all Black Entertainment Network, a 24-hour sports, movie and news networks, and an all religious programming station, just a few of the stations and programs offered through cable. In some areas of the United States, 50 or more stations are available to the public. More people than ever before are able to find something of interest to them on television. Cable television appears to have the capability of satisfying many of the diverse entertainment needs of the American public.

In addition, the last ten to twenty years have brought increased speculation about a "leisure boom" taking place in the United States. There have been dramatic increases in the reported use of parks and other recreation facilities, and also in the sales of campers, boats, and sports equipment. Vast increases in book and magazine sales, and admissions to theatres and museums have also been reported. At the same time there has been no decrease in the reported length of the work week since

1946, or in the amount of housework. These reports seem perplexing given that time is a fixed resource. Their implications for television time are also highly ambiguous and suggest that a study of cable television would be of value (Robinson, 1981).

As the mass media have developed, they have achieved two things. They have become channels for reaching more people than was available under "pre-mass media" conditions and they have become vehicles for the dissemination of more information than was available before. These facts have implications for any other institution which requires allocation of time and attention, especially to large numbers and in large quantities (McQuail, 1974). According to McQuail,

Insofar as we can regard leisure and sport as institutions in modern society, these should perhaps be added to politics and education as the most directly interrelated with mass media (p. 88).

It is not difficult to appreciate that we can arrive at one or more versions of ways in which culture and social structure can be influenced by the path of development of media institutions. If the content of what we know, our way of doing things and spending time, and the organization of central activities of the society are in part dependent on the media, then the fact of interdependence is evident (p. 89).

The many more viewing choices available through cable could possibly change or replace patterns of leisure behavior with which the media compete for time (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981). People now have more of an opportunity to satisfy their entertainment needs by staying at home and watching the various programs offered through cable television rather than going out. Major sporting events and quality movies are now offered through cable. These sources of entertainment were usually found outside the home.

The question that arises is whether or not people will choose to stay home and view these types of events or go out to view them. If people's leisure time behavior (time spent in non-working hours) is changed by the introduction of cable television, this could have an effect on the daily living routine of the average American.

Cable television may have yet another influence on society. Cable is not available to all segments of the population. There are those who are unable to afford it, or for other reasons choose not to subscribe. Though cable television serves an entertainment function, it also offers news and reports of current events. Among other things, cable offers two 24-hour news networks with up-to-the minute reporting. Cable television, therefore, may have created a gap, informationally, educationally, or culturally between people who choose to subscribe and those who don't. Those who subscribe to cable television may be experiencing changes in lifestyle that those without cable are not experiencing. Thus, a study of cable television usage may be useful in determining which specific segments of the population are being affected in what ways.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Many theories have been used to explain audience behavior with regard to the mass media. For a study of cable television usage however, perhaps the most appropriate one is the Uses and Gratifications Theory which uses a functional analysis type approach. By looking at previous research on the functions and effects of the general media on audience members some insight can be gained about the influence of cable television on society in particular.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is not a new approach to the study of the media. It has its roots in the sociological writings and theories of the early 1960s. A view of the media developed which perceived the audience member as intelligent and active, rather than passive, with regard to being able to choose between the media and their specific content. Although it cannot be denied that media exposure often has a casual origin; the issue is whether, in addition, patterns of media use are shaped by more or less definite expectations of what certain kinds of content have to offer the audience member (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981).

This approach to the study of the media grew, in part, out of an opposition to such writers as Laswell (Davis & Baran, 1981), who viewed the media as having great power over their audience. Human behavior was thought to be non-rational; therefore the audience was deemed to be easy prey for any type of propaganda.

Present uses and gratifications research concentrates on the

audience and the uses it makes of the media rather than analyzing the specific content of the media and making judgements about it, either moral or otherwise (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).

Major Uses and Gratifications Research Studies

Wright (1974) attempted to specify a functional perspective for the study of mass communications by borrowing from Iaswell's four-fold typology of media functions; surveillance, correlation, entertainment, and cultural transmission. He classified these functions and consequences of mass communication activities for individuals, groups, and societies.

Wright's essay further addressed the problems that occur in trying to specify and code kinds of communication phenomena that lend themselves to functional analysis. He also expressed the need to rephrase hypotheses in terms of functional analysis. By rephrasing, thus redefining, the hypotheses in terms of functional analysis, guidelines can be set up to determine the conditions under which a hypothesis could change or new hypotheses could be formed. For example we generally accept the hypothesis that in a modern society an individual's need for surveillance will be met through the process of mass communication. But at the same time the mass communicative features of this activity have effects on the individual that may be dysfunctional. For example, large amounts of raw news may overwhelm him/her and lead to personal anxiety, apathy, or other reactions. These reactions might interfere with his/her reception of news items about the environment necessary for his/her normal operations. Thus under certain conditions the original hypothesis would not hold true (Wright, 1964).

While Wright did not attempt an empirical investigation or reach any specific conclusions regarding Uses and Gratifications Theory, he did provide a framework for implementing future coding and classification schemes in the research.

De Fleur (1966) also looked at the functions and effects of the media from a sociological viewpoint. His approach to mass communication effects includes a survey of the diffusion of the major media through American society, claiming that the mass media may be viewed as a cultural innovation in their own right.

In his writings, De Fleur (1966) outlines five types of theories or effects processes which have been developed successively as knowledge of the field has advanced. One of his effects processes brings to light an important concept about Uses and Gratification Theory--the mediating or indirect effects of the media on the individual.

This concept is included in the selective exposure and response approach to the media, which is a part of Uses and Gratifications Theory. This concept states that individuals tend to expose themselves only to messages with which they agree (selective exposure), tend to distort messages to fit their pre-existing beliefs (selective perception) and tend to remember only those parts of messages with which they agree (selective retention) (McQuail, 1974). The differing exposure and response people have to the media could partly be the result of what could be termed as mediating or indirect conditions. These are such things as the social position, religion, or occupation of the individual. They therefore represent a kind of de facto selectivity operating on the individual with regard to media effects. This is the case when circumstances,

rather than conscious choice, are the determining factor in media selection and effects (Sears & Freedman, 1967). (More will be discussed on this subject in the section on Sears & Freedman, page 11.)

