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OLDER ADULTS AND TELEVISION USE

by

Ann H. Hasselquist

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Older Adults and Television Use," submitted by Ann H. Hasselquist in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Supervisor, Dr. G. T. Fouts
Department of Psychology

Dr. E. F. Einsiedel
Graduate Programme in
Communications Studies

Dr. D. Taras
Faculty of General Studies

Date January 22, 1992

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among the demographic characteristics and life circumstances of elderly viewers, their motives for TV watching, their TV viewing patterns, and how TV fits within their everyday activities. Seventy-five people (26 males, 49 females) 60 years of age or older participated in the study. The participants completed questionnaires regarding their demographic status, their motives for watching TV, and their life circumstances; they also recorded the television programs they watched and their daily activities for two consecutive weekdays in diaries.

The average daily viewing by seniors was 3.6 hours. Age, living alone, and lower levels of education and income were each related to greater amounts of TV watching. Evening viewing was significantly greater than either morning or afternoon viewing. Approximately one-third of the viewing time was spent with at least one other person, and almost one-fourth of the viewing time was spent watching television in conjunction with another activity. Analyses revealed little evidence to suggest that older people who are more active watch less TV, or that TV watching interferes or competes with seniors' involvement in other activities.

The results indicated that watching TV for information

was the motive most used by seniors, with watching for entertainment being the second most used motive. Elderly people with poorer life circumstances (e.g., health) were more likely to watch TV for escapist and habitual motives. Seniors with more education, higher incomes, and who were happier were more likely to watch TV for social motives (e.g., to watch with family and friends). Older people who lived with others were less likely to watch TV for information than those who lived alone.

News and information programs were watched significantly more than any other program type. Seniors with lower levels of mobility, health, and happiness spent significantly more time watching non-reality programs.

The uses and gratifications and uses and dependency models of communication provided the theoretical framework for the investigation and were used as guides to organize and examine the predictions and subsequent findings of the study. The limitations and implications of this study were also discussed and suggestions for future research were presented.

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INTRODUCTION

Television is arguably the most powerful and ubiquitous mass medium used by people of all ages, from the very young to the very old. Each day, people across the age span spend hours of their time watching television. Although a multitude of studies have examined television's effect on children, research studies in the area of television and other age groups are fewer in number. This is particularly true for older adults. Less than 1% of all published television research articles refer to the elderly[1] (Kubey, 1980). And yet, recent data indicate that the elderly are forming a larger portion of the television audience and that this elderly audience is becoming increasingly older.

In 1971, those aged 65 years and over represented 8% of the total population; in 1991 this segment is approximately 12%. By the year 2031 the elderly are expected to represent almost one fourth (23.8%) of the total population (Statistics Canada, 1990). In addition, the next few decades will witness a growth in the segment of the very old. The portion of the population aged 75 years and over is expected to jump from almost one million to three million, and those aged 85 years and over will swell in number from 224,000 to almost 750,000 (Statistics Canada, 1986). Despite these demographic shifts in the population which indicate that the elderly are forming an increasingly larger portion of the television audience, little is known about how and why older adults use television.

Research in the area of television and the elderly is important for several reasons. First, elderly people spend a substantial part of their time watching television. Older adults spend more time watching television than any other activity except sleeping (Moss & Lawton, 1982). Average viewing time is between three and six hours per day (Davis, Edwards, Bartel, & Martin, 1976; Fouts, 1989; Rubin & Rubin, 1982a). This indicates that television watching is a prominent activity in their lives; yet, it is not clear how this activitiy fits in with other leisure, routine, or social activities in which seniors participate. For example, does TV watching displace (prevent, limit, or replace) other activities; or does it perhaps complement them, e.g., by providing entertainment as a leisure activity, by making mundane tasks more tolerable while watching TV?

Second, television use by elderly people has been a neglected area of study by researchers. Much of the research that has been done focuses on how older adults are portrayed on television, rather than the role of television in the lives of elderly people (Fouts, 1989). Although television watching is commonly perceived by social scientists, health professionals, and the general population as a "mindless" and passive activity, it is unknown whether selective television use may actually enrich the lives of elderly people by helping them adapt to changes wrought by the aging process. For example, older adults who have

restricted mobility due to physical and/or financial limitations may use television as a way to stay in touch with what is going on in the world, thus strengthening their sense of belonging to a community or society. Seniors with failing eyesight may shift to television as a source for information because they can no longer read newspapers or magazines. Perhaps television watching can even be used to foster social interaction if it provides topics for conversation and/or becomes the basis for a shared activity with a spouse or grandchild.

Third, if it can be shown that television viewing is an important, positive activity of the elderly, then programming which better suits their needs and interests may be designed and implemented if such programs are developed from an understanding of how and why the elderly use television (Fouts, 1989). That is, knowing how television fits into the lives of older adults will ultimately assist in the production of programs which are better able to meet the interests and needs of an elderly audience. As most of the current offerings of television are directed toward a relatively younger audience, it may be that television is not serving the needs of an elderly population as much as it could (Adams & Groen, 1975).

Fourth, research that has been conducted in the area of television and the elderly is overwhelmingly American research. Very little research has been done in Canada. Canadian research is needed to either confirm these findings

for elderly Canadians or to demonstrate differences between the two countries. Although the two countries share many similarities, they also display many differences in regard to climate, historical roots, cultural values, and political structures. It is unknown if and/or how these differences may affect television use by seniors in Canada.

Fifth, the majority of the literature concerning television use by older adults is now nearly a decade old. Research articles published after the early 1980's which contain new data are few in number. Within the last ten years new technologies such as video cassette recorders allow viewers to watch selected programs and rented movies at their convenience, and satellite dishes and cable stations now present viewers with an amazing array of program choice. In addition, older adults are becoming healthier and more active than they have ever been and display positive health attitudes toward their physical fitness (McPherson, 1990; Statistics Canada, 1986). Current research is needed to discover what impact (if any) these changes have had on television viewing patterns of seniors.

Finally, it is necessary to know how and why older adults use television before having a sophisticated understanding of the effects of television on the elderly or the meaning they may derive from television content. Examining the perspectives and needs of an older audience which influence television use, and the context in which TV watching takes place, will provide a broader and deeper

knowledge base on which to base our understanding and explanation of how television affects older adults and how they may interpret and use television content.

Theoretical Approaches

Research concerning television and the elderly is still in its infancy and thus lacks a theoretical framework per se. Consequently, research studies have been predominantly descriptive in nature, rather than theoretical and interpretive (Kubey, 1980). Indeed, Kubey (1980, p. 31) even cautions against "overly ambitious theory building." Existing communication theories, however, can provide insight into understanding and explaining television use by older adults.

One communication paradigm useful when studying audience activity is that of the uses and gratifications perspective. Uses and gratifications research examines how people use the media experience and/or media content to gratify needs or expectations. Thus, audience behavior can largely be explained by understanding the needs and interests of the individual (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; McQuail & Windahl, 1981; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rosengren, 1985).

Researchers suggest that rather than being one theory, the uses and gratifications approach is an umbrella for a number of models with somewhat varying underlying assumptions and explanatory frameworks (Blumler, 1979; Levy & Windahl, 1985; McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974; McQuail &

Windhal, 1981; Palmgreen et al., 1985). However, the theoretical underpinnings fundamental to the approach are functionalist in nature and have been described as being "concerned with (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (Katz et al., 1974, p.20). (See Figure 1.)

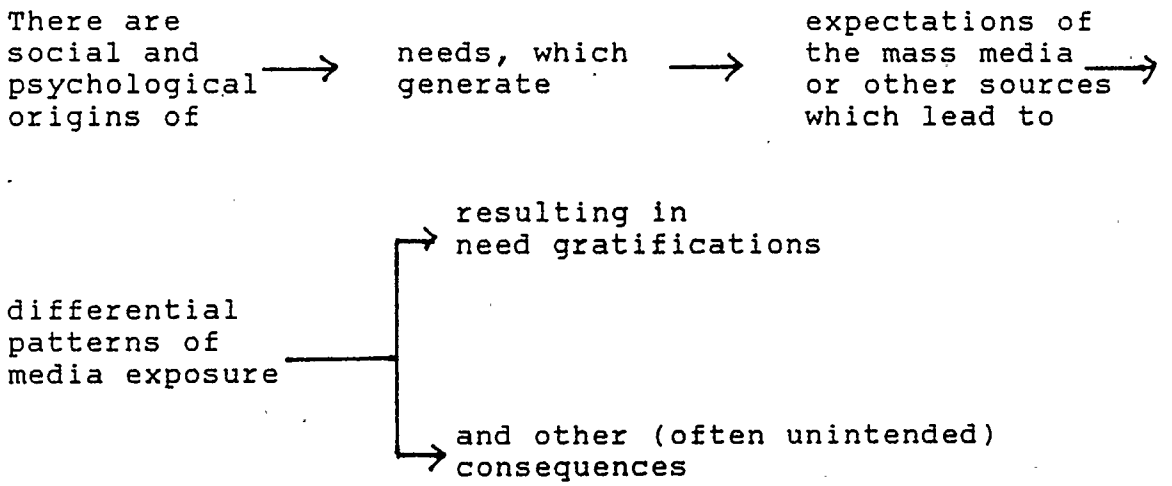

Figure 1: The Elements of a Uses and Gratifications Research Model (McQuail & Windahl, 1981, p. 76).

From this conceptual model stems several basic assumptions about the uses and gratifications approach: (1) the audience is active (i.e., a significant portion of media use can be considered as goal-directed), (2) audiences use considerable initiative in linking needs to media choice, (3) media use competes with other sources of need satisfaction, (4) media consumption can fulfill a range of needs and the degree to which these needs are met through mass media use varies, (5) media content is not the sole predictor of patterns of need satisfaction since media characteristics help shape the extent that needs may be satisfied and because (6) sources of gratifications spring from media content, exposure to media in and of itself, and/or the social setting in which exposure takes place, (7) individual audience members are able to articulate and/or recognize their interests and motives for mass media use, and (8) uses and gratifications research should be as objective as possible (i.e., value-free); that is, the cultural significance of mass media is not considered (Katz et al., 1974; Palmgreen et al., 1985).

In brief, an active audience can consciously or unconsciously identify certain needs and perceive media use as a viable solution (among others) to meet those needs. This, in turn, may lead to purposeful use of media as a means of fulfilling those needs. Needs may be satisfied by media content, media usage, and/or the situation surrounding media use. Thus, television is able to serve a variety of

functions for the audience. When a medium is used as an alternative to a "natural" solution (e.g., substitute companionship instead of personal contact), it can be viewed as a "functional alternative" (McQuail & Windahl, 1981). Functional alternatives refer to the various ways needs may be satisfied, with one way often, but not always, being "the natural one - for biologial, psychological, or cultural reasons" (Rosengren & Windahl, 1972, p. 167).

Although a predominant model for understanding audience activity, uses and gratifications studies have come under attack from several researchers. Rosengren & Windahl (1972) argue that "almost any type of content may serve practically any type of function" (p. 166). Carey & Kreiling (1974) charge that the "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. 232). Further, Elliot (1974) believes that the uses and gratifications perspective emphasizes the processes within the individual without considering the influence of societal systems on the audience member.

In response to this last criticism, Rubin & Windahl (1986) have suggested a model which they call the "uses and dependency" model of mass communication. This model provides an elaboration of the uses and gratifications model and will likely contribute to understanding and explaining television use by older adults. The new model merges the

uses and gratifications approach with the dependency model of mass media effects originally proposed by Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur (1976), which suggests that it is the nature of the reciprocal relationships among audience, media, and society that determines the effects of media use on individuals and society.

Dependency on media by the audience is seen as one aspect of the tripartite relationship which can influence mass media effects. The theorists define dependency as "a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 6). They argue that modern society is heavily dependent on media for information, and that the greater need for various types of information leads to a greater dependency on media. This, in turn, increases the probability that information received from media use will influence the thoughts, attitudes, and behavior of the audience (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976).

Rubin & Windahl (1986) state that the dependency model, with its emphasis on societal systems influencing media use, is deterministic in nature, denying the audience an active role in media use. In contrast, uses and gratifications is too individualistic and goal-directed in nature by not recognizing influences outside the individual. As a remedy, they suggest that a merging of the two frameworks yields a model which tempers the determinism of the dependency model

with the individualism of uses and gratifications. Thus, media use is seen as more situational; the needs and motives of individuals change as people interact with outside influences such as societal and mass media systems (Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

Thus, the theoretical framework of uses and dependency acknowledges the reciprocal and interactive relationships which exist among societal systems, mass media systems, and the audience. These interrelationships influence the needs and interests of the audience members which, in turn, affects audience behavior. Audience behavior can result in the use of a mass medium or in functional alternative use (non-media or other media use). This behavior, in turn, may lead to a dependency on the medium, the content, or the chosen functional alternative. In addition, media or functional alternative use can result in effects or consequences which, in turn, have ramifications for influencing societal systems, mass media systems and the audience (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). (See Figure 2.)

One feature of particular importance in the uses and dependency model is the concept of dependency. The model suggests that media use can lead to a dependency on the medium and/or the content. Further, the model suggests that dependency is also related to patterns of media use. One kind of dependency arises from instrumental use of media, a

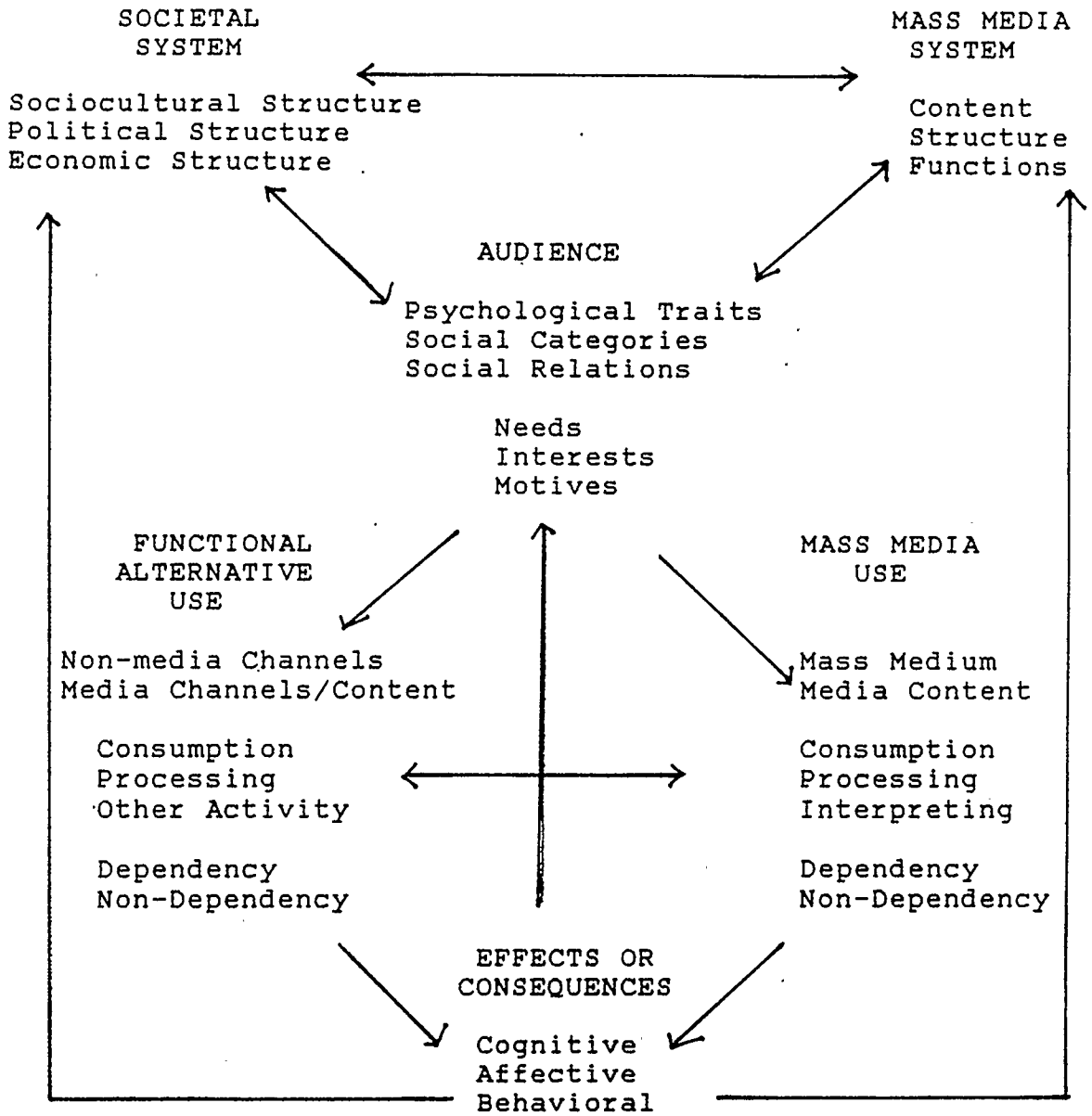

Figure 2: The Uses and Dependency Model of Mass Communication (Rubin & Windahl, 1986, p. 188).

