



Audience-centred models

Many studies focus on mass media and their messages. Audience-centred models try to understand the behaviour of audiences



One of important idea of audience-centred models:

Audiences can resist influence, in part because they have their own varied reasons for choosing



Main aim of audience-centred models:

we should pay less attention to what
'media do to people' and more to what
'people do with media'

Uses and gratifications

Theory discusses the effects of the media on people. It explains how people use the media for their own need and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled.



It can be said that the theory argues what people do with media rather than what media does to people. This theory has a user/audience-centered approach.



Also, this theory is in contradiction to the Magic Bullet theory, which states that the audience is passive.

(Uses and gratifications)

(UGT) is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs.

It postulates that media is a highly available product and the audiences are the consumers of the same product.



There are several needs and gratification for people. They are categorized into five needs.

Cognitive needs

Affective needs

Personal Integrative needs

Social Integrative needs

Tension free needs



Cognitive needs:

People use media for acquiring knowledge, information, facts, etc. Among the audience, some have the thirst to acquire intellectual and academic knowledge. This is not a very common phenomenon.



Different people have different needs. For example, quiz programs on television give on factual knowledge; to know about current affairs people need to watch the news regularly; search engines on the internet are also very popular since people can browse for any topic easily under the run with no time restriction.



Affective needs:

It includes all kinds of emotions, pleasure and moods of the people. People use media; say television, to satisfy their emotional needs.



The best example would be when people get emotional or sometimes even they cry for a sad scene while watching the movie/soap opera.



Personal Integrative needs:

This is the self-esteem need. People use media to reassure their status, gain credibility and stabilize. So people watch television and assure themselves that they have a respectable status in society.



For example, people watch advertisements in the media like jewellery ads, furniture ads, apparel ads, etc. and buy these products so that they can change their lifestyle. Hence the media helps them to do so.

Social Integrative needs:

It encompasses the need to socialize with family, friends and relations in society. For social interaction nowadays, people do not seem to gather socially during weekends instead they have turned to social networking sites on the internet such as Facebook, Twitter, and etc. to satisfy their needs.



Another example is people may start watching a particular programme, not because they have any self interest, but because their neighbour/friend watches it such that both the parties may have something in common to discuss.



Tension free needs:

People sometimes use the media as a means to escapism from the real world and to relieve from tension and stress.



People tend to relax while watching television, listening to the radio, surfing the internet, etc. In fact, media has the power to grab audience mind since it makes them feel connected with the situation and characters emotionally.

Catharsis Theory And Media Effects

The large amount of violence in the mass media is often justified by the concept of catharsis. The word catharsis comes from the Greek word katharsis, which literally translated means "a cleansing or purging."



The first recorded mention of catharsis occurred more than one thousand years ago, in the works of Aristotle.

Aristotle taught that viewing tragic plays gave people emotional release (katharsis) from negative feelings such as pity, fear, and anger.



By watching the characters in the play experience tragic events, the negative feelings of the viewer were presumably purged and cleansed. This emotional cleansing was believed to be beneficial to both the individual and society.



The producers of violent computer games, like the producers of violent films, claim that their products are cathartic.