Some criticisms have been leveled against De Fleur's work, namely that he deals primarily with the level of the individual effect rather than societal effect on the media (Curran, Gurevitch & Wollacott, 1979). The Uses and Gratifications approach to the mass media, however, deals mainly with the level of the individual.

Katz, et al. (1973) have conducted a large amount of research on Uses and Gratifications Theory, concluding that the four-function typologies of Laswell and Wright are too vague and general. They came up with an elaborate classification scheme of their own employing the central notion that mass communication is used by individuals to connect (or disconnect) themselves to society via instrumental, affective, or integrative relations with different kinds of others (self, family, friend, nations, etc.),

The contribution of these men comes from the fact that they drew attention to the needs of individuals and related them to expressed gratifications. They also found empirical regularities in the preferences for different media for different kinds of connections (instrumental, affective, or integrative relations with different kinds of others). This occurs, Katz proposes, because each medium seems to offer a unique combination of characteristic content, typical attributes (print versus broadcasting modes of transmission) and typical exposure situations (at home versus out-of-home, alone versus with others, control over temporal aspects of exposure versus absence of such control). In looking at which combination of attributes may render different media more or less

adequate for the satisfaction of different needs, he claims that those media that differ in their attributes are more likely to serve different needs and those media that are similar in their attributes are more likely to serve similar needs. This can be turned around to say that needs that are psychologically related will be served equally well by the same media (Katz et al., 1973).

An example of this is found in an Israeli study done by Katz et al., (1973). They argued that structurally-related needs will tend to be serviced by certain media more often than by others. Books and cinema appear to cater to needs concerned with self-fulfillment and self-gratification. They help to "connect" individuals to themselves. Newspapers, radio and television all seem to connect individuals to society.

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973) proposed a formal and specific classification scheme for psychological needs and gratification. The model asserts that the audience is active, i. e., an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal-directed. Another point in their model is that in the mass communication process, much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member.. The model further states that the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction. Methodologically, the model claims that many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves, i.e., people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases. In addition, value judgements about the cultural significance of mass communications should, they say, be suspended while audience orientations are explored

on their own terms (Katz et al., 1973).

The main contributions of Katz, Blumer, and Gurevitch to Uses and Gratifications Theory can be found in their concept of psychological need as related to expressed gratifications and how this might determine media use by the audience member. Their contribution of a classification scheme for psychological needs and gratifications also helped to clarify Uses and Gratification Theory.

Other authors, among them Elliot (1974), have questioned whether the research has really provided evidence of an active audience selecting from the media in accordance with its needs. They propose that, in order to properly explore the functions of the media, individual audience member needs must be related to the individual's selection and use of the media.

A study done by Susan Kippax and John P. Murray (1980) attempts to overcome this omission in previous research. They tried to determine whether perceived gratifications of audience members is directly related to their use of the media, independent of situation and social variables.

Kippax and Murray assembled a list of forty-two media related needs. In it they incorporated Katz's Israeli study list of needs McQuail's four-fold typology of media needs (diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance), and Robinson's list of media-related needs (utilitarian, ego defensive, value expressive, and informative)

Of these forty-two needs, thirty were found to be adequate for the study. These needs were then factor analyzed to incorporate four clusters of important media needs. Factor I included personal identity and

social contact needs, Factor II dealt with information needs, Factor III was concerned with self-gratification and stimulation needs and Factor IV included escapist needs.

Questions were then asked of the subjects regarding their specific use of each medium and correlated this with statements they had made about the perceived helpfulness of the specific medium in gratifying their needs. Kippax and Murray concluded that the use of the various media, with the exception of newspapers, is related to perceived helpfulness in gratifying needs (Kippax & Murray, 1980).

Media use and need importance were then correlated for the subjects. When demographic variables were held constant, no significant relationships were found. Only two trends appeared. One suggested that those with self-gratification needs (Factor III) read more books than those who placed little importance on these needs. The other suggested that for those who rated entertainment needs (Factor IV) as important, films were not only perceived to satisfy the need but their use indicated this.

The authors claim that these results suggest the possibility that the relationship of media use to need importance is modified by both the diversity of the functions served by the media and the availability of the media (Kippax & Murray, 1980).

The authors conclude that there may be no relationship between the quantity of use and need gratification. Rather they suggest that a far more complex relationship may exist between the quality of use and need gratification via the demographic and social characteristics of the audience members and the characteristics of each medium. Results of the study do demonstrate a relationship, not a clear one, between media use

and perceived functions of the media with regard to the need gratification, process (Kippax & Murray, 1980).

Kippax and Murray confirm Katz's study linking media needs with perceived gratification, but they go one step further by attempting to link media use with need importance. Elliot's argument receives some support from the results of this study because it demonstrates that need importance and media use are not clearly related (excluding films which do appear to serve an entertainment function). Most of the media are perceived as serving diverse needs and it appears that this diversity, as Elliott argues, makes it difficult to identify and categorize the specific functions that these media may serve for any particular individual (Elliot, 1974).

Other critics of uses and gratifications research, primarily sociologists David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman (1967), contend that the selective exposure process which is inherent in Uses and Gratification Theory is not determined by psychological variables such as felt needs, which Katz et al. (1973), propose, but by extemporaneous variables. These are things such as the utility of the information, the education of the individual, and past exposure history of the media content. They propose that this is a type of de facto selectivity, whereby circumstances, rather than motives, conspire to expose people to congenial communication.

In answer to Sears and Freedman, Katz argues that de facto selectivity may be in operation a good deal of the time with the audience, but that with infield studies it is hard to determine what is and is not de facto selectivity. This may be because of timing of the exposure to communication situations, and the possibility of unequal exposure on

each side of an issue. There is also the problem of a definition of selective exposure itself. What criteria do individuals use to recognize whether they are in the presence of supportive or discrepant information (Elliott, 1974)?