pattern of media use which refers to the audience's purposeful use of media content to satisfy informational or social utility needs (Rubin, 1984; Rubin & Windahl, 1986). For an elderly audience this means that they may view TV because it can provide them information and a "window to the world" (Davis, 1980). Newscasts and information programs may allow the elderly to maintain a link with society by enabling them to share common experiences happening in their community, their country, and the world. On the other hand, ritualized media use refers to a usage pattern which is habitual in nature, satisfying needs or motives such as diversion, to pass the time, and habit, and will produce a different kind of dependency. Ritualized media use emphasizes the actual process of using the media, not the content (Rubin, 1984; Rubin & Windahl, 1986). In this case, the elderly may use television as a way to structure their day, to fill time, to escape, and/or out of habit (Davis, 1980; Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Rubin & Rubin, 1982a). Thus, what is on TV is not as important as the fact that the TV is on.

Instrumental and ritualized patterns of media use imply that audience activity varies in nature as well as extent (Rubin, 1984). That is, the audience may not always be as cognitively active as uses and gratifications suggests, nor as acquiescent as the dependency model would have them be, but range somewhere in between.

Another feature of the uses and dependency model related to dependency is the consideration of outcomes (effects and consequences) of media use. Effects (i.e., alteration in the cognitions, attitudes, and behavior of the elderly audience) are the result of instrumental use of media (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Media content is the major feature during instrumental use; thus, it is the characteristics of the content which determine the outcomes or effects (McQuail & Windahl, 1981; Rubin & Windahl, 1986). For example, the information contained in a documentary on the environment could result in an information gain (cognitive effect), a shift in opinion regarding the issue (attitude effect), and/or a change in purchasing habits (behavioral effect) for the elderly viewer.

Ritualized use of media, on the other hand, produces consequences (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Consequences are the result of actual media use, rather than content characteristics. Consequences may take the form of dependency on media or actual displacement of activities (McQuail & Windahl, 1981; Rubin & Windahl, 1986). And finally, a third type of outcome is the gratification of needs or motives, whereby media use satisfies a certain need such as watching a situation comedy to fulfill a need to relax and unwind (Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

Theoretical Approach and Purpose of Study

The uses and dependency communication model provides a helpful framework when examining television use by older

adults. The model suggests that several factors influence and shape the numerous needs and interests of elderly viewers which may affect their use of television. These factors include the innteractive relationships which exist among the elderly audience, the mass media, and society, as well as the social, psychological and physical characteristics of the elderly. In an effort to understand the association between the social, psychological, and physical characteristics of an elderly audience as well as the societal context of their television use, the present research study will examine the relationships among TV use and demographic characteristics of an elderly audience (e.g., gender, age, marital status, income and education levels), and four life circumstance variables (happiness, mobility, perceived health, and social interaction). The demographic characteristics indicate certain positions within society that are apt to influence the elderly's interactions with social systems, and thus may also provide information regarding outside influences on their needs and interests; e.g., an individual's level of education influences his/her status in society, thus affecting his/her relationships within society. The life circumstance variables are indicators of social, physical, and psychological characteristics which may shape the interests and needs of the elderly. Thus, relating the demographic characteristics as well as the four life circumstance variables with television use will provide information

regarding how these factors may influence the needs and interests of older adults, which in turn, may affect their use of television.

The uses and dependency model suggests that it is difficult to separate needs from communication motives since "needs are manifested in motives" (Rubin & Windahl, 1986, p. 191); thus motives also play an important role in determining how television is used by seniors. The current research study will examine the relationships between the elderly's motives for TV watching and their exposure of the medium. This will provide information regarding the functions TV may serve an elderly audience and how that may affect how much time they spend watching TV, their choice of programming, and the manner in which they watch TV.

The current research study will also examine the daily activities of seniors and relate these activities with the demographic characteristics and life circumstance variables of an elderly audience, their motives for TV watching, and their TV viewing patterns. The measurement of activities of seniors plays an important supporting role in understanding the process of media use as suggested by the uses and gratifications/dependency models. First, the measurement of activities provides another indicator of the social, physical, and psychological characteristics of the elderly in addition to that measured by the four life circumstance variables. For example, for the individual who reports limited mobility, it is expected that this will be reflected

in a restriction of activities. This may coincide with a dominant motive of watching to keep in touch with what is going on in the world; perhaps a pattern of watching talk shows may occur, indicating the use of television as a "window to the world" rather than relying on information from personal sources. And second, the examination of everyday activities permits the measurement of other mass media, including print material and radio, thus contributing to a more complete picture of mass media use by seniors.

Although the current research study will not examine media effects directly (i.e., the alterations in cognitions, attitudes, and/or behavior of an elderly audience), ritualized and instrumental patterns of use by the elderly audience will be considered. Examining these patterns of usage may indicate potential effects or consequences from media use by seniors.

In brief, the present research study seeks to examine the relationships which exist among the demographic characteristics and life circumstance variables of an elderly audience, their motives for TV watching, their everyday activities, and their TV viewing patterns. Such an examination will provide insight into how each contributes to TV use, how each may relate to the other, and what patterns of variables may emerge which influence TV watching.

Literature Review

The models of both uses and gratifications and uses and dependency will be used as guides to organize and illustrate the results of past research in the area of television and the elderly, and to present the research goals and the predictions of the present study. The review of the literature will begin with the most basic research findings and progress to the more complex.

Patterns of Television Viewing

The models of uses and gratifications and uses and dependency suggest that the needs of an individual generate expectations of the mass media (or other sources) to fulfill those needs. These expectations may subsequently lead the individual to use any one or a variety of the media (or participate in other activities), with patterns of television watching reflecting one aspect of media exposure on the part of the individual, i.e., what the individual has selected and how it is consumed. The following section will discuss past research findings in terms of amount and daypart distribution of TV viewing, and program preferences.

Amount of TV Viewing. The amount of time older adults spend watching television has received the attention of serveral researchers. Doolittle (1979) assessed the viewing of individuals between the ages of 48 and 93 and found an average viewing time of 4 hours and 15 minutes per day, with 82% of older adults watching at least one hour a day. Korzenny and Neuendorf (1980) reported that their elderly

sample averaged 4.5 hours per day; Rubin and Rubin (1982a) found their respondents averaged 4.76 hours of TV watching. Schreiber and Boyd (1980) state that with regard to frequency of viewing, "89 percent of the sample reported that they watched 'every day', 36 percent watched 1-2 hours each day, 42 percent indicated between 3-4 hours of daily viewing, and 22 percent reported watching four or more hours each day" (p. 63).

The previous studies used questionnaires and global self-reports to document amount of TV viewing; other studies have used more objective and systematic methods (e.g., detailed diaries, electronic recording) to indicate television viewing time. Fouts and Abraham (1986) provided a TV diary and asked their participants to check off programs as they watched them. The researchers reported an average viewing time of 5.3 hours per week day for their elderly participants. Using a time diary, Robinson (1981) reported that his respondents spent an average of 2.2 hours per day watching TV as the primary activity. Davis, et. al. (1976) used electronic recorders to measure TV viewing time and found that their elderly sample spent an average of 3.41 hours of TV watching per day.

Discrepancies in viewing time among the several studies may be the result of differing methods of measurement. The method of global self-report is more prone to inaccuracy than the diary method because of the former's dependence on memory recall and/or because of the subjective nature of

self-reports which may lead respondents to underestimate the amount of time they watch TV. Electronic recorders may provide the most accurate measurement of viewing, but costs of using this method prohibits widespread use in research studies. In addition, past research studies do not provide information about TV watching as a conjoint activity (e.g., watching TV while performing other tasks such as cooking or reading). Thus, it is unknown whether TV watching was included in the measure when it was in conjunction with another activity. If TV viewing shared with other activities would be included, then the number of hours would likely be higher. For example, the unusually low number of hours reported by Robinson (1981) may be due from only assessing TV viewing as the solitary or sole activity, which likely underestimates total viewing.

Overall, it may be concluded that although the amount of viewing varies with health, time of year, viewing context, and method of assessment, the average TV viewing time for older adults appears to be approximately 4.5 hours per day (Fouts, 1989).

Daypart Distribution of TV Viewing. The most popular viewing time with older adults is during prime time, 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Rubin and Rubin (1982a) reported that 70% of their respondents watched TV during prime time, followed by the time period of 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. In a similar vein, Schreiber and Boyd (1980) stated that evening was the most preferred time for TV watching, with 53% of their elderly

respondents reporting watching between the hours of 2:00 PM and 6:00 PM. This pattern of TV viewing was also reported in a study by Korzenny and Neuendorf (1980) in which they found the largest amount of TV exposure taking place after dinner, followed by the afternoon, with the smallest amount of TV viewing taking place during the morning hours. Thus, the overall pattern indicates that evening is the most popular time for TV watching, followed by the afternoon, with morning being the least popular time.

Program Preferences of Older Adults. News and information programs are overwhelmingly the preferred programs by the elderly (Fouts, 1989; Goodman, 1990; Kubey, 1980). Although the elderly also view dramas, game shows, situation comedies and soap operas, their preferences for the different kinds of programs vary from study to study (Fouts, 1989). Discrepancies may, in part, be the result of how these preferences were determined. Some studies asked participants what they liked to watch, what they preferred watching, and what they watched the most; other studies examined what seniors were actually watching to determine preferences.

Rubin and Rubin (1982a) used questionnaires to determine preferences and found that their elderly sample preferred, in descending order, news, music-variety, documentary-magazine, drama, game shows, talk shows, sports, situation comedies, movies, religion, action-adventure, daytime serials, general comedies, and children's programs.

Korzenny and Neuendorf (1980) also used questionnaires to determine viewer preferences. They found that the evening news was the most popular program watched, followed by evening movies and situation comedies. In contrast, Fouts and Abraham (1986) used the diary method and determined that their older sample preferred, in descending order, news, human affairs/soft news, drama, serials, situation comedies, game shows, movies, music-variety, sports, self-improvement, and children's programs. On the other hand, using electronic recorders, Davis, et. al. (1976) found that their sample of seniors prefered news and public affairs, followed by game shows, comedies, and drama.

It must be noted that these preferences likely reflect, in part, program availability and seasonal variations, and not necessarily what the elderly would like to see on television.

Amount of TV viewing, daypart distribution, and program preferences are patterns of TV use that may result from the audience's expectations of the medium's ability to satisfy particular needs. For example, Davis (1980) has pointed out that television may be used by the elderly as a way of filling their time and/or structuring their time. Thus, the amount of time spent watching television may reflect the need to be doing something, rather than nothing. Seniors who are retired from the work force and/or older women whose children have grown up and left home may find that they have large amounts of time on their hands. Television may be an

activity which can fill the hours previously spent on paid employment and/or childrearing and homemaking activities. In addition, Davis (1971) has suggested that television helps seniors schedule their daily activities, thus daypart distribution of TV viewing may reflect the elderly's need to structure their time. For example, seniors may like to watch TV in the afternoon as a way to rest and relax after a busy morning of errands and household chores. Finally, the elderly's preference for news and information programs may reflect their need to keep in touch with what is happening in their community.

Research Goals and Predictions. The current research study, with its Canadian sample, expects to replicate previous research findings which indicate that evening viewing is the most popular time for TV watching and that news and information programs are the most preferred programs by older adults. To identify program preferences in a more objective way, preferences will be determined by examining what seniors actually watch using a diary method in which seniors check off programs as they watch them, rather than asking them what they like to watch, or what they watched the previous day or two, as most questionnaire studies have done in the past.

Although it is expected that program preferences and daypart distribution findings will be replicated, it is predicted that there will be more overall TV viewing than found in most studies since TV watching as the sole activity

(i.e., watching while alone and not engaged in another activity) as well as conjoint (i.e., TV watching with another activity) and shared (i.e., TV watching with another viewer) activities will be assessed. Use of the diary method to record the viewing activity will likely contribute to this greater amount of reported viewing because previous research studies which used questionnaires to determine amount of viewing time are dependent on the subject's memory, thus increasing the possibility of inaccuracy and/or systmatic under-reporting of watching due to the bias the elderly may have of admitting to watching TV (Fouts, 1989).

Amazingly, previous studies have not examined TV watching occuring in conjunction with other activities nor as an activity shared with other viewers. The present study will examine TV watching as a sole activity, a conjoint activity, and a shared activity. It is possible that TV viewing as a conjoint activity or shared experience with others is greater than TV watching as a sole activity, especially for seniors who are marrried, thus suggesting that TV watching may play a more subsidiary role than previously suspected.

Motives for TV Viewing. Motives play an important role in the uses and gratification/dependency models. Motives for TV watching are closely related to needs because needs are manifested in motives (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). "Motives are the expectations generated for communication behavior" (Rubin & Windahl, 1986, p. 191). An understanding of

motives is important, for motives affect which media and content are chosen as well as how and why a medium is used and analyzed, ultimately influencing the effects from media use (Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

Several motives for TV watching have been studied which appear to be related to the various ways older adults use television, and to some degree, which reflect their choice of programming. Since news and information programs are the main preferences, it is not surprising that the need to receive information has been found to be a popular reason for watching TV (Fouts, 1989). Types of informational programming that appeal to the elderly include nightly newscasts, talk shows, and documentaries. Rubin and Rubin (1982a) reported that information-seeking was the most salient viewing motivation for their sample, whereas Korzenny and Neuendorf (1980) found that the need to "gain new knowledge" was the second most important function of TV. Similarly, Ostman and Jeffers (1983) discovered that for older adults, learning was cited as an important reason to watch TV. Fouts and Abraham (1988) stated that 67% of their sample reported that learning new things was an important motive for watching TV.

In addition to information, entertainment has been another frequently reported reason for TV watching. Rubin and Rubin (1982a) found that for their elderly sample, entertainment was the second most salient motivation (following information). Korzenny and Neuendorf (1980)

found that entertainment was found to be the most important function of TV for their older sample. Fouts and Abraham (1988) also found that entertainment was the most salient motive for watching television.