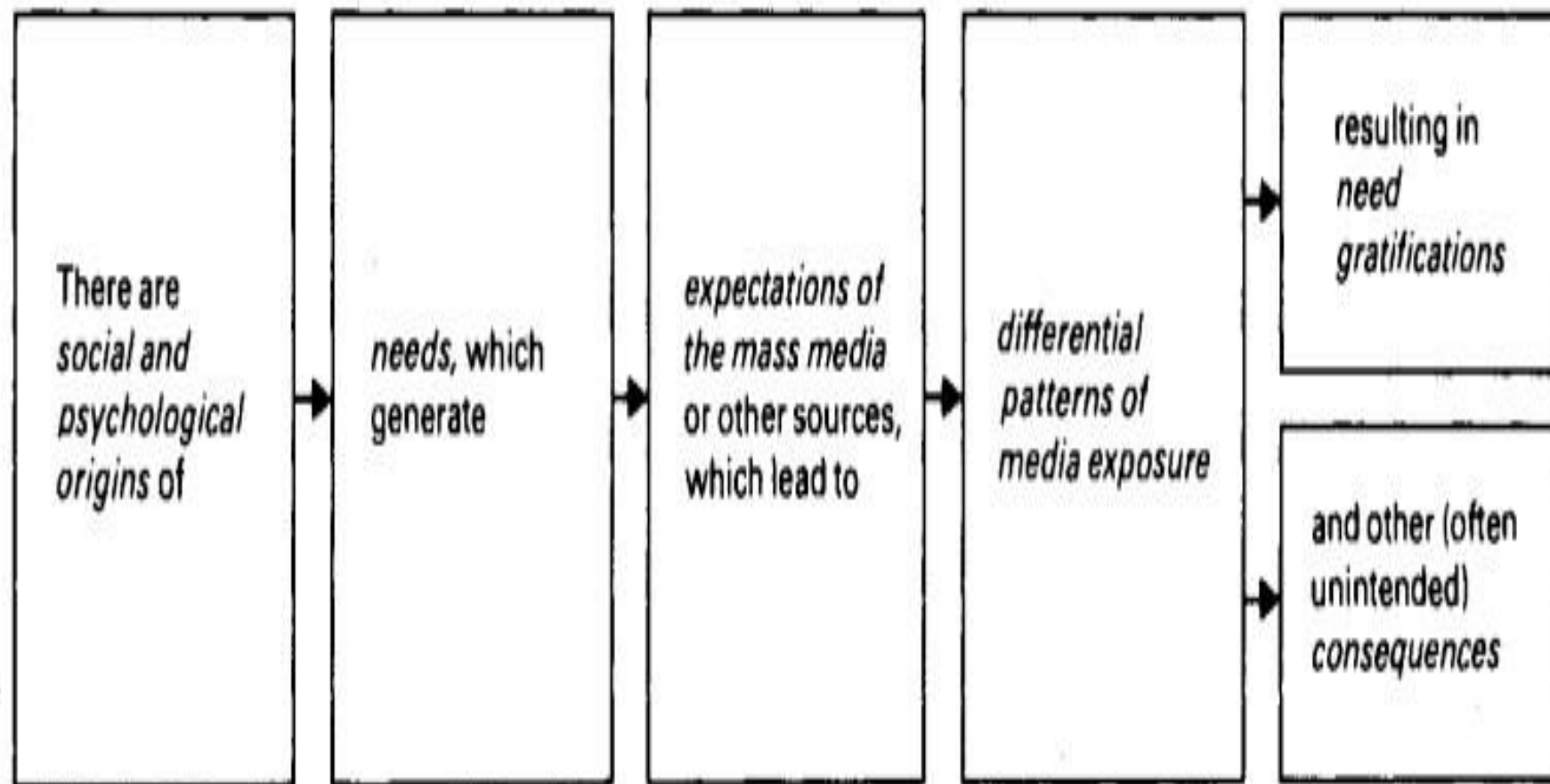
The needs are specific in nature to the individual and how the media satisfies the need is subjective. For example, some people may watch the news to relax while others may get tensed or agitated by the same. The media is the same, but people use it for different needs.



On television, most people watch reality shows nowadays not only its popular, but because of the following reasons:

- It is more realistic.
- It provides entertainment.
- It is more interesting.

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- Viewers can participate as well in many ways while sitting at home.
 - Sensationalism brings in more viewers.





Model concerned with (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media and other sources,



which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones.'



audience is active and makes
motivated choices, based on
previous experience with the media.

Criticism of Uses and gratification theory :