Although the hypotheses regarding Uses and Gratifications have not been disproved by Sears and Freedman, the concept of media use has been broadened by questions Sears and Freedman have asked regarding selectivity.

The Uses and Gratifications approach to mass research has been criticized on several counts. Among other things, some claim it lacks a general theory although most scholars admit the approach itself is not totally atheoretical (Blumler, 1979).

Some conceptual problems still exist with the approach. Jay G. Blumler (1979) points out some of the problems which exist with regard to "audience activity". He claims that the term "active audience" brings to mind several meanings which need to be clarified. He says that perhaps the term should be treated as a variable rather than an either-or condition. Blumler also points to the failure in the approach to recognize that activity might vary across both media and time. Others such as Swanson (1977), criticized Uses and Gratifications approach for lack of conceptual clarity noting that terms such as "function", "use", "gratification", "need" and "motive" are rarely defined let alone explicated.

Another reason for the lack of clarity surrounding Uses and Gratifications Theory is the tendency for scholars of this approach to dissociate the research from effects research. Uses and Gratifications

theory tends to lack a well-formed prior perspective about which forms of content are likely to facilitate which effects. Blumler (1979) claims that part of the problem may stem from confusion within the original uses and gratifications philosophy. Pioneers of the approach perceived any intent of conscious motivation on the part of the audience members as blocking message effects as evidenced in at least one study done by McLeod, Becker, and Byrnes (1974). This differs from the position of those uses and gratifications researchers who were skeptical about this limited effects point of view of media impact. They expected gratifications variables to provide discriminators of diverse lines of media influence. The original design of Blumler and McQuail's 1968 study of the British General Election in part illustrated this point,

We expected a division of the members of a sample according to their different motives for following election broadcasts (p. 153).

Since then many have recognized that to overcome this problem, certain impulses of audience motivation which underlie mass media use need to be specified and considered how they might be expected to facilitate certain media effects. The numerous typologies of audience needs that have emerged made this task difficult. This is part of the reason for the lack of clarity in the theoretical issues surrounding the Uses and Gratifications approach and to the differences in research findings (Blumler, 1979).

Among others, Blumler (1979) has said that some criticisms of uses and gratifications research are misleading because critics treat the approach as a single theory when it is more correct to regard it as an umbrella under which several Uses and Gratifications theories and models may be

found. Sven Windahl (1981) claims that criticisms of questionable points in what really are different models are lumped together as if concerning a single Uses and Gratifications theory.

Windahl argues for a merger between uses and gratifications research and effects research. (Windahl 1981).

Empirical research has yielded a scatter of indicators that gratification orientations are indeed relevant to the effects process--sometimes by supplementing exposure influences (McLeod et al., 1974, p. 138), sometimes by interacting with them (Blumler & McQuail, 1968, p. 203).

Similarities can be found. Some "consequences" are treated as "effects" and the effects may be discussed as if these outcomes (effects) really are consequences (Windahl, 1981, p. 174).

McQuail and Windahl (1984) stress that media use may have consequences such as dependency on a medium or communicator, as well as on needs and preferences. These are outcomes of the communication process which haven't really been systematically investigated. Another interesting point which hasn't been much researched is that differential mass media use may have consequences on higher, societal levels. Nordlund (1978), among others has helped develop this theme. He maintains that preferences systematically distributed in a population may contribute to widening gaps of knowledge and information. It has been pointed out that the mere use of the mass media and their content may lead to change in behavioral and cultural patterns. For example television viewing replaces real interaction and that consumption of one medium gives less time for other cultural activities. In fact Rosengran and Windahl (1977) have indicated that mass media use, for some

categories, is a substitute for interaction and this may lead to an increased degree of neuroticism.

With scholar's attention as of late, turning towards some important outcomes of media use, Windahl developed a model which merges the two traditions of uses and gratifications and that of effects (McQuail & Windahl, 1984). He employs the concept of media use as an intervening variable with regard to three types of consequences or effects. First, there are effects of the media content with media use as an intervening variable (the elements leading up to the media use such as needs, expectations, interests and motives are included). Second, there are the consequences of processes where media use in itself is the most important cause of the outcome. Third, he claims that there are what may be called "consequences" which are partly results of content mediated by use and partly the results of media in itself. Thus, it is a combination of the first two types (McQuail & Windahl, 1984).

In summary, Windahl argues that linking uses and effects thinking in a single model avoids some of the pitfalls of the original Uses and Gratifications approach, namely that, 1) it does not stress the "basic need" factor, allowing for other sources of media use, 2) it gives more attention to the media content than is usually the case, and 3) it doesn't regard the audience member as the only active part of the process--it recognizes intent and activity on the part of the sender (Windahl, 1981).

In helping to explain the mass communications process more fully, Uses and Gratifications theory could expand on yet another ground; a possible merger between uses and gratifications research and popular culture. As Carey and Kreiling (1974) writing from a cultural studies standpoint have observed, "Uses and Gratifications research fails to link the functions of mass media consumption with the symbolic content

of the mass-communicated materials or with the actual experience of consuming them (p. 231). In their essay regarding this subject, they are unsure that a marriage can be arranged between the cultural studies and uses and gratifications approaches, several times insisting on the unique properties of cultural studies as a "self-contained and immaculate pursuit." They claim that the cultural experience is reduced by uses and gratifications researchers to matters of tension reduction and role performance. They conclude that the underlying uses and gratifications logic is inadequate for a study of popular culture. Yet at other times in their essay they give several bridge-building suggestions such as that "mass communication is a system of interacting symbols and interlocked meanings that somehow must be linked to the motivations and emotions for which they provide a symbolic outlet (Carey & Kreiling, 1974, p. 235).

Blumler (1979) claims that such a marriage between cultural studies and uses and gratifications approach might be possible. It could begin to emerge by recalling how some early uses and gratifications studies showed how certain media materials spoke to the condition of their fans. According to Hertzog (1944) and Warner and Henry (1948) the popularity of the radio soap opera stemmed partly from how it spoke to its listeners (housebound housewives). Similarly, the Dales (another day-time radio serial) traced some of its appeal to the "projection of meaning capable of being assimilated to listeners' own values and circumstances" (Blumler, Brown, & McQuail, 1979, p.33).