Fouts (1989) states that information and entertainment motives are often combined motives and difficult to separate. He points out that often informational programs include entertaining elements (as in the case of human interest stories located within news broadcasts and/or talk shows which present information in an entertaining format). Similarly, docudramas contain both nonfictional and fictional elements, thus they are able to entertain while they inform. Entertainment motives are likely combined with other motives as well. Thus, viewing patterns originating only from entertainment motives are difficult to determine. What is "entertaining" is heavily dependent on the subjective perceptions of viewers rather than on the objective content of programs (Fouts, 1989). Nevertheless, viewers do report these two motives as the most common reasons for watching TV.

Although information and entertainment are the most salient motives for watching TV, the elderly also report watching television for a number of other reasons. Companionship (Davis, 1980; Graney & Graney, 1974; Rubin & Rubin; 1982a), to relax (Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980), as a source for conversational topics (Doolittle, 1979; Ostman & Jeffers, 1983; Rubin & Rubin,

1982a), to help structure time (Davis, 1971, 1980), to escape (Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Rubin & Rubin, 1982a), and out of habit (Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Rubin & Rubin, 1982a) have all been reported by older adults as reasons for watching TV. Other reasons also include because TV viewing is inexpensive, convenient, to pass the time, and for excitement/arousal (Rubin & Rubin, 1982a). Thus, it appears that television serves a variety of functions for older adults.

Interestingly, Fouts & Abraham (1988) discovered that their sample watched TV predominantly for "positive" reasons (e.g., information seeking and entertainment) rather than for "negative" reasons (e.g., to escape from depression, to pass the time). They also found that the number of different reasons for watching TV was positively correlated with the amount of time spent watching TV, and concluded that the more functions TV serves for elderly viewers, the more the medium is used.

Research Goals and Predictions. In an effort to better understand the functions that TV serves for seniors, the current research study will use a Canadian sample to examine motives for TV watching as well as examine their relationships with amount of TV viewing, program preferences, daily activities, and life circumstance variables.

It is predicted that information and entertainment motives will be the dominant motives for watching

television. It is also predicted that growth-enhancing motives (e.g., to learn new things, to continue to be in contact with world events, entertainment) for TV watching will be positively correlated with higher levels of happiness, mobility, health, and social interaction. Escapist motives (e.g., to forget about problems, to pass the time, out of habit), on the other hand, will be negatively correlated with levels of happiness, mobility, health, and social interaction (Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980).

In addition, higher levels of overall motivation for TV watching is expected to be positively correlated with amount of TV viewing and greater range of program preferences. That is, the greater the number of functions TV serves for older adults, the greater the amounts of TV use and a wider selection of program contents which may satisfy these needs (Fouts & Abraham, 1988).

Contextual Factors Influencing TV Use

Uses and gratifications suggests that the needs which generate expectations of the mass media have social and psychological origins. Thus, knowledge of the various social, physical, and psychological characteristics of the elderly which influence the shaping of needs should contribute to an understanding of media use by individuals. Furthermore, the uses and dependency model proposes that the needs and interests of individuals are also shaped as they interact with outside influences. Demographic factors such

as gender, age, and education level indicate certain positions within society that likely shape and color interactions with social, cultural, political, and economic structures, and thus, indirectly provide information about outside influences on the needs and interests of individuals. Therefore, examining such factors as education and income levels, age, and gender, and their relationships with motives and subsequent TV viewing patterns can provide additional insight into television use by seniors.

Although some studies have examined what the elderly watch on TV and why, much less is known about the factors which create, shape, and influence the various needs and interests which older adults strive to satisfy through media use or other sources. As Dimmick, McCain, and Bolton (1979) pointed out, an individual's needs change over the course of a lifetime in response to changes in the physical, social, and psychological environments. This alteration in need structure can, in turn, affect the way the individual seeks to satisfy these needs, and one of the changes in need-satisfying behavior may include changes in the use of mass media.

One study has examined television viewing and the environmental context in which it occurs (Rubin & Rubin, 1981). This study compared the TV viewing patterns and motivations of younger (23 to 60 years old) and older (62 to 93 years old) persons in confined (hospital) and non-confined (home) settings. The researchers speculated that

the communication, psychological, and social contexts surrounding an individual were more important in determining television use than age per se. Their primary purpose was to "examine the communication, social, and psychological effects on aging processes by analyzing the context of confinement or non-confinement in which a person lives" (Rubin & Rubin, 1981, p. 4).

The results indicated that for both younger persons and seniors, entertainment and information were important viewing motivations at home. However, seniors watched more TV than younger persons in a home environment (Rubin & Rubin, 1981). On the other hand, in a hospital setting, viewing to pass the time and to relieve boredom were the dominant motives for both young and old (Rubin & Rubin, 1981). Furthermore, younger people reported substantially higher levels of TV viewing in a hospital setting than in a non-confined environment (Rubin & Rubin, 1981). The researchers also found that few differences existed with regard to either programs preferences or viewing motivations between the two age groups in a hospital setting. The researchers suggested that within a confined environment, TV provides all viewers with a means of relieving loneliness and with a "window to the world" (Rubin & Rubin, 1981). They concluded, that rather than age being an important discriminator of communication behavior, the environmental context of the individual is the major determinant of media use (Rubin & Rubin, 1981).

Building on these research findings, the researchers designed another study in which they suggested various factors contributing to the "contextual age" of individuals helps in explaining and predicting TV viewing behavior more than chronological age. Their concept of "contextual age" is composed of "several communication, social, psychological, physical, and economic dimensions, including interpersonal interaction, social activity, mobility, life satisfaction, health, and economic security" (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b, p. 230). Thus, "how young or old a person is varies with the context in which he/she lives" (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b, p.230).

In this study, the researchers found that relationships existed between interpersonal interaction, economic security, and self-reliance contextual age factors and TV viewing patterns. For example, socially active and self-reliant but economically insecure seniors regularly watched a variety of programs. Socially active but less mobile persons were found to perceive television as important and watched daytime serials on a regular basis; those who were self-reliant and socially active and watched sports and action adventure programs displayed little affinity with television (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b).

The study also found relationships between contextual age factors and motives for TV watching. Seniors who were least satisfied and lived alone used TV as a means of escape or to forget about their problems. Those seniors who were

satisfied with life and socially active, but economically insecure, used TV because it was an inexpensive means of relaxation and less because it was a way to escape, pass the time or for social interaction. In addition, seniors who were less mobile had a greater need to use TV as a companion or to forget about problems than those who were more reliant (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b).

The researchers concluded that the concept of contextual age was a meaningful life-position indicator, but pointed out that various contextual age dimensions (e.g., mobility) are not limited to the elderly, but may also be found in younger adults. Thus, younger persons who shared contextual age factors with the elderly could also display similar communication behaviors.

Although they found that these individual factors are related to viewing motivations and viewing patterns (i.e., daypart distribution, program preferences, and TV affinity), they did not relate these factors to whether TV watching was a sole, conjoint, or shared activity, or relate TV watching with the everyday activities of seniors.

Although these two research studies contribute to our understanding of television use by seniors, methodological limitations prevent us from a more complete and deeper understanding of the many variables that may influence their television use.

First, both studies (Rubin & Rubin, 1981, 1982b) relied on self-report rather than the diary method to measure

amount of TV viewing, daypart distribution, and program preferences. The current study will use the diary method to determine TV viewing patterns in a more objective way and two days' viewing will be measured rather than one.

Second, Rubin and Rubin's (1982b) contextual age study used only 14 motivational statements, each statement representing a different motive, to determine motives for TV watching. The present study will measure motives by asking participants to respond to 28 statements, each reflecting a specific motive for watching TV. Some motives will be represented by more than one statement.

And third, the previous research studies did not systematically assess the activities of older adults, thus we have no information regarding how contextual age factors are related with everyday activities which may indicate a different pattern of relationships than those associated with TV viewing.

The present research study will expand previous research findings by assessing the activities of older adults for two days using the diary method and relating these activities with demographic characteristics, the four life circumstance variables, motives for TV watching, and TV viewing patterns. Thus, we will have a more complete understanding of how these variables contribute to TV use, how they may relate to each other, and what patterns of variables may influence TV use within the context of everyday activities.

Research Goals and Predictions. The current research study will examine the situation surrounding TV use by studying the relationships among the variables of physical health, mobility, happiness, social interaction, and demographic characteristics, and motivations for TV viewing, patterns of TV use, and daily activities.

Lower levels of physical health, mobility, happiness, social interaction, income, activities, and education and living alone are expected to be positively correlated with greater amounts of TV viewing, overall motivation for TV watching, and range in type of programs watched. With lower levels of health, mobility, happiness, interaction, income, and activities, the individual has fewer resources to draw on to fulfill needs, and thus would be more likely to seek out television use as a means of fulfilling those needs which cannot be satisfied by other, non-media alternatives.

Everyday Activities and TV

The uses and gratifications/dependency models propose that individuals look to many sources, mediated and non-mediated, for need gratification. It has been suggested that needs may be satisfied by "(a) best by media alone, (b) equally well by media use and other alternatives, or (c) best by alternatives to specific media use" (Rubin & Windahl, 1986, p. 193). Individuals with many resources (e.g., good health, mobility, opportunities for social interaction, higher income levels) are likely to have more alternatives for satisfying needs than those with fewer

resources. Examining how older adults spend their time may indicate how TV use may help compensate for lost resources and/or complement their other needs.

Although several time analysis studies involving older adults have assessed leisure activities, little research exists which examines all uses of time. One study (Moss & Lawton, 1982) which did look at how seniors spent entire days involved elderly people situated in four different living arrangements: elderly people living in the community, in public housing, those receiving in-home services, and those waiting for insititutional care. The study examined obligatory activities (e.g., cooking, eating, shopping) and discretionary activities (e.g., reading, television watching, relaxing) in which seniors participated as well as the situations surrounding the activities (i.e., whether the individual was alone or with others, and the location of the activity). Their findings indicated that for all four groups, the majority of the sample spent their days alone (59 to 66% of the waking day) and at home (75 to 85% of the day). Approximately one-third of the day was spent engaged in obligatory activities. Interestingly, the amount of time spent watching television was the most time-consuming activity in which the sample engaged, and the amount of viewing was quite similar across the four different living arrangements, ranging between 3.36 hours and 3.7 hours per day. Thus, in this study, the living

arrangement of the individual did not appear to influence TV viewing.

In analyzing differences among the four groups, the results also indicated that the independent groups (those people situated in community or public housing) spent more time away from home and engaged in more obligatory activities. Few differences existed among discretionary activities (Moss & Lawton, 1982). Also, those who were more independent generally enjoyed all activities more than those who were more dependent. The researchers concluded that older adults with higher levels of behavioral competence and psychological well-being can enjoy many activities more than those who are not as fortunate (Moss & Lawton, 1982).

Although Moss & Lawton's (1982) study contributes to the understanding of time use by older adults, two major limitations prevent us from understanding how everyday activities relate to TV use. First, the assessment of activities entailed asking participants to recall how they had spent their time the day before (only one day's activities were noted). Obviously, the possibility of inaccuracy is great for this type of subjective recall, especially for participants who may have age-related memory deficits (Craik, 1977). Second, the researchers did not attempt to relate the amount of time spent engaging in the various activities with TV use; thus, television use within the context of everyday activities could not be described.

This limits our understanding of how television watching fits in with other everyday activities.

Research Goals and Predictions. The current research study will attempt to overcome the limitations of the previous study by using a diary method to record activities and by correlating TV watching with other activities. Whereas the previous study asked participants to recall activities from the previous day, the current research study will ask participants to keep a record of activities for two days. Since participants will be asked to record their activities at three different times during the day, the results should provide a more accurate picture of time use by seniors, as this method is less dependent on the participant's memory of the previous day. This research study will also permit the relating of daily activities with the life circumstance variables, thus providing another measurement of the social, physical, and psychological characteristics of the elderly. Relating the life circumstances variables and daily activities with motives for TV watching may provide the "context" for a particular motive. In addition, the record of daily activities will provide another measure of TV watching, and a measure of other media use in general.

It is predicted that greater participation in various activities (e.g., time outside the home, social interaction activities, other media use) will be negatively correlated with amount of TV viewing. This is a logical prediction

since elderly people who participate in many activities are likely to spend more time away from home and/or be engaged in activities which make it difficult or impossible to watch TV (e.g., gardening, going for a walk); thus, they simply may not be able to spend as much time watching as their less active peers. Also, participation in many activities may suggest that these seniors may seek (and are able to seek) need gratification from non-media sources, rather than television. For seniors who are restricted in their ability to satisfy needs through a variety of sources, television may be used as a substitute or as a way of compensating for that loss.

It is also expected that greater participation in various activities will be positively correlated with conjoint TV viewing. That is, active seniors may be able to satisfy two or more needs simultaneously by engaging in two activities; e.g., writing a letter to an adult child (satisfying a need to communicate, maintain family ties) while watching the news (satisfying a need for information).

Methodological Issues and Present Design

The total literature examining television use by older adults is small, and several studies suffer from methodological problems which may obscure interpreting research findings and cloud our understanding of how and why seniors use television in their daily lives. The present research study was designed to overcome some of the limitations of previous studies, and in doing so, provide a

broader, more accurate and data-based picture of TV use by the elderly. The following discussion will address some of the methodological concerns regarding previous research studies and will present features of the current study intended to remedy these limitations.

Television Diary. Some studies have relied on long-term memory to recall information about amount of TV viewing, viewing distribution throughout the day, and program preferences. Considering that some older adults have age-related memory deficits (Craik, 1977), relying on subjective recall may not be the most accurate way to measure TV viewing. The present study, however, will use the diary method. This will likely increase the accuracy of measurement since it relies on memory less than does a questionnaire and is less subject to bias on the part of the individual (e.g., selective "forgetting" of watching a soap opera because he/she may be reluctant to admit it).

In addition, two days of viewing will be recorded. Most studies have measured either the previous day's viewing or used a questionnaire without a specific time frame. The use of two days of measurement has the advantage of sampling a larger block of time, thus likely increasing the representativeness and accuracy of measuring viewing habits, rather than one day's TV viewing which may or may not be typical for that individual.

The present study will also record whether TV viewing was a sole, conjoint, or shared activity. This has not been

measured in previous studies. Thus, previous research findings regarding the amount of TV viewing may be inaccurate because it is unknown whether these studies examined only one or some combination of these three types of TV viewing. In association with this, past research may have been misleading in how TV is used by older adults. For example, if TV watching is often used as a conjoint activity, it may have a more subsidiary or different function for those viewers than for people who watch TV mostly as a sole activity.

Motivation Measurement. The present research study will measure motives by asking participants to respond to 28 statements, each reflecting a specific motive for watching TV. Some motives will be represented by more than one statement in order to obtain a clearer understanding of specific motives. In contrast, some studies have measured motives by using substantially fewer motivational statements and/or used a single statement per motive. In the present study, the motives suggested by past research will be examined.

In the present study, motives will be measured on a Likert scale, thus measuring not only the existence of a motive but also how often the motive is used. Most studies have not used a scale, but merely asked participants to check off those motives which applied to their situation. Using a number of statements to represent motives for TV watching and a Likert scale to measure the frequency of use

will likely increase the accurate assessment of participants' reasons for TV viewing as well as being able to statistically relate them to the many other variables of the study.