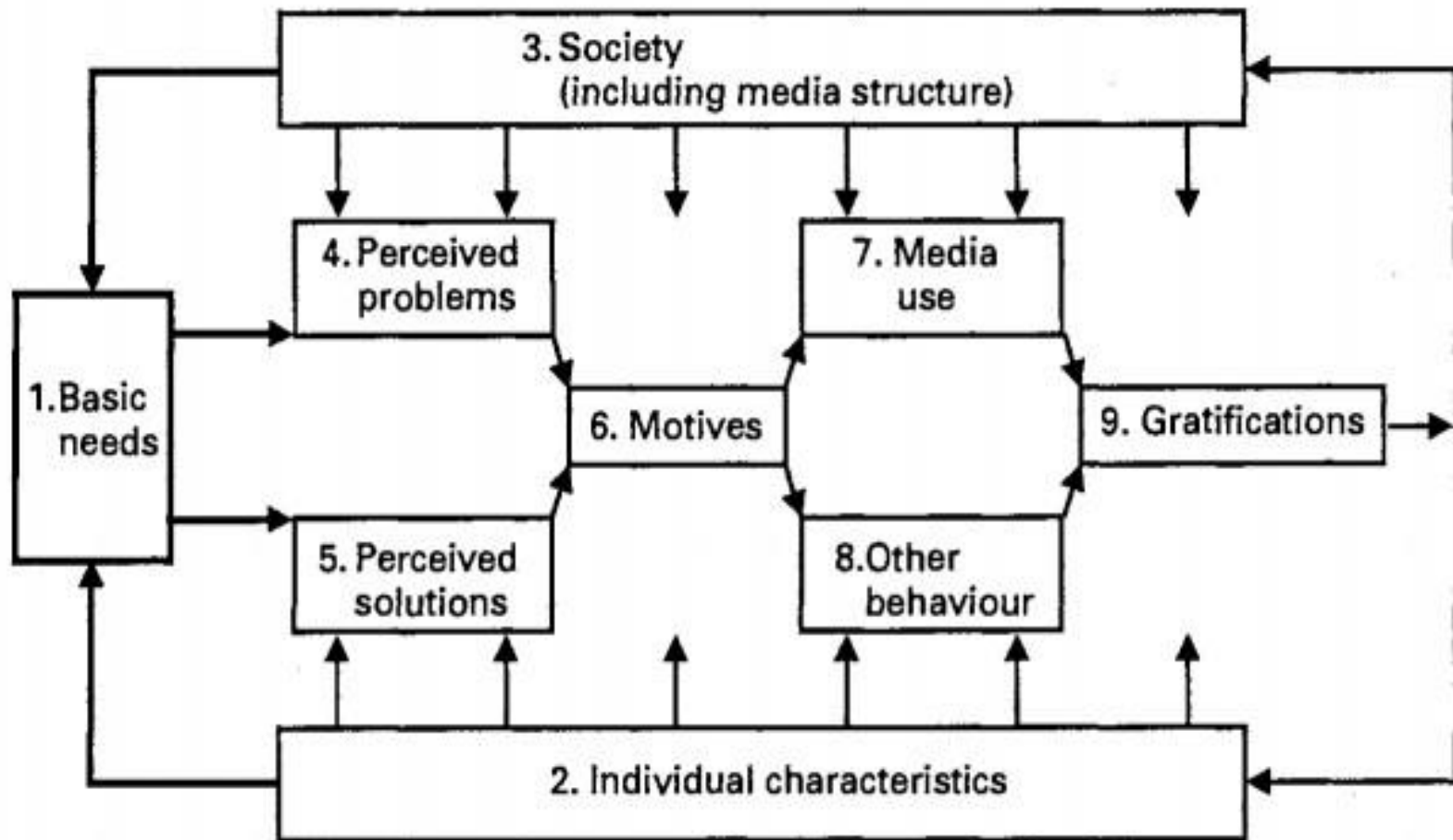
The uses and gratification theory does not bring into consideration the power of media.

It is more audience-oriented study.

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- Positive point of the uses and gratification theory is it focuses attention on individuals in the mass communication process.
 - It mainly focuses on people's selectivity on media content rather than its unintended effects in their minds.
 - Researches of this theory conclude the results are subjective rather than objective.

Rosengren's general model

A further elaboration of the basic thinking described above was provided by Rosengren (1974) in the form of a model reproduced



Paradigm for uses and gratifications research (Rosengren 1974).



The 'needs' of the individual form the starting point (1) (reference is made to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of human needs), but for these to lead to relevant action they have to be perceived as problems (4) and some potential solution has also to be perceived (5).



In the model, the experience of needs is shown to be shaped or influenced by (3) aspects of the social structure (level of development, type of political system) and also by (2) individual characteristics.



The perception of problems and possible solutions leads to the formulation of motives (6) for media use (7) or other kinds of behaviour (8).



Media use in the model refers primarily to selecting and paying attention by reading, listening, viewing, etc.