Blumler (1979) claims that implicit in such studies is the framework for linking uses and gratifications approaches with popular culture. To start with would be the idea that,

Audience members familiar with certain materials come to form perceptions of what they have to offer. These in turn, become their perceived appeals which may include perceptions of the meanings and values conveyed by the materials concerned. Translated into expectations, these appeals become motives for attending to the same materials. If confirmed in experience, they become satisfactions which will feed back into the complex of motives for continuing to consume them. Meanwhile, audience members' social roles help to shape perceptions of such meaning and in this way also feature among the forces motivating attendance (pp. 33-34).

Research conducted concerning this phenomenon might unravel how far, and in what ways, perceptions of content meaning contribute to media motivations and how such perceptions and their motivational implications vary across audience subgroups and across various kinds of content (Blumler, 1979).

With mass media technology growing to include many more types of content such as that of the relatively new cable television industry, such a marriage between students of popular culture and the Uses and Gratifications approach to the mass media may be fruitful and would perhaps give insight into new ways in which the media is being used.

Cable Television and Uses and Gratifications Theory

Katz has suggested that clues to the functions a particular medium performs can be gained through searching out and studying those occasions in which a medium of communication is being augmented in scope or is reaching new segments of society. Many, such as Campbell (1963), Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958), and Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961), have studied what happened when television was introduced into communities. Insofar as cable television can be considered a new

medium, (or an older medium augmented in scope) with its introduction into an existing system, it has the potential of altering the relationship between needs and media use (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981).

With the multitude of new viewing choices offered by cable television, its value as a leisure time or recreational activity may be greatly enhanced at the expense of other, more traditional leisure activities.

In a study done by Robinson (1981), Television and Leisure Time, time spent viewing television was found to be negatively correlated with time spent on activities done away from home (entertainment outside the home, social visiting, religion, and travel). When correlations were done for time spent viewing television and time spent on other at-home activities (such as radio listening, rest and relaxation, book/magazine reading, and sleep) the negative correlation was not as strong.

Many of these outside-the-home leisure activities, such as participation in sporting events, either as a spectator or a player, are means of relaxing and being entertained. As such, they are competitive with the media-generated means of satisfying the need for entertainment (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981).

Within the media, television not only competes for an individual's time, but his or her financial resources as well (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981). Often, television entertainment is cheaper and more easily accessible than other outside-the-home activities if it provides access to viewing of similar events, for example, baseball games. This is especially true if the television version of the event is of higher quality than one could have access to close to their home. In the case of baseball games, attendance at an American minor league game would be in competition with a televised game of major league baseball.

The availability of many more entertainment channels which cable television has to offer may affect people's evaluation of the means for satisfying their needs. Their needs may now be met by either participating in outside activities or staying home and viewing similar types of entertainment, such as sports and movies, on television.

Robinson (1981), in the study (Television Viewing and Leisure Time) has found that some early casualties of television (radio listening, visiting, newspaper reading, etc.) continued to decline as television viewing time sought new plateaus; and that away from home activities are the most successful competitors for Americans' leisure time. Time budget studies have shown that Americans spend more than three-fourths of their total mass media time, and as much as forty percent of their total leisure time, with television. The increase in total time spent with the mass media brought about by television thus inevitably means some diminution elsewhere (Robinson, 1981).

Robinson suggests that this increase in viewing time of television may be related to two separate groups of factors, those dealing with television technology and those dealing with television content. The increasing personal risks of being away from home, improved programming in non-prime time hours, and the younger age composition of the adult population (within the last decade or so) may be reasons to expect that television has increased in audience appeal as a way of spending time.

A study done on Qube television (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981) in Columbus Ohio determined that cable television increased viewing time. Results of the study show that levels of viewing for subscribers and non-subscribers are quite different. Subscribers report an average of

3.6 hours of television viewing on the average weekday while non-subscribers report an average of 3.1 hours. On Saturdays and Sundays the discrepancy is even more apparent. Subscribers report an average combined viewing time of 8.0 hours compared with 5.7 hours for non-subscribers. Another study done by Cosner (1980) using national and market specific data gathered by Nielson has shown that cable homes use more television than non-subscribing homes and that cable households were found to be younger, larger, and higher in socio-economic status than non-cable households. Demographic correlations of subscription to Qube showed that home owners are more likely to subscribe to Qube than apartment dwellers, married persons are more likely to subscribe than single persons, and persons with children in the home are more likely to subscribe than persons without children in the home. As income is often related to education, it might also be expected that those with more education are more likely to subscribe than those with less education (Cosner, 1980).

Summary

The Qube study is one of the few studies done that deals directly with cable television usage. As cable television can be considered a new type of medium (in its use of new technology and program content) its diffusion into society and possible effects need to be studied along with those of other types of media. The Uses and Gratifications approach is useful to the study of the media and to cable television in particular. It is an application of old concepts to a new medium and therefore should be appropriate for many types of media use studies. Although the authors in the literature survey have looked at the uses and effects of

the media in different ways and have come up with somewhat different results, they have all contributed something to Uses and Gratifications Theory with regard to the media. A closer examination of cable television as a medium may shed some light on the uses and effects of the media in general and to Uses and Gratification Theory specifically.

CHAPTER III

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The existing research on cable television is deficient in at least two areas. First, little research has been done dealing with demographic differences between subscribers and nonsubscribers. Secondly, the existing research has not looked at the effects of cable television on other diverse aspects of non-media social behavior.

What has been of considerable concern in the research is the economic impact of cable on existing broadcast television outlets. Agencies such as the Federal Communications Commission have received and commissioned research for that purpose. These reports, however, have dealt only indirectly with the impact of cable television on audience use habits.