Activity Diary. The systematic assessment of activities by older adults has been ignored by communication researchers. Although Moss and Lawton's (1982) study provided some information about seniors' activities, the study depended on the participants' memory for information and only measured one day's activity. Furthermore, the researchers did not relate activities with television use; thus preventing us from understanding how TV watching fits in with other everyday activities.

The present study will record everyday activities (e.g., shopping, housework, hobbies, reading, resting, social interaction, entertainment) for two days using a diary method. To avoid relying on memory too much, participants will be asked to record their activities at three different times during the day: after lunch, after dinner, and before bedtime. The daily activities will be related to patterns of TV use, motivations for watching TV, demographic characteristics, and the life circumstance variables; these relationships have not been examined in the past research.

Life Circumstances Questionnaire. Rubin & Rubin produced two landmark studies (1981, 1982b). However, further research is needed to confirm their research

results. Both studies suffer from some of the methodological limitations mentioned above. Yet, the researchers made a major contribution to understanding television use by seniors by suggesting that various factors contributing to their "contextual age" helps in explaining and predicting TV viewing behavior more than chronological age. Rubin and Rubin (1982b) examined interpersonal interaction, social activity, mobility, life satisfaction, health, and economic security as variables which could influence television use by seniors. The present study will use the variables of mobility, happiness, physical health, and social interaction as indicators of the social, psychological, and physical characteristics of the elderly which may affect their use of television. Six questions will be used for measuring each variable and responses will be presented in the form of a Likert scale. The measurement of these variables, combined with improved methods of measuring motives, TV viewing patterns, and everyday activities will provide a broader, deeper, and more accurate understanding of television use by the elderly.

Summary. The present study will use an activity diary and a TV diary to measure daily activities and television watching for two days. Television watching as a sole, conjoint, and shared activity experience will be recorded. To determine program preferences in a more objective way, preferences will be based on what participants watch rather than on what they say they like to watch. Motives will be

measured on a Likert scale; 28 statements representing a variety of motives for TV watching will be used. Six questions will be used to measure each of the four life circumstance variables and responses will be presented in the form of a Likert scale. These methodological considerations will contribute to a more accurate and precise data-based description about television use by the elderly as well as allow the development of an understanding of TV use; e.g., how the social, physical, and psychological characteristics are related to TV use, the functions TV serves, how TV fits in with daily living, and whether TV watching displaces or complements other everyday activites. Thus, the present research study satisfies two major goals: (1) to increase the methodological sophistication of research in this area, and (2) with this improved sophistication, a more complex understanding of television use by seniors within the uses and gratifications/dependency theoretical framework can be obtained. That is, whereas past research has examined certain elements within this framework in relative isolation, the present research study will examine several elements as well as their relationships among one another.

The hypotheses of the present study are as follows: (1) evening viewing will be the most popular time for TV watching; (2) news and information programs will be the most preferred programs; (3) overall TV viewing will be greater than found in previous studies; (4) information and

entertainment motives will be the dominant motives for watching TV; (5) growth-enhancing motives (e.g., to learn new things, to continue to be in contact with world events, entertainment) for TV watching will be positively correlated with higher levels of happiness, mobility, health, and social interaction; (6) escapist motives (e.g., to forget about problems, to pass the time, out of habit) will be negatively correlated with levels of happiness, mobility, health, and social interaction; (7) higher levels of overall motivation for TV watching will be positively correlated with amount of TV viewing and greater range of program preferences; (8) lower levels of physical health, mobility, happiness, social interaction, daily activities, income, education, and living alone will be positively correlated with greater amounts of TV viewing, higher levels of overall motivation, and greater range in type of program watched; (9) greater participation in various activities will be negatively correlated with amount of TV viewing; and (10) greater participation in various activities will be positively correlated with conjoint TV viewing.

METHOD

Participants

Eighty people volunteered to participate in the study; 28 of the participants were men and 52 were women, approximately the same male/female ratio as in the general population. The 80 participants included 22 married couples. All participants were 60 years of age or older and were recruited three different ways. First, a newspaper advertisement appeared in The Calgary Herald explaining the purpose and nature of the study. Seniors interested in participating in the study were directed to contact the researcher by telephone. The advertisement appeared on three separate occasions and in three different sections of the newspaper to reach as large a senior audience as possible. Second, the researcher contacted and met with various seniors' organizations in Calgary (e.g., in the communities of Renfrew and Varsity) and explained the purpose and nature of the study to them. Those seniors who were interested in participating in the study gave the researcher their names and telephone numbers. And third, several people volunteered to participate in the research after being referred by friends or relatives who were already involved in the study.

Assessment Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire. The Demographic Questionnaire asked participants about their gender, birthdate, marital status, type of residence, education and

income levels, retirement status, and whether they lived alone. Five elderly people not involved in the actual research study were used to test this instrument in a pilot study so that instructions and/or statements could be refined as needed.

Media Questionnaire. The Media Questionnaire asked participants about their use of media in general. This instrument included questions regarding the number of working TVs and radios in the home, whether participants subscribed to cable television, the number of channels they received on their TV set, whether they owned a VCR and how often it was used, and whether they read a newspaper on a regular basis and/or subscribed to magazines. This questionnaire was also pilot tested with five elderly people so that instructions and/or statements could be refined.

Motives Questionnaire. The Motives Questionnaire asked participants about why they watched TV. The questionnaire contained 28 statements which reflected a variety of motives for watching television (e.g., entertainment, to pass the time, to learn, to escape). Motives for television watching have been examined to some degree by previous researchers (e.g., Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980; Rubin & Rubin, 1982a), and most of the motivational statements used in this questionnaire are based on those statements used in previous studies. An example of a statement from the Motives Questionnaire is, "I watch TV to keep me company." A 5-point Likert scale was used to

measure participants' degree of use for each motive, with the response choices being "almost all the time," "usually," "some of the time," "not usuallly," and "almost never." Participants were asked to circle the response that most accurately described how often they watched TV for that reason. Some motives (e.g., information seeking, escape) were assessed by more than one statement. This instrument was also pilot tested.

Life Circumstances Questionnaire. The purpose of the Life Circumstances Questionnaire was to assess some of the psychological, physical, and social characteristics of the participants. The questionnaire examined four variables: physical health, mobility, social interaction, and happiness. These four variables are among those used by gerontologists to assess levels of life satisfaction and functional competence (e.g., Stones & Kozma, 1973) and high levels of these variables are thought to contribute to successful aging (Butler & Lewis, 1982). This questionnaire contained 24 statements; six different statements (3 positively worded, 3 negatively worded) were used to assess each of the four variables. Rubin and Rubin (1982b) examined similar variables in their "contextual age" study, and many of the statements used in the present questionnaire were based on statements from their research study. Examples of statements from the Life Circumstances Questionnaire are, "I usually drive my own car or use the city bus to get around" (mobility variable), "I do not worry

much about my life situation" (happiness variable), "healthwise, I am no worse off than anyone else my age" (physical health variable), and "I have someone close to me that I can trust and confide in" (social interaction variable). The questionnaire asked participants to indicate how well each statement described their present situation. Responses were based on a 4-point Likert scale: "completely agree," "generally agree," "generally disagree," and "completely disagree," with "undecided" being provided as a response option. The Life Circumstances Questionnaire was pilot tested by five older adults not involved in the actual research so that the directions and/or statements could be refined.

TV Diary. Participants were asked to use the TV Diary (see Appendix A) to record the television programs they watched on two consecutive weekdays. Weekdays were chosen over weekends because weekday programming is considerably different than that on the weekends (e.g., Saturday morning programming consists largely of cartoons and Saturday afternoon is often filled with sports programming) and is likely to be of more interest to the elderly than weekend programming. In addition, previous research (e.g., Fouts & Abraham 1986 & 1988; Rubin & Rubin 1982b) examined weekday viewing; thus, comparisons between past research and the present study will be more appropriate if this study also examines weekday viewing.

The TV diary had a format which was similar to that of the television guide published in the newspaper; it listed the channels (from 2 to 13) and programs scheduled for the two week days chosen by the participant. Participants were instructed to circle the programs that they watched and to indicate whether they watched the program(s) with someone else and whether they participated in other activities while watching the program(s). Space was provided for participants to record if they watched a program on a channel that was not listed in the diary (e.g., a news program broadcast by Cable News Network) and/or if they taped a program on the VCR and watched it at a different time. To ensure the participants' understanding, the instructions included a detailed practice sheet which illustrated each step involved in completing the TV Diary. Participants were advised to mark a program just before or just after they watched the program and to keep the diary in a place where they were likely to see it, such as on the television set or on the table next to their chair. The TV Diary was pilot tested by five seniors not involved in the actual research to ensure that all instructions and statements were clear and easy to understand.

Daily Activities Diary. Participants were asked to record their everyday activities for two consecutive weekdays using the Daily Activities Diary; these 2 days were the same days during which the participants recorded their TV viewing in the TV Diary. The Daily Activties Diary

listed obligatory activities (e.g., cooking, shopping, housework, personal care) as well as discretionary activities (e.g., reading, hobbies, entertainment outside the home). To assist participants in remembering and recording the activities in which they engaged, each day was divided into three parts: the time from when they awoke until lunchtime, the time between lunch and dinnertime, and the time between dinner and bedtime. Thus, participants were asked to record their activities at three different times during the day: (1) after lunch, to record activties which took place between the time from waking until after lunch, (2) after dinner, to record activities which took place between the time after lunch until after dinner, and (3) before bed, to record activities which took place between the time after dinner and bedtime.

Participants were instructed to write down the amount of time (as close as possible in minutes) they spent on each activity in the space provided across from the listed activity. Participants were advised to record only those activities that took 15 minutes or more of their time. To ensure the participants' understanding, the directions included a detailed practice sheet which illustrated how the Daily Activities Diary should be completed. The Daily Activities Diary was also pilot tested by five seniors.

Procedure

The researcher contacted participants by telephone to arrange appointments at a mutually convenient time in order

to have them answer the questionnaires and receive instructions for completing the TV and Daily Activities Diaries. The researcher met with the participants in their homes, apartments, or in the case of one individual, a nursing care home.

Upon arrival at a participant's residence, the researcher introduced herself, stated that she was a graduate student in Communications Studies at the University of Calgary, and verbally explained the nature and purpose of the research study. The participant then read an "Information Sheet" which also explained the purpose and nature of the study. The participant was asked to read and sign a Consent Form; all questions (if any) were answered. By signing the Consent Form, each participant agreed to complete the four questionnaires and to record their TV viewing and daily activities for 2 days.

Each participant was first given the Demographic Questionnaire to complete; the researcher informed the participant that "this questionnaire asks you a few questions about yourself." When the Demographic Questionnaire had been completed the researcher stated that she would like to ask the participant "a few questions about the types of mass media you use in your home." The researcher then verbally asked the participant questions from the Media Questionnaire and recorded his/her answers.

Next, the participant was informed that the third questionnaire "asks why you watch TV". The researcher gave

the participant the Motives Questionnaire and asked him/her to read the instructions. After the instructions had been read by the participant, the researcher briefly reiterated the directions and restated the example that was provided. Any questions the participant had about the instructions were answered and he/she completed the questionnaire.

The researcher then stated that the final questionnaire "asks you a few questions about your present situation." The researcher gave the participant the Life Circumstances Questionnaire and asked him/her to read the instructions. After the instructions had been read by the partcipant, the researcher briefly reiterated the directions and restated the example that was provided. Any questions the participant had about the instructions were answered and he/she completed the questionnaire.

After the four questionnaires were completed, the researcher presented the participant with the Daily Activities Diary and the instructions for completing it. The researcher stated that "this form will help you keep track of how you spend your time on the two weekdays you have chosen." The researcher asked the participant to read the instructions. The researcher then verbally repeated the instructions, gave examples, pointed out how and where entries were to be recorded, and answered any questions the participant had until the researcher was confidant that the participant understood how the Daily Activities Diary was to be completed.

Finally, the researcher presented the participant with the TV Diary and the instructions for completing it. The researcher explained to the participant that "this form will help you to keep track of the TV programs you watch on the two weekdays you have chosen." The researcher then asked the participant to read the instructions. The researcher then verbally repeated the instructions, gave examples, pointed out how and where entries were to be recorded, and answered any questions the participants had until the researcher was confidant that the participant understood how the TV Diary was to be completed.

After completing the Demographic, Media, Motives, and Life Circumstances Questionnaires and explaining the TV and Daily Activities Diaries, the participant was asked if he/she had any questions. The researcher answered any questions the participant had and gave the participant her telephone number in case other questions arose later. The researcher then told the participant that she would return in a few days to pick up the completed TV and Daily Activities Diaries. The researcher thanked the participant for taking part in the study and departed.

In most cases, the four questionnaires were completed and the instructions for completing the Daily Activities and TV Diaries were discussed at the kitchen or dining room table in the participant's residence.

In two instances, at the request of the participants, the researcher read the questionnaires to the participants,

recorded their answers, and read the instructions for the Daily Activities and TV Diaries to them. In both cases, the participants cited failing eyesight for the request. Despite the participants' less than optimal eyesight, the Daily Activities and TV Diaries appeared to be appropriately completed when the researcher returned to collect the Diaries.

The appointment for completing the four questionnaires and discussing the instructions for completing the Daily Activities and TV Diaries varied in length from a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours. Some participants were able to complete the questionnaires and read and understand the instructions for the TV and Daily Activities Diaries quickly, and/or were less inclined to visit with and ask questions of the researcher. Other participants needed more time to complete the questionnaires and understand the instructions for the TV and Daily Activities Diary and/or chose to visit with the researcher about the study or other items of interest.

At a mutually convenient time, the researcher returned to retrieve the diaries. At that time, the researcher clarified with the participant any diary entries that were not clear to her (e.g., in some instances a participant circled only 30 minutes of a 60 minute program and the researcher checked with the participant how much time was indeed spent watching that program). The researcher thanked the participants for their involvement in the study and

reminded them that they would receive a summary of the results sometime after the completion of the study. In a few instances, diaries were picked up from friends or spouses of the participants, or retrieved from the participant's mailbox if he/she was unable to keep the appointment.

All data were collected by one researcher during a three month period (April-June) in the spring of 1990.

Data Scoring

Direct Data Scoring. The scorer calculated the age of each participant and then all data from the Demographic, Media, and Motives Questionnaires were directly recorded onto data sheets for later entry into the computer data base.

Coding of Data: Life Circumstances Questionnaire. Responses to the Life Circumstances Questionnaire required coding in order to permit appropriate analysis of the data. One-half of the statements from the Life Circumstances Questionnaire were worded in a positive way (e.g., "most of the time I feel content and satisfied with my life") and the other half were worded in a negative way (e.g., "my life could be happier than it is now"). Thus, each statement had to be coded so that the score reflected the same direction, thus permitting the later calculation of the four major variables: physical health, happiness, social interaction, and mobility. The 24 data points on this questionnaire were

recorded on the data sheets for later entry into the computer data base.

Coding of Data: Activities Diary. The scorer calculated the time (in minutes) the participant was awake for the each of two days of the study (participants were directed to record the time that they awoke and the time they went to bed each day) and these two scores were then summed. The total time (in minutes) spent engaged in each of the following basic activities was summed across the two days: (1) eating, cooking, (2) shopping, errands, (3) housework, (4) personal care, (5) helping others, (6) appointments, (7) reading, (8) watching TV, (9) listening to the radio, (10) recreation, hobbies, (11) resting, napping, (12) exercise, fitness, (13) religious activities, (14) social interaction, (15) entertainment outside the home, (16) work, employment, (17) media use, and (18) time outside the home. An additional category "media use" was calculated by combining the scores from "reading," "watching TV," and "listening to the radio." Another category "time outside the home" was calculated by combining the scores from "shopping, errands," "appointments," and "entertainment outside the home."