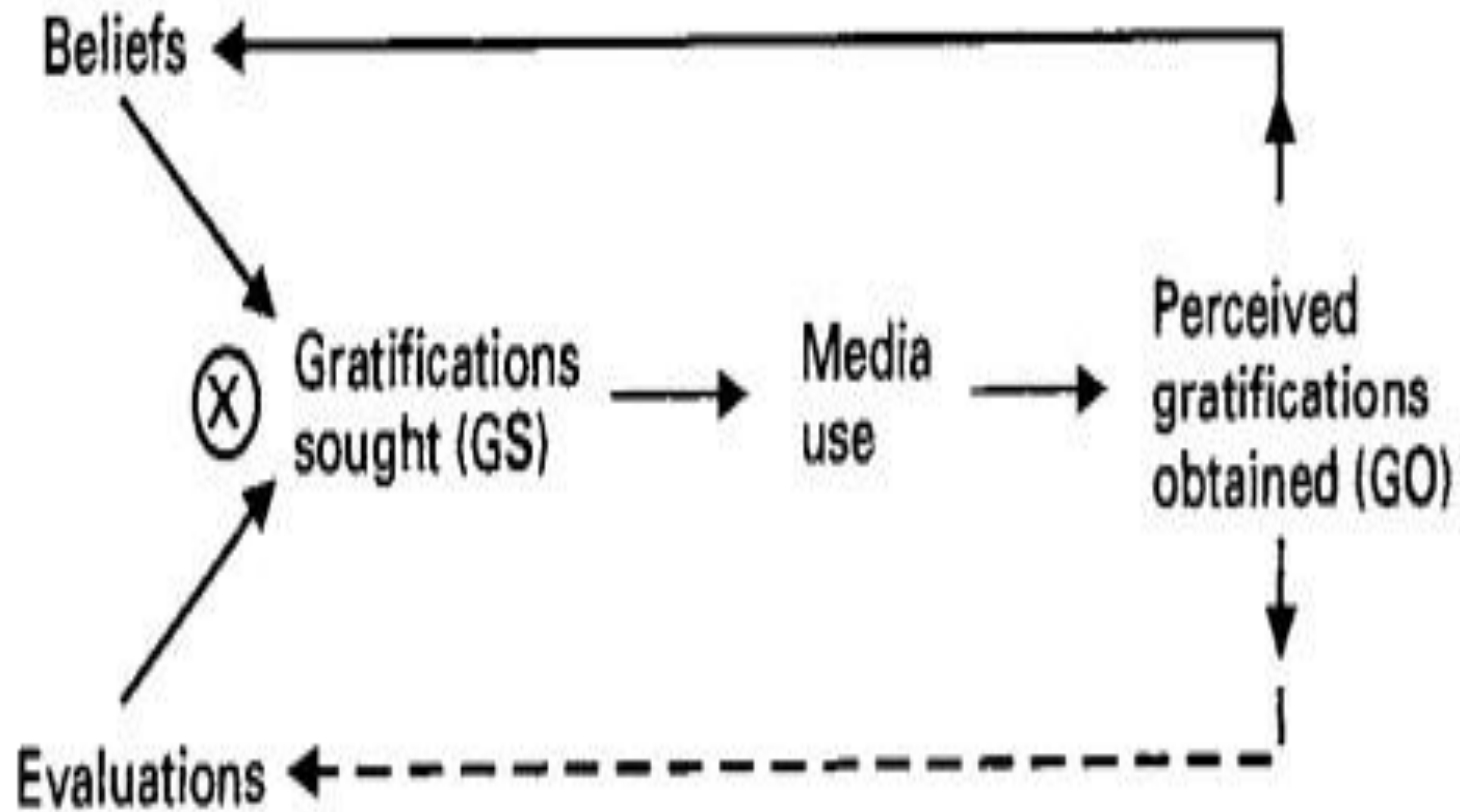


satisfaction from the media is itself
likely to be directly affected or shaped
by society and individual differences



The expectancy –value approach to media gratifications

media offer rewards which can be expected by members of the audience





media use is accounted for by a
combination of perception of
benefits offered by the medium and
the differential valuation of these
perceived benefits



Cultural versus informational gratification models

The mainstream approach is based on assuming a logical relationship between means (media use) and ends (gratifications)



it has been observed that much use
of media is undertaken in order to
escape from reality



Cultural gratification, in this sense, refers to an individual attribute (the particular preference pattern) which is shaped by family, social class milieu, education