The deficiencies in research concerning cable television's effect on media use habits and non-media leisure activities (which Robinson has studied with regard to television use) were some of the motivating factors that prompted this study. This combined with recent speculation that the informational and entertainment content of the new cable system could be related to differences in lifestyles of subscribers and non-subscribers were some of the reasons for conducting this study. Indeed McQuail, Windahl and Rosengren have pointed to possible consequences resulting from differential mass media use. Also, other research indicates (as in Cosner's study, 1980 and in the Qube study) that people who subscribe to cable television may be significantly,

demographically different than those who choose not to subscribe. Subscribers may be different with regard to media use habits and lifestyle patterns than non-subscribers. Herein lies the importance and scope of this study.

To explore these phenomena further, hypotheses were formed dealing with three aspects of cable television effects. The first area is a descriptive analysis which demographically compares cable subscribers to non-subscribers. The second area deals with differences in the lifestyles of subscribers and non-subscribers. This area focuses especially on the way in which leisure time is spent. Third, the area of media usage for cable subscribers and non-subscribers will be explored.

Hypotheses:

Descriptive Analysis of Cable Subscribers and Non-subscribers

- I. Cable subscribers are likely to be younger in age than non-subscribers
- II. Cable subscribers are likely to be of a higher income bracket than nonsubscribers
- III. Cable subscribers are likely to be more highly educated than non-subscribers.

Differences in Lifestyles for Cable Subscribers and Non-subscribers

- IV. Cable subscribers are likely to attend fewer movies at the theatre than non-subscribers
- V. Cable subscribers are likely to attend fewer sporting events that charge admission than non-subscribers

Media Usage for Cable Subscribers
and Non-subscribers

VI. Cable subscribers are likely to watch more television than non-subscribers

The survey developed to test these hypotheses employs a self-report questionnaire. For this type of descriptive study, it was decided that this was the best available method for obtaining the information (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981, p. 34).

Methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves--i.e. people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases, or at least to recognize them when confronted with them in an intelligible and familiar verbal formulation.

The Qube study claimed that information on the effects of Qube on its audience could be gained indirectly from an examination of the uses being made of the cable systems, the reasons for subscription, and demographic comparisons of subscribers and non-subscribers. More direct evidence, it claimed, could be gained by a comparison of subscribers and non-subscribers (Becker & Rafaeli, 1981).

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Three hundred subjects were selected for the study from a 1982 Cache Valley Telephone Directory. Only subjects from Logan and its immediate surrounding communities (College Ward, Millville, North Logan, Providence, River Heights, Young Ward and Hyde Park) were utilized for the phone interview because they are served by the same cable system, Northern Utah Community TV.

The sample was composed of people 20 years of age and older. The person who answered the phone was interviewed in most cases.

Sampling Method

A systematic random sample was used to select the telephone numbers from the directory. This was done by first selecting a page from the directory to serve as representative of all pages in the book. The phone numbers on this page were counted and the total was multiplied by the number of pages in the first residential section of the directory (the second section contains phone numbers of Preston, Idaho residents and the third section is the yellow pages). This yielded an approximate total of 20,584 phone numbers in the first section.

Then a count was taken of the business/non-residential phone numbers on the representative page and this figure was multiplied by the total number of pages in the first section of the directory, resulting in approximately 3720 business/non-residential numbers. Subtracting

this total from the approximate total of all phone numbers left approximately 16,864 residential phone numbers contained in the first section of the directory.

Dividing 16,864 by the sample size of 300 left 56.21. This means that approximately every 56th name in the directory would be chosen for the sample. A random number obtained from a random numbers list was used as a starting point for sample selection. Every 56th number was chosen provided the selected number was a residential number in one of the target communities. If the phone number to be selected appeared as a business/non-residential number or a number outside the population boundaries, the next consecutive phone number was chosen until one that fit the criteria was selected.

The Survey

The survey was conducted in the spring of 1982 and was in the form of a telephone interview. It consisted of 39 questions, 27 close-ended and 12 open-ended. Answers to the open-ended questions were subsequently broken down into smaller categories after the interviews were completed. The categories were grouped according to the most frequent answers given by respondents.

The survey dealt primarily with three areas of subject matter. Questions were asked of respondents regarding their television viewing habits, (such as "What types of programs would you say you watch the most, second most, and third most?") their leisure time activities (such as "What social or recreational activities do you regularly participate in outside the home?") and their demographic characteristics such as age, sex, income, etc. (See Appendix A.)

The author and four trained interviewers administered the questionnaire to the subjects. Each interviewer was instructed to inform the subject at the beginning of the interview that the survey responses would be included in a thesis paper dealing with television viewing and that all information received would be treated as confidential. One hundred seventy-six completed interviews were obtained.

Statistical Tests Performed

Statistical tests were performed on the six hypotheses. Each of the hypotheses treats cable subscribers or non-subscribers as the independent variables and tests their correlation with the dependent variables such as demographics, movie attendance, etc.

The subprogram Frequencies and Chi square summary statistics for subprogram crosstabs were the statistical tests performed for all of the hypotheses. The subprogram frequencies serves to calculate distributions of cable subscribers and non-subscribers on each of the six dependent variables. It is a descriptive statistic and was chosen for the analysis because of the nature of the data (variables in the study are classified into a limited number of values or categories) and its values in relaying a general picture of cable subscribers and non-subscribers. Chi square is a test of statistical significance. It was used to determine whether a systematic relationship exists between two variables in the study (Dunt, Hull, Jenkins, Nie & Steinbrenner, 1975).

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The crosstabulation tables for each of the hypothesis showed, ironically, that about twice as many subscribers were surveyed as opposed to non-subscribers. A chi square analysis was used to test the significance of each hypothesis and a level of .05 or less was needed for the hypothesis to be accepted.

Hypothesis I: Cable subscribers are likely to be younger in age than non-subscribers.