Coding of Data: TV Diary. The following 18 categories were defined (see Appendix B for lists of programs under each category) and the scorer tabulated across two days the total time (in minutes) the participant spent watching

television in each of these categories: (1) news, "hard" information, (2) talk shows, (3) self-improvement, (4) "infotainment", (5) information for the elderly, (6) the total for informational programming (i.e., the sum of categories 1, 2, 3, and 4), (7) soaps/serials, (8) drama, (9) action/adventure, (10) situation comedies, (11) movies, (12) the total for escapist programming (i.e., the sum of categories 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11), (13) sports, (14) game shows, (15) religious programming, (16) children's programming, (17) music/variety, and (18) other. The scorer also calculated across two days, for each category, the total time (in minutes) the participant spent watching a program with another viewer and the total amount of time (in minutes) the participant spent engaged in other activities while watching TV. Finally, the scorer calculated across two days the total amount of time (in minutes) each participant spent watching television in the morning (8:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.), in the afternoon (1:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.), and in the evening (6:00 P.M. - midnight).

Provision was also made to identify those participants who engaged in the viewing of two or more programs simultaneously or "zapping" (i.e., switching from one channel to the next during a given time slot), and those whose TV Diary and/or Daily Activities Diary may reflect some inaccuracies. For example, some TV Diaries appeared to underestimate TV viewing time because the participants only circled 30 minutes of a 60 minute program and the researcher

was unable to determine whether he/she did indeed only watch 30 minutes or if he/she inadvertently omitted circling the whole program. In these instances, the program was scored as being watched for only 30 minutes: thus, amount of time spent watching television for that participant may be a conservative measure. In the case of the Daily Activities Diary, some participants overlooked entering the amount of time in an activity category, but rather, merely put a check mark in the box.

All data were scored by one individual.

Data entry was carried out by Academic Computing Services, University of Calgary.

Reliability of Data Scoring and Coding

To assess the consistency of data scoring and coding, approximately 21% (n=16) of the sample was randomly chosen to have the data scored and coded again 11 months after the initial scoring and coding; this was done by the researcher. Nineteen variables were then selected for comparison with the original set of scored and coded data.

Four major demographic variables were chosen to be re-scored: age, marital status, education, and income. Pearson's correlation conducted on the variable for age indicated high reliability (r= 0.97, p< 0.001), and perfect agreement was found between the two sets of data for marital status, education, and income.

Four variables were randomly selected from each of the Motives and Life Circumstances Questionnaires to be re-

scored. The variables selected from the Motives Questionnaire were as follows: "I watch TV to give me things to talk about with others"; "I watch TV to unwind"; "I watch TV to share an activity with others"; and "I watch TV when I don't have anything else to do." The variables selected from the Life Circumstances Questionnaire were as follows: "healthwise, I am no worse off than anyone else my age"; "I often feel depressed"; "I often have aches and pains that slow me down"; and "I spend enough time communicating with my family and/or friends by telephone or mail." Perfect agreement was found between the original and subsequent scoring for each of these eight variables.

Four variables from the Activity Diary were randomly selected to be re-coded: helping others, listening to the radio, exercise and fitness, and media use. Perfect agreement was also found between the original and subsequent sets of data for each variable.

Finally, the three variables measuring amount of television watched (i.e., TV watching in the morning, afternoon, and evening) from the TV Diary were selected to be re-coded. Pearson's correlation conducted on the variable measuring afternoon TV watching indicated high reliability (r= 0.99. p< 0.001), and perfect agreement was found between the two sets of data for the variables measuring TV watching in the morning and TV watching in the evening.

RESULTS

Participant Demographics

Eighty people participated in the research study. The data from five participants were eliminated: two people were under the age of 60 and three people were unable to accurately complete the Daily Activities and TV Diaries. Thus, data from 75 people, including 19 married couples, were used in the analyses.

Sociodemographic variables of the participants can be viewed in Table 1. Sixty-five percent of the participants were female, 35% were male. Participants ranged in age from 60 to 90 years old with a mean age of 70 years. Three participants did not provide their age, but assured the researcher that they were over the age of 60. For the statistical analyses, these participants were assigned the mean age of 70.

Seventy-six percent[2] of the participants were married, approximately 15% were widowed, 9% were divorced or separated, and none were single and never married. Only 17% lived alone; 83% lived with at least one other adult.

Seventy-five percent lived in a house or mobile home, 21% lived in an apartment/seniors only apartment/ condominium, and 4% had other housing arrangements. All of the participants were retired from full-time employment or were homemakers and considered themselves retired; 11% of the participants were semi-retired. Five percent of the group had completed grade 7 - 9 in school, while 45% had

TABLE 1

Participant Demographics (N= 75)

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Male	26	34.7
Female	49	65.3
Marital Status		
Married	57	76.0
Widow/widower	11	14.7
Divorced	7	9.3
Residence		
House or mobile home	56	74.7
Apartment/seniors only apartment/condominium	16	21.3
Other	3	4.0
Number of people living in residence		
Live alone	13	17.3
Live with 1 other adult	52	69.3
Live with 2 or more adults	10	13.3

TABLE 1 CONT.

Variable	n	%
Education		
Grades 7 - 9	4	5.3
Some high school	12	16.0
High school graduate	22	29.3
Some university	17	22.7
University graduate	20	26.7
Income		
Less than $15,000	7	9.3
$15,000-$30,000	28	37.3
$30,000-$45,000	16	21.3
$45,000-$60,000	7	9.3
Over $60,000	7	9.3

attended high school or were high school graduates; 49% had attended university or were university graduates. Fifty-nine percent of the participants had annual incomes between $15,000 and $45,000, while 9% earned less than $15,000 and 19% earned more than $45,000.

Correlational (Pearson's product-moment correlations) analyses among demographic variables revealed that age was negatively correlated with the number of people living in residence; i.e., the older the participant, the fewer people the participant lived with (r= -0.19, p= 0.049). No other significant relationships were found among demographic variables.

Media Use

Media in the Home. All the participants had working television sets, with the average number of working sets in the home being 2.12. The average number of working radios was 4.27. The vast majority of the group were subscribers to cable television (approximately 95%); 71% were owners of video cassette recorders. All the participants read the newspaper on a regular basis (i.e., at least three times a week) and approximately 87% subscribed to at least one magazine.

Correlational analyses between demographic variables and media in the home indicated that the older the participants, the fewer number of working television sets in the home (r= -0.22, p= 0.032).

Television Use. The average amount of television watched on week days by the participants (data obtained by the diary method) was 217.1 minutes (3.6 hours). It was expected that the amount of television watched for this study would be higher than previous studies since the study used the diary method to record TV watching (thus decreasing subjective underestimation) and included TV watching in conjunction with other activities. The daily average of TV viewing from previous studies has been approximately 4.5 hours per day, with a range of 2.2 to 6 hours per day (Fouts, 1989); the average daily viewing in the present study was 3.6 hours. Thus, it appears that the average number of viewing hours was below that of other studies, although it did fall within the range previously reported.

Several demographic variables were significantly related (Pearson's product-moment correlations) to amount of television watched. The older the participants, the more TV they watched (r= 0.39, p< 0.001). On the other hand, the more people participants lived with (r= -0.20, p= 0.041) and the higher their level of education (r= -0.25, p= 0.015), the less time they spent viewing TV. Based on approximately 87% of the participants who reported their income (n=65), a correlation between level of income and time spent watching TV approached significance, suggesting that the higher the level of income (r= -0.20, p= 0.051), the less time they spent viewing TV.

A mean of 39 minutes of television was watched in the morning (8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.), 44.9 minutes watched in the afternoon (1:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.), and 133.2 minutes (2.2 hours) watched in the evening (6:00 P.M. to midnight). It was predicted that evening viewing would be the most popular time for TV viewing. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted on the three viewing times revealed a significant difference among the times, $F(2/148)= 79.55$ ($p< 0.001$). Follow-up pair-wise comparisons among the three viewing times (Scheffé, 1959) revealed that evening viewing was significantly ($p< 0.05$) greater than either morning or afternoon viewing; no significant difference existed between morning and afternoon viewing. This finding is consistent with previous research which has found evening viewing to be the most popular time for TV watching (Fouts, 1989).

Age, education, and income were related to daypart TV viewing. Age was positively correlated with TV watching in the morning ($r= 0.41$, $p= 0.000$), TV watching in the afternoon ($r= 0.28$, $p= 0.008$), and TV watching in the evening ($r= 0.20$, $p= 0.042$). Higher levels of education were negatively correlated with TV watching in the afternoon ($r= -0.26$, $p= 0.013$), and higher levels of income were negatively correlated with watching TV in the morning ($r= -0.26$, $p= 0.023$) and in the afternoon ($r= -0.25$, $p= 0.023$).

The daily average of television watched with at least one other person (e.g., a spouse, friend) was slightly more than 1 hour (63.8 minutes), with most of that time occurring

in the evening (41.8 minutes). An average of approximately 10 minutes was spent watching television with someone in both the morning and afternoon. An ANOVA conducted on the three viewing times revealed a significant difference among them, $F(2/148) = 17.20$ ($p < 0.001$). Follow-up pair-wise comparisons among morning, afternoon, and evening viewing times (Scheffé, 1959) indicated that evening viewing with at least one other person was significantly ($p < 0.05$) greater than either morning or afternoon viewing; no significant difference occurred between morning and afternoon TV viewing with others.

Correlational analyses between demographic variables and TV watching with others revealed that across the three viewing times, people who lived with one or more adults were more likely to watch television with at least one other person ($r = 0.24$, $p = 0.018$). Higher levels of income were positively correlated with watching television with at least one other person in the evening ($r = 0.27$, $p = 0.016$). No other demographic variables were significantly related to watching television with other people.

The daily average of televison watched in conjunction with another activity (e.g., cooking, knitting) was 51 minutes (or approximately 24% of total viewing time) with half of that time occurring in the evening. An average of 10 minutes in the morning, and 16 minutes in the afternoon was spent watching television in conjunction with other activities. An ANOVA conducted on the three viewing times,

however, indicated that the three viewing times did not significantly differ.

Correlational analyses between demographic variables and TV watching in conjunction with another activity revealed that age, education, income, and gender were significantly related to sharing an activity with television watching. Across the three viewing times, age was positively correlated with watching television in conjunction with another activity (r= 0.21, p= 0.033), and specifically, sharing an activity with television watching in the morning (r= 0.33, p= 0.002), and afternoon (r= 0.23, p= 0.023). Higher levels of education were negatively correlated with sharing an activity with television watching across the three viewing times (r= -0.25, p= 0.016), and specifically sharing an activity while watching TV in the morning (r= -0.31, p= 0.003). On the other hand, higher levels of income were positively correlated with sharing an activity with television watching in the evening (r= 0.23, p= 0.030). Across the three viewing times, women were found to watch more television in conjunction with other activities than men, $t(73)$= -3.17, p=0.002.

Program Type Viewing. Daily averages and percentages of viewing time for different program types (16 categories) are presented in Table 2. In brief, news and information programs were overwhelmingly the most watched programs, with a daily mean of approximately 1.5 hours (92.4 minutes), i.e., about 43% of total viewing time. Sports programs

TABLE 2

Program Type Viewing

Program	Mean (minutes)	S.D.	% of total viewing time*
News, hard information	92.4	69.4	42.6
Sports	24.8	48.2	11.4
Drama	23.0	34.7	10.6
Game shows	16.4	23.9	7.5
Soaps/serials	15.7	36.4	7.2
Situation comedies	14.5	24.8	6.7
Talk shows	11.8	30.8	5.4
Infotainment	4.8	9.3	2.2
Movies	4.0	22.1	1.8
Children's programs	2.2	14.1	1.0
Religious programs	1.8	6.5	.8
Music/variety	1.8	6.9	.8
Action/adventure	1.6	8.4	.7
Self-improvement	1.2	6.4	.5
Other	.2	1.7	.09
Information programs for the elderly	0	0	0
Combined information programs (news, hard information, talk shows, infotainment, self-improvement)	109.9	82.8	50.6
Combined non-reality programs (drama, soaps/ serials, situation comedies, movies, action/adventure)	58.1	68.7	26.8

*Mean of amount of TV watched = 217.1 minutes.

averaged approximately 25 minutes a day (11.4%), followed closely by drama programs at 23 minutes (10.6%). Game shows, soaps/serials, and situation comedies each averaged approximately 15 minutes a day (approximately 7%), while talk shows averaged approximately 12 minutes (5.4%). Each of the other nine types of programs averaged less than five minutes per day, together accounting for only 8% of the total viewing time.

It was predicted that news and information programs would be the most preferred program types. An ANOVA conducted on the 16 different program types (i.e., news, information; sports; drama; game shows; soaps/serials; situation comedies; talk shows; infotainment, movies; children's programs; religious programs; music/variety; action/adventure; self-improvement; other) revealed a significant difference in amount of time watched among the categories, $F(15/1110) = 49.68$ ($p < 0.001$). As predicted, follow-up pair-wise comparisons among the program types (Scheffé, 1959) demonstrated that significantly ($p < 0.05$) more news and information programs were watched than each of the other program types. This finding is consistent with previous research which has predominantly reported that news and information shows were the most preferred progams by the elderly, although previous research has not reported significant differences (Fouts, 1989).

No significant differences ($p > 0.05$), however, occurred among the other 15 program types. This is consistent with

and may explain the variation of program preferences found in other research studies. For example, Rubin and Rubin (1982a) reported that their elderly sample preferred, in descending order, news, music-variety, documentary-magazine, drama, game shows, talk shows, sports, situation comedies, movies, religion, action-adventure, daytime serials, general comedies, and children's programs; Davis, et. al. (1976) found that their sample preferred news and public affairs, followed by game shows, comedies, and drama. Although previous studies have used frequencies to determine program preferences, the findings of the present study suggest that statistical analyses clarify the importance of differences among program types.

A significant difference was found between the amount of combined information programs watched and the amount of combined non-reality programs watched, $t(74) = 4.97$, $p < 0.001$. The daily average for combined information programs (i.e., news and information, talk shows, infotainment, self-improvement programs) was slightly under 2 hours per day (109.9 minutes) and accounted for 51% of viewing time; whereas the daily average for combined non-reality programs (i.e., soap operas/serials, drama, situation comedies, movies, action/adventure) was just under 1 hour (58.1 minutes) and represented 27% of the viewing time.

The range of program types was also calculated. The different program types watched by participants ranged from

one to eight, with a mean score of 3.61. This mean score was significantly related to amount of television watched, $t(75) = 9.98$, $p < 0.01$. That is, viewers who watched a higher number of different types of programs also spent more time watching television.

Age, education, income, gender, and marital status were all significantly correlated with program type viewing. Older people watched more information programs in general (combined news and information programs, talk shows, self-improvement programs, infotainment; $r = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), and specifically, news and information programs ($r = 0.30$, $p = 0.005$), and talk shows ($r = 0.35$, $p = 0.001$). Older people also spent more time watching non-reality programs (combined soaps/serials, drama, action/adventure, situation comedies, movies; $r = 0.29$, $p = 0.006$), with individual correlations occurring with soaps/serials ($r = 0.21$, $p = 0.037$) and situation comedies ($r = 0.29$, $p = 0.005$).