Table 1

Age by Subscription

	Subscribers	Non-subscribers	Row Total
20-30 year olds	62.5% (55)	37.5% (33)	54.7% (88)
31-40 year olds	71.1% (27)	28.9% (11)	23.6% (38)
41-50 year olds	85.7% (6)	14.3% (1)	4.3% (7)
51 and older	75.0% (21)	25.0% (7)	17.4% (28)
Column Total	67.7%(109)	32.3% (52)	

Chi Square = 3.00477 with 3 degrees of freedom significance = 0.3909

The highest percentage of subscribers was found in category 3 (41-50 year old age group) with 85.7% of the respondents subscribing to cable. The next highest percentage of subscribers was found in category 4 (51 year old and older age group) with subscribers making up 75.0% of that category.

The percentage of subscribers in categories 1 (20-30 year old age group) and 2 (31-40 year old age group) were lower but relatively close to those of categories 3 and 4.

Although fewer respondents fall within categories 3 and 4, when the categories were collapsed, there were still higher percentages of subscribers in the over 40 age group (77.1%) as compared to those 40 years old and younger (which totaled 65.0%). The significance level for hypothesis I was greater than .05 thus the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis II: Cable subscribers are likely to be of a higher income bracket than non-subscribers.

Table 2

Income by Subscription

	Subscribers	Non-subscribers	Row Total
less than \$10,000	63.6% (21)	36.4% (12)	21.3% (33)
\$10,001-\$20,000	55.3% (21)	44.7% (17)	24.5% (38)
\$20,001-\$30,000	69.0% (20)	31.0% (9)	18.7% (29)
\$30,001-\$40,000	75.0% (9)	25.0% (3)	7.7% (12)
\$40,001-\$50,000	100.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	3.9% (6)
%50,001 and over	100.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.6% (4)
not applicable	50.0% (5)	50.0% (5)	6.5% (10)
refused	92.9% (13)	7.1% (1)	9.0% (14)
don't know	66.7% (6)	33.3% (3)	5.8% (9)
Column Total	67.7%(105)	32.3% (50)	

Chi Square = 1351989 with 8 degrees of freedom significance = 0.0952

The highest percentage of respondents fell in category 5 (\$40,001-\$50,000) and 6 (%50,001 and higher) with subscribers making up 100.0% of each category. The second highest percentage of subscribers fell within category 4 (\$30,001-\$40,000) and made up 75.0% of that category.

Percentages of subscribers in categories 1 (less than \$10,000), 2 (\$10,000-\$20,000), and 3 (\$20,001-\$30,000) were only slightly lower than category 4 and each category contained an average of 33 respondents.

The upper income categories contained far fewer numbers of subscribers than the lower income categories. When categories were collapsed however, there were still higher percentages of subscribers in the above \$30,000 a year range (86.4%) than in the \$30,000 a year and lower income range (62.0%).

The significance level of hypothesis II was greater than .05 thus the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis III: Cable subscribers are likely to be more highly educated than non-subscribers.

Table 3

Education by Subscription

	Subscribers	Non-subscribers	Row Total
grade school grad	66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)	1.1% (3)
highschool grad	66.7% (56)	33.3% (28)	52.5% (84)
college grad	63.6% (35)	36.4% (20)	34.4% (55)
Masters degree	77.8% (7)	22.2% (2)	5.6% (9)
Doctorate degree	100.0% (8)	0.0% (0)	5.0% (8)
Column Total	68.1%(109)	31.9% (51)	

Chi Square = 5.19271 with 5 degrees of freedom significance = 0.3928

The highest percentage of subscribers was found in category 5 (doctorate degree) with subscribers totaling 100.0%. Category 4 (graduate degree) contained the second highest percentage of subscribers (77.8%).

The differences between subscribers and non-subscribers decreased slightly in categories 1 (grade school graduate), 2 (high school graduate), and 3 (college graduate).

Again, far fewer respondents fell within the two upper education categories, therefore the graduate degree category and doctorate degree category were collapsed to form one category. Results showed that this new higher education category still contained more subscribers percentage-wise (88.2%) than subscribers with a college degree or less (65.5%).

The significance level for hypothesis III was greater than .05 so the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis IV: Cabel subscribers are likely to attend fewer movies at the theater than non-subscribers.

Table 4

Movie Attendance by Subscription

	Subscribers	Non-subscribers	Row Total
never go to movies	81.8% (27)	18.2% (6)	20.6% (33)
attend movies less than once per month	52.0% (26)	48.0% (24)	31.3% (50)
attend movies 1-2 times per month	66.1% (37)	33.9% (19)	35.0% (56)
attend movies 3 or more times per month	90.5% (19)	9.5% (2)	13.1% (21)
Column Total	68.1%(109)	31.9% (51)	

Chi Square = 13.77659 with 3 degrees of freedom significance = 0.0032

The highest percentage of subscribers fell within category 4 (attend three or more movies per month) and made up 90.5% of that category. The next highest percentage of subscribers were found in category 1 (never go to movies). Cable subscribers made up 81.8% of that category.

Categories 2 (attend movies less than once a month) and 3 (attend movies one to two times a month) contained approximately the same number of subscribers, 52.0% and 66.1% respectively.

The significance level for hypothesis IV was less than .05 so the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis V: Cable subscribers are likely to attend fewer sporting events that charge admission than non-subscribers.

Table 5

Sports Attendance by Subscription

	Subscription	Non-subscription	Row Total
Never attend sporting events	62.8% (49)	37.2% (29)	48.8% (78)
Attend sporting events less than once a month	65.8% (25)	34.2% (13)	23.8% (38)
Attend sporting events 1-2 times per month	80.0% (28)	20.0% (7)	21.9% (35)
Attend sporting events 3 or more times per month	77.8% (7)	22.2% (2)	5.6% (9)
Column Total	68.1%(109)	31.9% (51)	

Chi Square = 3.76523 with 3 degrees of freedom significance = 0.2880

The highest percentage of subscribers was found in category 3 (attend sporting events 1-2 times per month with subscribers making up 80% of that category). The next highest percentage of subscribers was found in category 4 (attend sporting events three or more times per month) with cable subscribers making up 77.8% of that category.

Categories 1 (never to to sporting events) and 2 (attend sporting events less than once a month) both had approximately the same percentages of subscribers and non-subscribers.