Participants with higher levels of education spent less time watching talk shows ($r = -0.19$, $p = 0.049$), drama programs ($r = -0.27$, $p = 0.011$), and soaps/serials ($r = -0.31$, $p = 0.004$), with the general category of non-reality programs (combined soaps/serials, drama, action/adventure, situation comedies, movies) also being less ($r = -0.30$, $p = 0.005$). Similarly, people with higher levels of income spent less time watching talk shows ($r = -0.28$, $p = 0.013$), soaps/serials ($r = -0.40$, $p = 0.001$), and programs in the non-reality program category ($r = -0.26$, $p = 0.018$); however, higher

levels of income were positively correlated with watching religious programming (r= 0.29, p= 0.009).

Some differences in program type viewing were found between men and women. Women watched more talk shows (t(73)= -2.50, p= 0.015), more game shows (t(73)= -2.09, p=0.040), and more programs in the non-reality program category (t(73)= -2.15, p= 0.035).

An ANOVA conducted on marital status and program type viewing indicated a significant difference among those who were married, those who were widowed, and those who were divorced or separated, F(2/72)= 7.86 (p= 0.005). Follow-up pair-wise comparisons among the groups revealed one significant (p= 0.005) difference (Scheffé, 1959); participants who were widowed watched more talk shows than participants who were married.

Motives. A Likert scale was used to measure the participants' degree of use for each motive for TV viewing. Response options for each motive ranged from 1 ("never") to 5 ("almost always"). For the statistical analysis, motives for watching television were placed into six categories, with three of the social/parasocial motives assigned to more than one category. For example, the statement "I watch TV to share an activity with others" was placed in both the "social/parasocial" and "shared activity" categories because the motive implies a social activity as well as a shared activity. Thus, two of the motive categories were mutually exclusive, while four of the categories shared motives among

them. The motives assigned to each category are identified in Table 3. The mean for each category was then calculated: information (3.57); entertainment (3.08); shared activities (2.27); habitual (2.13); social/parasocial (2.08); and escape (1.93).

It was predicted that information and entertainment motives would be the dominant motives for TV watching. An ANOVA conducted on five motive categories (information, entertainment, habitual, escape, shared activities; these catagories have no common motives) indicated a significant difference in use among the categories, $F(4/288) = 130.16$ ($p < 0.001$). Follow-up pair-wise comparisons among the categories (Scheffé, 1959) demonstrated the following significant ($p < 0.05$) differences: there was greater use of the information motives than of the entertainment, habitual, escape, and shared activities motives, with the entertainment motive being used more than the habitual, escape, and shared activities motives; the latter three did not significantly differ. Thus, it appears that the prediction of information and entertainment motives as the dominant motives for TV watching is supported by the research findings.

Separate analyses[3] comparing social/parasocial motives with each of the other categories revealed that social/parasocial motives were used less than information

TABLE 3

Categories of Motives and Their Statements

Information (mean= 3.57, S.D.= 0.62)

I watch TV to keep up with current affairs.

I watch TV to give me things to talk about with others.**

I watch TV to be informed.

I watch TV to learn new things.

Entertainment (mean= 3.08, S.D.= 0.66)

I watch TV to stimulate my imagination.

I watch TV because it can be exciting.

I watch TV to be entertained.

I enjoy watching TV.

Shared activities (mean= 2.27, S.D.= 0.66)

I watch TV when I do other things.

I watch TV because my family and/or friends watch TV.

Even if I'm not watching the TV, I like to have it on in the background.

I watch TV to share an activity with others.*

Habitual (mean= 2.13, S.D.= 0.69)

I watch TV because it is convenient.

I watch TV out of habit.

I watch TV when I'm bored.

I watch TV to pass the time.

I watch TV when I don't have anything else to do.

I watch TV because it is inexpensive.

TABLE 3 CONT.

Social/parasocial (mean= 2.08, S.D.= 0.55)

I watch TV to keep me company.

I watch TV because my family and/or friends watch TV.

I watch TV because I like to get involved with the characters on TV.

I watch TV to give me things to talk about with others.**

I watch TV when I am lonely.***

I watch TV to share an activity with others.*

Escape (mean= 1.93, S.D.= 0.61)

I watch TV to relax.

I watch TV to unwind.

I watch TV to take my mind off things.

I watch TV when I want to be alone.

I watch TV when I am lonely.***

I watch TV when I feel depressed.

I watch TV when I feel upset or worried.

*Denotes a statement shared between the "shared activities" and "social/parasocial" categories.

**Denotes a statement shared between the "information" and "social/parasocial" categories.

***Denotes a statement shared between the "social/parasocial" and "escape" categories.

motives ($t(74)= -18.90$, $p< 0.001$), entertainment motives ($t(74)= -112.90$, $p< 0.001$), and shared activity motives ($t(73)= -2.72$, $p= 0.008$). Social/parasocial motives, however, were used more than escape motives ($t(73)= 2.54$, $p= 0.013$).

The viewing of some types of programs were related to motives for television watching. Not surprisingly, the more information was used as a motive for watching, the more time was spent watching combined information programs (i.e., news, talk shows, infotainment, self-improvement; $r=0.25$, $p= 0.016$), and specifically, news and information programs ($r= p.24$, $p= 0.019$). Participants watching TV for entertainment motives spent more time watching non-reality programs (combined soaps/serials, drama, action/adventure, situation comedies, movies; $r= 0.24$, $p= 0.019$). The more frequently older people used shared activity motives, the more time they spent watching situation comedies ($r= 0.23$, $p= 0.024$). Viewers watching TV out of habit spent more time watching soap operas and serials ($r= 0.25$, $p= 0.014$), action/adventure programs ($r= 0.21$, $p= 0.035$), and non-reality programs (combined soaps/serials, drama, action/adventure, situation comedies, movies; $r= 0.29$, $p= 0.006$). The more frequently older viewers used motives for social/parasocial reasons, the more time was spent watching sports programs ($r= 0.25$, $p= 0.017$), soap operas and serials ($r= 0.21$, $p= 0.038$), and situation comedies ($r= 0.20$, $p=$

0.042). And finally, older viewers who watched TV to escape spent more time watching game shows (r= 0.25, p= 0.016).

A mean score across all 28 motives was also calculated, with the assumption the greater the mean, the higher the overall motivation to watch TV (a combination of magnitude and range of motives). This mean score was 2.42. The higher the overall motivation older viewers had for watching television, the more they watched soaps/serials (r= 0.26, p= 0.013), action/adventure programs (r= 0.21, p= 0.036), non-reality programs in general (i.e., soaps/serials, drama, action/adventure, situation comedies, movies; r= 0.37, p= 0.001), and game shows (r= 0.33, p= 0.002). In addition, overall motivation was found to be positively related to range of program preferences, $t(73)$= 7.41, p< 0.01. That is, those viewers with higher levels of overall motivation to watch TV watched a greater number of different types of programs. Analyses correlating overall motivation with demographic characteristics revealed one significant correlation: overall motivation to watch TV was negatively correlated with the number of people an older viewer lived with (r= -0.21, p= 0.037). That is, those older viewers who lived with at least one other person had less overall motivation to watch TV than those who lived alone.

Several types of motives for watching television were positively correlated with the amount of time spent watching TV. The more frequently older adults used motives for entertainment (r= 0.22, p= 0.032), social/parasocial reasons

(r= 0.31, p= 0.004), information (r= 0.24, p= 0.017), escape (r= 0.22, p= 0.027), and out of habit (r= 0.25, p= 0.016), the greater the number of hours they spent watching television. As might be expected, the greater the overall motivation older adults had for watching TV, the more time they spent watching television (r= 0.39, p< 0.001).

The analysis also indicated that the more frequently the elderly watched for information (r= 0.21, p= 0.035), and used shared activities as a motive for television watching (r= 0.20, p= 0.042), the greater amount of time they spent watching television in conjunction with other activities.

Analyses, correlating demographic characteristics with each of the motive categories, revealed a few significant correlations. The number of people participants lived with was negatively correlated with some particular motives for TV watching. Specifically, participants who lived with one or more adults watched television less for information (r= -0.25, p= 0.017), less out of habit (r= -0.24, p = 0.019), and less for sharing an activity (r=-0.19, p= 0.050). In addition, women reported using shared activity motives more frequently than men did ($t(72)$= -2.25, p= 0.027).

Analyses, correlating demographic characteristics with specific motives for TV watching, revealed some significant correlations. Older seniors were more likely to report that they watched TV to relax (r= 0.20, p= 0.042) and to be informed (r= 0.24, p= 0.02) than younger seniors. Older

viewers with higher levels of education were more likely to report that they watched TV to share an activity with others (r= 0.24, p= 0.019) and less when they were bored (r= -0.22, p= 0.030). Similarly, seniors with higher levels of income were more likely to report that they watched TV to share an activity with others (r= 0.23, p= 0.033) and less when they were bored (r= -0.27, p= 0.014).

Daily Activities of Older Adults

The different daily activities in which the participants engaged, and the mean times and percentages of total available time (awake) for each activity are presented in Table 4. An examination of the mean times engaged in the different activities indicates that apart from sleeping (8.1 hours), older adults spent more time watching television than any other activity. That is, older adults spent 18% of their time watching television, followed by eating and cooking (10%), reading (9.4%), social interaction (8.3%), and housework (7.6%). Combined media use (i.e., the total time engaged in watching television, reading, and listening to the radio) consumed a full one-third of seniors' waking time.

The amount of time spent watching TV as measured by the Activity Diary (173.6 minutes) is somewhat less (43.5 minutes) than the amount of time measured by the TV Diary (217.1 minutes). There may be two reasons for this discrepancy. First, the Daily Activities Diary asked

TABLE 4

Daily Activities

Activity	Mean (minutes)	S.D.	% of time awake*
Non-media activities			
Eating, cooking	99.6	47.5	10.4
Social interaction	79.6	77.4	8.3
Housework	72.7	76.6	7.6
Shopping, errands	59.5	46.7	6.2
Recreation, hobbies	51.4	86.0	5.4
Personal care	46.7	24.3	4.9
Helping others	32.9	58.1	3.4
Resting, napping	26.8	34.0	2.8
Work/employment	26.4	68.8	2.8
Exercise	19.3	29.9	2.0
Appointments	18.8	32.1	2.0
Entertainment outside the home.	17.9	46.6	1.9
Religious activities	9.2	21.2	1.0
Time outside the home (shopping, errands, appointments, entertainment outside the home)	96.1	76.1	10.1
Media activities			
Watching TV	173.6	103.3	18.2
Reading	89.6	78.1	9.4
Listening to the radio	54.5	104.3	5.7
Combined media use	317.7	161.4	33.3

*Mean of time spent awake = 954.4 minutes (15.9 hours); mean of time asleep = 8.1 hours.

participants to record, at three different times during the day, the amount of television they had watched during the previous hours. This required participants to rely on their memory to recall the amount of time they spent watching TV. The TV Diary, on the other hand, encouraged participants to complete their TV Diary during or right after watching the program(s). It is possible that people may underestimate the time they spend watching TV when they are asked to recall their TV viewing, especially elderly people who may have age-related memory deficits (Craik, 1977). Second, the Daily Activities Diary requested that participants record only their *primary* activities; e.g., if participants had the television on while preparing a meal or doing housework, they were instructed to record the activity which was more dominant. Since the data from the TV Diary indicated that approximately 24% of the viewing time (51 minutes) was in conjunction with another activity, this may help explain the 43.5 minute discrepancy between the Daily Activities and TV Diaries. It is important to note, however, that in spite of the difference between the two measures, a significant relationship was found between the amount of time spent watching TV as recorded in the Activity Diary and the amount of time spent watching TV as recorded in the TV Diary (r= 0.69, p= 0.000). This high correlation and significant relationship suggests that both diaries reflected the amount of time participants spent watching TV, thus demonstrating and supporting the validity of both measures.

An ANOVA conducted on the 16 different types of activities (i.e., eating, cooking; social interaction; housework; shopping, errands; recreation, hobbies; personal care; helping others; resting, napping; work/employment; exercise; appointments; entertainment outside the home; religious activities; watching TV; reading; listening to the radio) indicated a significant difference in time spent among the activities, $F(15/1080) = 30.94$ ($p < 0.001$). Follow-up pair-wise comparisons among the activities (Scheffé, 1959) demonstrated the following significant ($p < 0.05$) differences: more time was spent watching television than time spent engaged in exercise, appointments, entertainment outside the home, and religious activities. However, these four types of activities together accounted for only 7% of the participants' available waking time.

An analysis examining the difference between two overall measures of activities (total media use, i.e., watching TV, reading, listening to the radio, and total time spent outside the home, i.e., shopping, appointments, entertainment outside the home) revealed a significant difference, $F(1/72) = 92.01$, $p < 0.001$); more time was spent involved in media use in the home than was spent involved in shopping and running errands, appointments, and entertainment outside the home.

Several correlations were found between demographic variables and daily activities. As might be expected, the older the particpants, the less time they spent doing

housework (r= -0.25, p= 0.016), the less time involved in social interaction with others (r= -0.21, p= 0.036), and the more time resting (r= 0.29, p= 0.007). The more people older adults lived with, the more time they spent preparing food and eating (r= 0.31, p= 0.004), and not surprisingly, the more time spent doing housework (r= 0.37, p= 0.001). Also, the more people they lived with, the less time spent on entertainment outside the home (r= -0.24, p= 0.022) and the less time they spent watching TV (r= -0.23, p= 0.027). Finally, those seniors with more education spent less time watching television (r= -0.21, p= 0.040). These last two findings are consistent with previously reported findings which indicate a negative relationship between the number of individuals a participant lived with and the level of education of a participants, and the amount of TV watched.

It was predicted that greater participation in various activities would be negatively correlated with amount of TV viewing, i.e., the more time they spent engaging in various activities, the less TV they would watch. Correlational analyses, however, indicated only one relationship between amount of television watching and time spent with the 15 specific types of activities; the more time spent in food preparation and eating, the less time spent watching television (r= -0.27, p= 0. 010). This finding is consistent with two previously reported findings; i.e., the more people older adults lived with, the (a) more time they

spent preparing food and eating, and (b) the less time they spent watching television.

No significant ($p > 0.05$) relationship was found between the amount of TV viewing and the total time spent outside the home (i.e., shopping, errands, appointments, entertainment outside the home). Thus, the single negative correlation between TV viewing and a specific activity (eating and cooking) and the absence of any other correlations with 12 specific non-media activities or total time spent outside the home provide little support for the prediction that greater amounts of TV watching would be negatively correlated with participation in various activities, thus providing little endorsement for the idea of TV watching displacing activities in which the viewer would otherwise be engaged. On the other hand, when the relationships between total media use (TV watching, reading, listening to the radio) and activities were examined, it was found that the more older adults used the media in their homes, the less time spent shopping and and running errands ($r = -0.28$, $p = 0.008$), the less time involved in social interaction with others ($r = -0.27$, $p = 0.011$), and the less total time spent outside the home ($r = -0.31$, $p = 0.004$). However, the more older adults used the media in their home, the more time they spent doing housework ($r = 0.31$, $p = 0.003$); this latter finding coincides with the finding that 24% of their TV viewing is shared with other activities.

It was predicted that participation in various activities would be positively correlated with TV watching while engaging in that activity, especially activities which allow dividing attention or shifting attention (e.g., cooking, knitting, working on a crossword puzzle). No correlations were found, however, suggesting that particular activities do not appear to foster time sharing, although participants do report an overall sharing of 24% of their TV time with activities.