Fewer respondents fell within categories 3 and 4 thus the categories were collapsed. Results still showed that more subscribers attend sporting events one time or more per month.

The significance level for hypothesis V was greater than .05, thus the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis VI: Cable subscribers watch more television than non-subscribers.

Table 6

Time Spent Watching TV by Subscription

	Subscription	Non-subscription	Row Total
watch less than 1 day a week	60.0% (3)	40.0% (2)	3.1 (5)
watch 1-2 days per week	47.8% (11)	52.2% (12)	14.3% (23)
watch 3-4 days per week	59.4% (19)	40.6% (13)	19.9% (32)
watch 5-6 days per week	75.9% (22)	24.1% (7)	18.0% (29)
watch 7 days per week	75.0% (54)	25.0% (18)	44.7% (72)
Column Total	67.7%(109)	32.3% (52)	

Chi Square = 7.94251 with 4 degrees of freedom significance = 0.0937

The highest percentage of subscribers fell within category 4 (watch television five to six days a week) and 5 (watch television seven days a week). Each category contained approximately 75.0% subscribers.

In categories 1 (watch television less than once a week), and 2 (watch television one to two days per week), and 3 (watch television three to four times per week) differences in percentages of subscribers and non-subscribers were not as great as in categories 4 and 5.

The significance level for hypothesis VI was greater than .05 so the hypothesis was rejected.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis I: Cable subscribers are likely to be younger in age than non-subscribers.

It appears that there is a trend for cable subscribers to be older rather than younger in age although the chi square analysis of the hypothesis was not significant enough to be accepted. The highest percentage of subscribers came from the 41 to 50 year old age group and the second highest percentage came from the 51 year old and older age group although percentages of subscribers in the younger age group were not much fewer. In fact, the two lower age group categories contained greater numbers of subscribers than the two older age group categories though the actual percentages were lower. It appears there is a trend that suggests that the results were in the reverse direction of prediction.

As income is often related to age, one possible explanation for these results is that perhaps older people are better able to afford cable television. For example, students often can't afford the subscription rates which are \$8.50 per month in this area. Also, most people of this age group (41 year olds and older) have teenagers living at home. Teenager's interests are more varied and they desire more sophisticated entertainment than would younger children, those whose parents are in the 20-40 year old age group. The larger variety of entertainment available through cable might be more important to a teenager than to a younger child.

As mentioned before, it can generally be said that a person's income increases with age. Also he or she may move up in their job, or have more experience and training and thus the freedom of job mobility. This allows an individual some choice in job selection, for example, one which might provide more leisure time. This combined with the fact that the children of this age group category have grown up. Many have left the home already and this leads to the possibility of more leisure time for people in this age group. This includes more time to enjoy leisure activities such as watching television. The extra stations that cable television provides could be of interest to this age group and a pleasurable way in which to spend their leisure time.

There was, however, almost as high a percentage of cable subscribers in the younger age groups so it cannot be said that age is strongly related to cable usage.

Hypothesis II: Cable subscribers are likely to be of a higher income bracket than non-subscribers.

Results in the crosstabulation table of Hypothesis II show that there is a tendency for cable users to come from higher income brackets. In the \$40,001 and higher income bracket categories, all of the respondents had cable although only 10 respondents fell within these two categories. The second highest percentage of subscribers fell within the \$30,001-40,000 income bracket with 12 total respondents falling in this income bracket. This income bracket perhaps reflects a more accurate description of the household income of cable subscribers because more respondents fell within this category compared to a total of 10 in categories 5 and 6. Below this income bracket differences between subscribers and non-subscribers decreases.

As the \$30,001 to \$40,000 income bracket can be considered to be a fairly high one, and percentages of subscribers increases to 100.0% in the highest income brackets, there may be somewhat of a relationship between income and cable subscription although the hypothesis was rejected.

As was mentioned in the discussion of Hypothesis I, higher income families may be better able to afford cable than lower income families. This could be a possible explanation for the appearance of the trend. Also, as was mentioned, higher income families generally have more free time to spend on viewing television and the more stations available on cable might be of interest to them.

Although the significance level of the hypothesis was closer to the accepted level of .05 than was so in Hypothesis I, results were still not significant enough to prove the hypothesis.

Hypothesis III: Cable subscribers are likely to be more highly educated than non-subscribers.

In the crosstabulation table of Hypothesis III again, a trend appears. Cable subscribers appear to be slightly more highly educated than non-subscribers however, the significance level was unacceptable, thus the hypothesis was rejected. The highest percentage of subscribers fell within the doctorate degree category in which all of the respondents were subscribers. The second highest percentage of subscribers was found in the graduate degree category, however the number of respondents varied greatly from across categories. This perhaps was a factor in the determination of the significance level as well as the fact that percentages of subscribers were only slightly lower in the grade school, high school, and undergraduate categories than in the graduate and doctorate degree

categories.

As income and education are often related, a possible explanation for the higher percentages of subscribers in the higher education categories would be similar to that discussed for Hypothesis II. The variety of programs offered through cable might appeal to a more educated audience.

Hypothesis IV: Cable subscribers are likely to attend fewer movies at the theater than non-subscribers.

Although test results for Hypothesis IV proved to be significant, the result did not occur in the crosstabulation table in the predicted way. The highest percentage of subscribers was found in the last category (attend movies three or more times a month) and second highest percentage of subscribers was found in the first category (never go to movies). No significant differences were found between subscribers and non-subscribers in the second category (attend movies less than once a month) and differences increased only slightly in the third category (attend movies one to two times per month). The table shows that of those who never go to movies, most are subscribers but so also are those that attend movies three or more times a month.

Perhaps this reflects two different types of subscribers; those who substitute watching movies on cable channels for going out to the theater to view them and those who enjoy viewing movies often and thus watch them at home as well as at the theater. The first of these explanations would concur with the hypothesis as stated; the second explanation shows the result to be in the reverse direction of prediction.

Differences between subscribers and non-subscribers weren't as great in the two middle categories where movie attendance was average

(less than once a month or one to two times per month). To these respondents, movies are not of great importance. If the explanation offered for the results of the table are correct, it would appear that cable television has an influence on those people who consider viewing movies an important leisure activity and its effects on their movie attendance run in opposite directions.