Life Circumstances

A 4-point Likert scale was used to assess the physical health, mobility, social interaction, and happiness of each participant; the scale ranged from 1 (least positive) to 4 (most positive). For the statistical analyses, the mean value for each variable (each had 6 items) was calculated. The mean and standard deviation for each of the 4 variables are as follows: happiness (3.37, 0.40); mobility (3.34, 0.47); social interaction (3.25, 0.38); and health (3.21, 0.43). A total life satisfaction score was generated by calculating the mean of all 24 statements used in the life circumstances questionnaire (collapsing over the four circumstances); this was 3.30 (the standard deviation was 0.33). The magnitude of the mean values (all above the theoretical mean of 2.5 and approaching the theoretical maximum of 4.0) suggests that the participants enjoyed positive life circumstances and rather high levels of life satisfaction.

Within the life circumstances scales, a higher level of mobility was positively correlated with a higher level of social interaction (r= 0.21, p= 0.049). A higher level of happiness was positively correlated with greater mobility (r= 0.41, p= 0.001), health (r= 0.59, p< 0.001), and social interaction (r= 0. 54, p< 0.001).

Correlations were conducted between the demographic variables and life circumstances, including overall life satisfaction. The following correlations were significant: higher levels of education were correlated with being more mobile (r= 0.20, p= 0.041), and higher levels of income were correlated with higher scores in interpersonal communication and social activity (r= 0.24, p= 0.033). No significant relationships were found between demographic characteristics and overall life satisfaction.

Correlations between life circumstances and overall life satisfaction and amount of time spent watching TV were calculated. No significant (p> 0.05) relationships were found between health, mobility, social interaction, happiness, and overall life satisfaction and the amount of time spent watching television.

Correlations were computed between life circumstances and life satisfaction and daily activities. Older adults whose lives were happier spent more time involved in housework (r=0.32, p= 0.008) and recreation and hobbies (r= 0.25, p= 0.034), and less time reading (r= -0.30, p= 0.012) and exercising (r= -0.34, p= 0.005). Those elderly people

who reported higher levels of mobility spent more time outside the home (r=0.21, p= 0.040), and specifically, spent more time shopping and running errands (r= 0.23, p= 0.028). These two findings provide some evidence that the Life Circumstances Questionnaire and Daily Activities Diary adequately reflected the participants' levels of mobility, thus lending support to the validity of both measures. Finally, older adults who had higher levels of overall life satisfaction spent more time with hobbies and recreational activties (r= 0.27, p= 0.033) and more time doing housework (r=0.27, p= 0.033).

Several relationships were found between specific life circumstances and categories of motives for television watching. Viewers whose lives were happier had less motivation to watch TV for escape or to cope (r= -0.22, p= 0.047), but were more likely to report motives for watching TV as a shared activity (e.g., watched TV while doing other things, watched TV with other people; r= 0.34, p= 0.005). Elderly people who were more mobile were less likely to watch television to escape or cope (r= -0.25, p= 0.019), and less out of habit (r= -0.21, p= 0.035). Viewers who enjoyed better health also reported less motivation to watch TV to escape or cope (r= -0.21, p= 0.041). Those viewers who engaged in more interpersonal communication and social activity were less motivated to watch television for information (r= -0.20, p= 0.050), to escape or cope (r= -0.26, p= 0.016), or out of habit (r= -0.23, p= 0.031).

Viewers who had higher levels of overall life satisfaction were less likely to watch TV for reasons of escaping or coping (r= -0.39, p= 0.003), and were less likely to use TV in a habitual way (r= -0.27, p= 0.031).

Several specific motives for TV watching were significantly related to various life circumstances. Seniors who were more mobile were more likely to report that they watched TV to learn new things (r= 0.19, p= 0.049), and seniors who were less mobile were more likely to report that they watched TV because it was convenient (r= -0.19, p= 0.05), to pass the time (r= -0.33, p= 0.002), when they were depressed (r= -0.29, p= 0.006), when they wanted to be alone (r= -0.30, p= 0.005), and when they were upset or worried (r= -0.32, p= 0.003). Elderly people who were happier were more likely to report that they watched to share an activity with family and friends (r= 0.35, p= 0.004). Those who were less happy were more likely to report that they watched TV when they wanted to be alone (r= -0.24, p= 0.034), when they were upset or worried (r= -0.24, p= 0.032), and when they were depressed (r= -0.43, p< 0.001). Older adults who were in poorer health were more likely to report that they watched television when they were depressed (r= -0.31, p= 0.005), when they were upset or worried (r= -0.27, p= 0.013), and when they had nothing else to do (r= -0.24, p= 0.023). Finally, seniors with higher levels of social interaction were less likely to report that they watched TV to keep up

with current affairs (r= -0.27, p= 0.013); but those with lower levels of interaction were more likely to report that they watched TV when they were depressed (r= -0.44, p< 0.001).

Life circumstances and overall life satisfaction were also correlated with viewing several types of television programs. Lower levels of mobility were correlated with watching more soap operas and serials (r= -0.30, p= 0.005), drama programs (r= -0.23, p= 0.027), and non-reality programs (i.e., drama, situation comedies, soaps/serials, action/adventure, movies; r= -0.33, p= 0.002). Poorer health was correlated with watching more drama programs (r= -0.21, p= 0.044) and music and variety programs (r= -0.28, p= 0.011). And lower levels of happiness were correlated with watching more movies (r= -0.23, p= 0.044). Viewers with higher levels of overall life satisfaction watched more talk shows (r= 0.25, p= 0.46), and also watched a greater number of different types of programs, $t(48)$= 9.60, p< 0.01).

Subsidiary Findings

An analysis, correlating the wife and husband data from 19 married couples who participated in the study, revealed several significant (p< 0.05) findings. Married couples showed significant similarity with respect to levels of happiness (r= 0.50), and levels of social interaction (r= 0.47). The analysis also indicated that husbands and wives reported using similar levels of habitual motives for TV

watching (r= 0.57), and that they watched TV together (r= 0.70), assuming that when they indicated watching with others that this was the spouse. As might be expected, correlations were found among several program types; husbands and wives spent similar amounts of time watching combined news and information programs (r= 0.49), with specific correlations also occurring for news and information programs (r= 0.54) and infotainment (r= 0.50); they also showed similar amounts of time watching situation comedies (r= 0.66), drama (r= 0.49), and games shows (r= 0.75).

Brief Summary of the Major Findings

The average daily viewing by seniors was 3.6 hours. Age, living alone, and lower levels of education and income were each related to greater amounts of TV watching. Evening viewing was significantly greater than either morning or afternoon viewing. Approximately one-third of the viewing time was spent with at least one other person, and almost one-fourth of the viewing time was spent watching television in conjunction with another activity. Analyses revealed little evidence to suggest that older people who are more active watch less TV, or that TV watching interferes or competes with seniors' involvement in other activities.

Watching TV for information was the motive most used by seniors, with watching for entertainment being the second most used motive. Elderly people with poorer life

circumstances (e.g., health) were more likely to watch TV for escapist and habitual motives. Seniors with more education, higher incomes, and who were happier were more likely to watch TV for social motives (e.g., to watch with family and friends). Older people who lived with others were less likely to watch TV for information than those who lived alone. The greater the overall motivation older adults had for watching TV, the more time they spent watching television and the greater the range of program preferences. Older viewers who lived alone had greater overall motivation to watch TV than those who lived with at least one other person.

News and information programs were watched significantly more than any other program type. Seniors with lower levels of mobility, health, and happiness spent significantly more time watching non-reality programs.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationships among the demographic characteristics and life circumstance variables of an elderly audience, their motives for TV watching, their TV viewing patterns, and how TV fits within their everyday activities. The following discussion is divided into two sections. In the first section, the uses and gratifications/dependency models of communication will be used as guides to organize and examine the predictions and subsequent findings of the study. The second section will discuss the limitations and implications of the present study as well as offer suggestions for future research.

Uses and gratifications research examines how people use the media experience and/or media content to gratify particular needs or expectations. It is thought that audience behavior can largely be explained by understanding the needs and interests of the individual (Katz, et al., 1974; McQuail & Windahl, 1981; Palmgreen, et al., 1985).

The uses and dependency model goes a step further by incorporating the reciprocal and interactive relationships which exist among societal systems, mass media systems, and the audience. These interrelationships are perceived to influence the needs and interests of the individual. Thus, media use is seen as more individual and situational, with one's media needs and interests changing as the individual interacts with outside influences (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Consequently, the needs and interests of the individual

affect his or her motives and behavior. Audience behavior can be specifically directed in the use of a particular mass medium or in a functional alternative (non-media or another medium). This behavior, in turn, may lead to a dependency on the medium, the content, and/or the chosen functional alternative (Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

The present study examined several aspects of the uses and gratifications/dependency models. The predictions and related findings will be organized and presented according to the corresponding categories of the theoretical framework: the individual characterics of the audience, their motives for TV watching, their patterns of TV viewing (amount of TV use, viewing style, program preferences), and the situation in which TV viewing takes place (their daily activities, other mass media use). The results will be compared with findings from previous research and some possible explanations for the findings will be discussed.

Characteristics of the Audience

According to the uses and gratifications/dependency models of communication, factors such as the demographic characteristics of an audience as well as their social, physical, and psychological characteristics, play a role in shaping their media interests and needs.

Demographic Characteristics

Although many people often perceive the elderly as a homogeneous group who are ailing, lonely, poor, and institutionalized, in fact, they represent an extremely

diverse and heterogeneous segment of the population which spans more than one full generation and cannot be reduced to a cultural stereotype. Clearly, the participants in the present study did not fit this negative sterotype of older people. Thirty-five percent of the participants were male and 65% were female; thus, the male-to-female ratio in the present study approximated that of the general elderly population in Canada (McPherson, 1990). The age range of the participants was 60 to 90 years, with the average age of the participants being 70 years old, which represents neither the "young-elderly" (age 60 - 65), nor "old-elderly" (over 75 years); thus, the present sample represents all segments of the elderly population, with the expected greater representation of the "middle-elderly." Most participants were married (76%) and most lived with at least one other person (83%); this approximates the general elderly Canadian population in that only 13% of men and 32% of women between the ages of 65 and 74 live by themselves (McPherson, 1990). As is true of the elderly population in Canada (McPherson, 1990), a large majority (75%) of the particpants lived in a house or mobile home and 21% lived in an apartment or condominium; only 4% of the participants had other housing and living arrangements. Participants in the present study were comparatively well-educated; almost one-half (49%) had attended university or were university graduates, whereas only 5% of older adults in Canada have university degrees (McPherson, 1990). Since education plays

a key role in influencing income, it is not surprising that only 9% of the participants had annual incomes of less than $15,000, as compared with 38% of households with heads aged 65 and over in the general Canadian population who earned less than $15,000 per year (Statistics Canada, 1990). Therefore, the sample in the present study, with its wide age range and varied representation of marital status, living arrangements, education, and income, demonstrates the great diversity among the elderly who volunteer for research.

Individual Characteristics

Four life circumstance variables (happiness, mobility, perceived health, and social interaction), as well as a measure of overall life satisfaction were used as indicators of social, physical, and psychological characteristics of the participants. These were assessed in order to determine whether they influence the media interests and needs of seniors and subsequently, their use of television.

The findings indicated that the participants enjoyed positive life circumstances and rather high levels of life satisfaction. Not surprisingly, those older people who were more mobile also had more opportunities to socialize with others, indicating that perhaps a certain amount of socializing takes place outside the home or involves a degree of mobility to entertain in the home. In addition, happiness was associated with being able to get around more, enjoying better health, and experiencing more opportunities

for interpersonal interaction. Understandably, people had an increased sense of well-being when they were able to travel beyond the confines of their homes, were in good health, and had more opportunities to be with other people.

Only two demographic characteristics were associated with life circumstances. Those seniors who were better educated were also able to get around more, and seniors with a higher economic status also experienced more social interaction. Unlike Rubin and Rubin's contextual age study (1982b), no association was found between mobility and age, nor between health and age. One possible explanation for the these findings is that the mean values for the four life circumstances variables were all rather high, indicating that the participants enjoyed advantageous life circumstances. This is probably due to the fact that the method of recruiting participants (i.e., through newspaper advertisements, contact through seniors' organizations) required considerable initiative on the part of the respondents, mobility, and good health, whereas individuals who were more depressed, more isolated, and in poorer health would perhaps be less likely to respond to the appeal. There were no gender differences associated with life circumstances and no association was found between happiness and age nor social interaction and age.

Daily Activities

To assess the daily activities in which seniors engage, participants were asked to record their everyday activities

for two consecutive weekdays. An examination of the non-media activities indicated that there is a wide variation in how seniors spend their time. Food preparation and eating consumed the most non-media time, followed by socializing with others, housework, shopping and errands, recreation and hobbies, personal care, helping others, resting, part-time employment, exercise, appointments, entertainment outside the home, and religious activities.

The findings indicated that the older seniors become, the less time is spent doing housework, less time socializing with others, and more time resting. Also, seniors who live with other people spend significantly more time preparing food and eating, more time doing housework, and less time on entertainment outside the home.

Several associations were found between life circumstances and life satisfaction and everyday activities. Older adults who were happier spent significantly more time involved in housework and recreation and hobbies, and less time reading and exercising. Seniors who were more mobile spent significantly more time time outside the home, and specifically, more time shopping and running errands. Finally, older adults who had greater overall life satisfaction spent significantly more time with hobbies and recreational activities and more time doing housework.

As the participants in the present study demonstrate, the elderly are not a homogeneous group, but vary greatly with respect to demographics, individual charateristics, and

everyday activities. Although these seniors represent the majority of the elderly in Canada (i.e., most did not live alone, were in good health, were not isolated or institutionalized, were not poverty stricken), there were differences with respect to age, education, income, marital status, living arrangements, life circumstances, and activties. Thus, there is enough variablity in these measures to examine them in relation to TV use, which in turn, will contribute to our understanding of how older adults use television.

Television Use

A major goal of the present study was to examine how the individual characteristics of an older audience were related to their use of television, specifically, motives for TV watching and subsequent patterns of television viewing.

Motives

"Motives are the expecatations generated for communication behavior" (Rubin & Windahl, 1986, p. 191) and play a critical role in understanding television use by seniors. Motives affect which media and content are chosen as well as how and why a medium is used and analyzed, ultimately influencing the effects from media use (Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

It was predicted that information and entertainment motives would be the dominant motives for TV watching. This prediction was confirmed. Watching television for

information was clearly the motive most used by the participants, with watching for entertainment being the second most used motive. This finding is consistent with previous research; the elderly's practice of watching television for information and entertainment reasons has been well-documented in the literature (Fouts & Abraham, 1988; Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980; Ostman & Jeffers, 1983; Rubin & Rubin, 1982a).

Several explanations for the predominant use of information and entertainment motives are possible. First, providing information and entertainment to the viewing public is arguably television's most primary function and original purpose. Television, therefore, is a readily available way to satisfy an individual's need to be informed and/or entertained.