Hypothesis V: Cable subscribers are likely to attend fewer sporting events that charge admission than non-subscribers.

Although the highest percentages of subscribers were found in the last two categories, differences in percentages of subscribers were relatively small across categories. This and the fact that category 4 (attend sporting events three or more times per month) contains only nine respondents are perhaps reasons for the unacceptable level of significance.

It appears that few people attend sporting events three or more times per month so this category may be considered to be a high sports attendance category, especially in the area this survey was conducted. Logan is a small college town where the university provides a majority of the sporting events. University and high school sports are the only ones readily available. Severly limited opportunities exist for people to attend live sporting events. Because of this, it was hard to determine those individuals who might be more active sports fans if they lived somewhere else.

It is possible that an explanation similar to the one provided for Hypothesis IV could fit here; that those who enjoy viewing sports at home via cable also enjoy attending sporting events often outside the home. A possible relationship exists between attending sporting events outside

the home and subscription to cable, however, the lack of sporting events in this area shed doubt on the validity of any significant conclusions. In any event, the relationship of attendance at sporting events and subscription to cable television does not appear to be as strong as the relationship between movie attendance and cable subscription.

Hypothesis VI: Cable subscribers watch more television than non-subscribers.

Although the significance level of the chi square analysis of Hypothesis VI was not acceptable, it was closer to an accepted level than many of the other hypotheses and a slight trend is apparent in the cross-tabulation table. Most subscribers did indeed fall in the last two categories of heavy television viewing. There were fewer subscribers in categories 1, 2, and 3. Only five respondents fall within category 1 and in categories 2 and 3 there were no large differences between subscribers and non-subscribers.

It would appear that there is a relationship between time spent watching television and subscription to cable. It follows that the extra stations or programs offered through cable are of interest and are being utilized by many people. Cable television also offers news or sports programs, reruns of old series, movies, and offers these at different times than are broadcast on regular networks. This flexibility in time allows for many more people to be able to view programs that they would normally miss (because of odd working hours, etc.) and therefore they would be able to spend more time viewing television.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Only one of the hypotheses proved to be significant but the results did not occur in the predicted way. However, some definite trends were apparent in other hypotheses. Three of the six hypotheses (those dealing with income level, movie attendance, and time spent viewing television had significance levels of .0952 or lower, all the rest were higher.

Significant Trends in Testing Results

It appears that there is a tendency for cable subscribers to be of a higher income bracket than non-subscribers. Factors relating to the cost of subscription and the greater variety of programs available through cable may be responsible for this trend. Non-subscribers would, of course, miss the many more entertainment and informational programs available through cable which could create a type of cultural or informational gap between subscribers and non-subscribers. Income creates gaps between people with regard to many things in modern society. Cable television could foreseeably be added to the list. This phenomenon will undoubtedly become more evident as cable technology expands and more services such as home computers become readily available at lower costs to the public.

Testing results of the hypothesis dealing with movie attendance are ambiguous because of the numbers of cable subscribers falling in the highest and lowest movies attendance categories. It appears that

the effects of cable television on movie attendance could run in two different directions. There are those who appear to replace movie attendance with cable and those who do not. There may be reasons, however, for going out to a movie other than the merit of the movie itself. There is a social aspect of any activity that lends itself to participation with others. The comradeship involved in sharing the activity with friends, the occasion of dating, or simply just getting out of the house, may be reasons for wanting to attend movies at the theater. If this is true then cable television's influence may not be as strong with regard to activities outside the home as was thought. This explanation is an alternative to the one that is offered in the discussion section.

As some have feared, the American public will not then become isolated in their homes because of cable, away from the influence and ideas of others, being entertained solely by their televisions.

Cable television does not appear to have that strong an influence over people's daily living routines and leisure time behavior. The testing results for Hypothesis IV to some extent support this explanation because of the unacceptable level of significance, however more research needs to be done in this area, especially as more different types of programs become available to more people through cable.

With regard to the last hypothesis, there does seem to be a correlation between time spent viewing television and cable subscription. These results lend some support to those of the Qube study however the relationship between time spent viewing television and cable subscription was not strong enough to be significant. Given this fact, previous assumptions about an informational or cultural gap occurring between

subscribers and non-subscribers, may be unfounded. This is especially true when one takes into account the limited number of channels available through cable in Logan presently. The two 24-hour cable news networks do offer up-to-the minute reporting at more times during the day than do the regular network news stations. Although this is true, one can get an account of a news event of similar quality through the regularly scheduled news programs. It is also true that through cable, one can view some of the classic old movies, but Showtime and HBO are not offered in Logan as of this writing, and HTN which is offered, shows only "G" and "PG" movies. Therefore, with regard to movies, the cable stations in this area do not offer much more than the regular networks do. Neither are there any programs available that are geared to specific cultural or ethnic groups.

The daily digest of cable television programs cannot be considered to be drastically different than that of regular network stations in this area. This combined with the fact that subscribers are not viewing much more television than non-subscribers leads to the conclusion that cable television is not greatly affecting the daily living routines of people in this area. As cable is introduced into other small communities of this type, these results could be relevant--not only to the cable companies but to the audiences for cable that live there.

As more stations and programs are offered to more people through cable, more time may be spent viewing television in the future. The quality of programs available (such as educational, cultural, and informational) could offset what some see as the bad effects of too much television viewing. The hope is that more of these types of programs will be shown in the future and perhaps some could be used as educational

tools for the young as well as the old.

Implications for Further Research

This study points out the need for further research in all aspects of cable television. As the industry grows, and with it, the technology and program content, cable television's influence may indeed exceed what the results of this study show. A follow-up study in 5-10 years, dealing with an in-depth analysis of program content correlated with what people actually watch on television, and the effect this has on their leisure activities would shed some light on questions still unanswered about cable television usage. As the industry is still a growing one, many questions regarding cable television and its effects are still unanswered and much research must still be done.

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