Second, the characteristics of television are such that they enable elderly viewers to receive information with relative ease. As people age, hearing and eyesight may decline; thus, seniors may be drawn to television which provides both visual and auditory stimuli which are adjustable to accommodate any deficits (e.g., turning up the volume, sitting closer to the screen; Kubey, 1980). Elderly people with failing eyesight may increasingly rely on television as a source for information because it may be difficult for them to read newspapers or magazines. Seniors who have trouble hearing may also rely on the visual cues television offers to facilitate their understanding. For

example, the common practice of news programs using camera close-ups of the newsreader's head and shoulders allows hearing impaired viewers to read the speaker's lips; thus, the auditory signals are supported or reinforced with visual stimuli. Television may function as a medium that provides information while assisting the elderly to adapt to any physiological changes due to aging, a conclusion consistent with that of Heatherton and Fouts (1985).

Third, seniors may rely on TV as a source for information because of a decrease in contact with other people. One finding of the present study was that those people who lived alone were more likely to watch television for information than those who lived with others. This suggests that seniors with diminished social contact may rely on television as a way of compensating for that loss, indicating that TV may serve as a functional alternative when other sources of information are less available.

And finally, Davis (1971) stressed that the information television provides offers seniors a "window to the world". That is, television functions as a way for the elderly to maintain a link with their communities and to the world at large. In a similar vein, Kubey (1980) argues that the elderly are particularly interested in keeping up with world affairs because as they reach Erikson's last stage of psychosocial development (ego integrity), they long to achieve an integration between themselves and the world. During this last life stage, individuals may reflect on

their past, integrating past experiences and knowledge with present events into a cohesive theme which is significant and meaningful (Erikson, 1963). Maggie Kuhn (September, 1991), founder of the Gray Panthers, echoes this thought when she wrote in *SELF Magazine*, "Old-age has fed my passions - my passion for the world, for people, for a better way. As my personal tale is about to end, I am more interested than ever in the larger story." Thus, television may serve as a means for allowing elderly individuals to unify and synthesize the culmination of life's experiences with the world at large.

After information and entertainment, seniors used (in descending order) shared activities, habitual, social/parasocial, and escape motives. However, statistical analyses revealed no meaningful differences between the shared activities, habitual, and escape motives. Social/parasocial motives were used significantly less than shared activities motives, but more than escape motives. Thus, several motives contribute to TV use by seniors and are an indication of the variability and uniqueness among elderly viewers in how they use television.

Generalized Motive for TV Use. Previous research has not examined the relationships between overall motivation for television use (a combination of magnitude and range of motives) and factors such as the demographic and social, physical, and psychological characteristics of elderly viewers. The present study predicted that elderly people

who had higher levels of overall motivation to watch television would be those with lower levels of happiness, health, mobility, social interaction, income, education, and who lived alone. Only one aspect within this predication was supported by the findings. Seniors who lived alone were found to have greater levels of overall motivation to watch television, indicating, perhaps, that TV serves a greater variety of functions for those who live by themselves than for those who live with others. No correlations, however, were found between overall viewing motivation and level of income nor between overall motivation and level of education. Thus, those seniors with less education and income had no greater overall motivation to watch TV than those with more education and higher incomes. Also contrary to what was expected, no significant correlations were found between overall motivation to watch TV and levels of health, happiness, social interaction, and mobility. Finally, no significant correlation occurred between age and overall motivation to watch TV, nor was there a significant difference between men and women and overall motivation for TV watching. These results indicate that overall motivation to watch TV is not particularly related to demographic or individual characteristics of elderly viewers. This, however, may be the result of looking too broadly at motivation (a general overall level of motivation). Therefore, a closer examination at categories of motives and specific motives may reveal the expected relationships.

Instrumental vs. Habitual Use. According to the uses and dependency model of communication, the needs and motives of an individual give rise to different and specific patterns of media use. This, in turn, can lead to a dependency on the media and/or its content, with this dependency increasing the audience's susceptiblity to media influence (Rubin & Windahl, 1986). "Instrumental" media use is a pattern which is goal-directed and refers to the audience member's purposeful use of media content to satisfy informational or social utility needs. On the other hand, "ritualized" media use (i.e., media use which is diversionary or habitual) emphasizes the process of using the media, not the content, and implies that the viewer is less active, intentional, and/or selective in his or her use of television (Rubin, 1984; Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

Whereas instrumental patterns of TV use may result in effects (i.e., an alteration in the cognitions, attitudes, and/or behavior of the audience) and/or a dependency on content, ritualized use of TV is assumed to produce consequences which stem from the actual use of the medium rather than its content. Consequences may take the form of increased dependency on TV per se, an increase in affinity toward it, increased use of the medium, and/or actual displacement of activities (McQuail & Windahl, 1981; Rubin, 1984; Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Furthermore, Blumler (1979) suggests that media use for escape and diversionary purposes can lead the audience to accept the stereotypes of

characters, roles, and conflict situations as portrayed on television. Because ritualized patterns of media use presumes low involvement on the part of audience members, their "perceptual guard" may be lowered and they become more easily influenced by the frames of reference inherent in the programs they watch (Blumler, 1979).

With these theoretical assumptions in mind, it was expected that elderly people with lower levels of happiness, health, mobility, social interaction would be more likely to demonstrate a pattern of ritualized TV use and have a higher use of escapist motives for watching television than seniors with higher levels. This prediction was overwhelmingly supported by the results. Seniors who were in poorer health, who had restricted mobility, who had less interpersonal communication, who were less happy, and who were less satisfied with their lives all were significantly more likely to watch television for escapist reasons (e.g., to watch TV when they were lonely, when they were depressed, when they were upset or worried, when they wanted to relax). Futhermore, seniors with restricted mobility, fewer social contacts, and who were less satisfied with their lives were also more likely to use TV in a habitual way (e.g., to pass the time, out of habit, when they were bored, when they did not have anything else to do).

These research results lend support to the findings from Rubin and Rubin's contextual age study (1982b), the only published study to examine the relationships between

elderly viewer characteristics and motives for television use. They found that seniors who were less satisfied with their lives used television in a habitual way and to forget about problems and unhappiness; also, seniors who were restricted in their mobility relied on television as a means to forget about problems and relieve loneliness (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b).

Not only do the results from the present study corroborate those of Rubin and Rubin (1982b), they are also important because they indicate that for elderly viewers who have diminished or lost resources (e.g., poorer health, fewer social contacts, restricted mobility, depression, and lower life satisfaction), television may be used as a means to cope with their circumstances, to temporarily escape, and/or as a means of diversion. That is, according to the uses and dependency model, these elderly viewers appear to exhibit a specific pattern of use of television. This finding has important implications for understanding the potential effects that television watching may have on this particular audience.

If the concepts from uses and dependency are applied to the findings from the present study, it suggests that elderly people with fewer resources are more likely to engage in ritualized patterns of TV use and may be less active and/or intentional in their use of television than those viewers who are more goal-directed. They may display a greater affinity toward television and may be inclined to

use the medium more. Viewers who watch TV in a ritual way may also become dependent on it for need gratification and may experience the displacement of daily activities. Finally, these viewers may be more susceptible to the ideology present in television content.

Higher levels of life circumstances were expected to be related to motives for TV watching assumed to be "positive" or growth enhancing (e.g., to learn new things, for information), i.e., instrumental patterns of television motives. Elderly people having less need to watch television for information were found to participate in significantly more social interaction. This finding is congruent with the previously reported finding which indicated that people who lived with others were less likely to watch TV for information, implying that elderly people may fulfill informational needs through their contact with others. In addition, seniors whose lives were happier were more likely to report motives for watching TV as a shared activity, indicating that perhaps television watching may be used as more of a secondary activity for these people, rather than a primary activity requiring their total attention.

Specific Motives and TV Use. An examination of the results indicated that several demographic and individual characteristics were associated with specific motives for TV use. Older seniors were significantly more likely to report that they watch TV to relax than seniors who were younger.

In addition, older seniors were significantly more likely to report that they watch television to be informed than those who were younger, indicating again that the aged seem to rely heavily on TV as a source for information. Elderly people with higher levels of education and income were significantly more likely to report that they watch TV to share an activity with others and were significantly less likely to report that they watch television when they were bored than those with lower levels of education and income. This suggests that seniors with more education and higher incomes may use TV in a social way and/or as a secondary activity which does not require their total attention. Furthermore, elderly people with higher levels of education and income most likely have a broader base of sources and resources to engage their interest and time and are less likely to use TV as a way of relieving boredom.

Two relationships were found between higher levels of life circumstances and motives assumed to be growth enhancing. Seniors who were happier were significantly more likely to report that they watch TV with family and friends than those who were less happy, and seniors who were more mobile were significantly more likely to report watching television to learn new things than those seniors who were less mobile. On the other hand, seniors who experienced more social interaction were significantly less likely to report watching TV to keep up with current affairs than those who were less socially active. This finding is

congruent with the previously reported finding that elderly people who participate in significantly more social interaction reported having less need to watch TV for information.

Several relationships were found between lower levels of life circumstances and specific escapist motives for watching TV. Elderly people who were less mobile were significantly more likely to report that they watched TV when they were upset or worried, when they wanted to be alone, when they were depressed, to pass the time, and because it was convenient than those who were more mobile. Older people who were unhappy were significantly more likely to report that they watched TV when they were upset or worried, when they wanted to be alone, and when they were depressed than older people who were happier. Seniors in poorer health were significantly more likely to report that they watched TV when they were upset or worried, when they were depressed, and when they had nothing else to do than those who were in better health. Finally, seniors who were less socially active were significantly more likely to report that they watched TV when they were depressed than those who had more social interaction with others.

Clearly, the results indicate that at both the categorical and specific motive level, seniors with fewer resources use television in a specific way, i.e., as a means to cope with their circumstances, to temporarily escape, and/or as a means of diversion.

Although higher levels of education, income, and happiness are associated with social motives for watching television, only one relationship between higher levels of life circumstances and watching for information was found (seniors who were more mobile were significantly more likely to report watching television to learn new things than those who were less mobile). One possible explanation is that most elderly people, regardless of life circumstances, engage in instrumental viewing patterns. That is, seniors with lower levels as well as higher levels of life circumstances watch television for informational and social utility purposes as suggested by the predominance of the informational motive. Thus, in addition to watching TV for information, seniors with lower levels of life circumstances also use television for escape and in a habitual way, a ritualized pattern of TV use. This suggests that lower levels of life circumstance may predispose viewing to exhibit both types of motivational patterns (instrumental and ritualized), with higher levels of life circumstances being related to more instrumental use; i.e., the latter do not have life circumstances which would lead them to want to watch television for escape.

Another possible explanation is based on the assumption that a higher level of life circumstances is related to having a broader base of sources for information. Rubin and Windahl (1986) argue that the broader the person's "information seeking strategies, the better the quantitative

and qualitative mix of available sources, and the stronger the motivations to seek and use functional alternatives, the lesser is the dependency on a specific communication source" (p.197). As the demographics suggest (higher than average education levels, income, marriage), seniors in the present study likely have many sources and resources for information. Therefore, they would be less likely to depend on any one source, including television, for their information needs.

Finally, the lack of a relationship between higher levels of life circumstances and information motives for TV watching may be due to the fact that the range of life circumstances scores among the participants was quite narrow; thus, it becomes statistically more difficult for a relationship to occur. Perhaps if there had been greater representation of lower levels of life circumstances within the sample, creating a wider range of scores, a relationship with instrumental use of TV would have been found.

Patterns of Television Viewing

Uses and gratifications/dependency models suggest that the needs of an individual generate expectations of the mass media (or other sources) to fulfill those needs. These expectations (i.e., motives) may subsequently lead the individual to use any one or a variety of the media (or other sources), with patterns of television watching reflecting one aspect of media use on the part of the viewer; that is, what the individual has selected and how it

is consumed. The following section will discuss the present research findings in terms of amount, daypart distribution, viewing style of TV watching, and program preferences.

Amount of Television Use. Previous research has shown that the daily average of TV viewing has been approximately 4.5 hours per day, with a range of 2.2 to 6 hours per day (Fouts, 1989). Because the present study used the diary method to record TV watching (consequently decreasing subjective underestimation), and included TV watching in conjunction with other activities, it was expected that the average amount of television watched per week day would be greater than previous studies. Surprisingly, this prediction was not supported by the data. The average daily viewing in the present study was 3.6 hours; although this average was below that of other studies, it did fall within the range previously reported.

One explanation for this result may be the time of year of the study; the data for the study was gathered during the springtime (i.e., April, May, and June). It is reasonable to assume that the advent of warmer weather, particularly in a cold weather climate, would entice and enable older adults to participate in activities outside their homes. Fouts and Abraham (1986) also used the diary method with Canadian seniors, but their study was conducted during the month of February; they found a daily average of 5.3 hours per week day. Thus, it does appear that time of year and/or climate may influence TV use.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in the present study, the TV Diary was scored in a conservative manner. For example, some TV Diaries may have underestimated TV viewing time because the participants only circled 30 minutes of a 60 minute program and the researcher was unable to determine whether the participant did indeed only watch 30 minutes or if he/she inadvertently omitted circling the whole program. In these instances, the program was scored as being watched for only 30 minutes, resulting in perhaps an underestimating of the amount of time spent watching for that participant.

Amount of Television Use and Demographics. It was predicted that lower levels of income, education, and living alone would each be related to greater amounts of TV watching. These predictions were confirmed and are consistent with the literature (Kubey, 1980; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). These results suggest that demographic characteristics may limit the choices seniors have regarding different ways of gratifying various needs. That is, higher levels of education and income may allow individuals a greater number of resources from which to choose when seeking gratification and/or may affect their choices with the particular resource. For example, a higher income permits an individual to take advantage of opportunities such as attending musical concerts or the theater to fulfill entertainment needs, playing a round of golf to satisfy recreational needs, or calling an adult

child long distance to satisfy a social need. In addition, previous research (Doolittle, 1979; Young, 1979) suggests that seniors with higher levels of education and income continue to rely on print media, citing print media's thoroughness of coverage and the seniors' ability to afford print media as factors influencing use. Also, Rubin and Rubin (1982a) have pointed out that TV is an inexpensive medium for the elderly. Using a similar argument for resources, elderly people who live alone and are retired may lack sufficient opportunities to interact with other people to fulfill needs such as companionship and information exchange. Thus, television may be used as a way to gratify such needs.

Age as a predictor for amount of television watched has consistently been reported in the literature, although there are some reports of a slight reduction in viewing after age 70 (Davis, et al., 1976; Doolittle, 1979; Fouts, 1989; Kubey, 1980; Ostman & Jeffers, 1983). The present study found that the amount of television viewing significantly increased with age. This is consistent with the previous explanation; i.e., as one ages, one is increasingly likely to live alone, resulting in watching more television than people who lived with others. It is interesting to note that the increased viewing appears <u>not</u> to be related to health and mobility issues, since no correlations were found between these variables and age.

No significant differences were found between men and women and the amount of time spent watching television.

Amount of Television Use and Life Circumstances. The present study predicted that lower levels of health, mobility, happiness, and social interaction would be positively correlated with greater amount of TV viewing. This prediction was based on the assumption that people with fewer resources may not only look to television as a means of gratifying particular needs, but would also use the medium more. Contrary to what was expected, no relationships were found between health, mobility, social interaction, happiness, overall life satisfaction, and the amount of time spent watching TV. These results match those in Rubin and Rubin's contextual age study (1982b); i.e., no relationships between individual characteristics (social interaction, life satisfaction, economic security, and self-reliance) and amount of daily viewing were found.

One may interpret these results by assuming that perhaps TV viewing may vary more in nature (motives, preferences) than in extent (amount) as life circumstances change. That is, perhaps TV viewing is such a common and widespread everyday activity that elderly people are going to view a certain amount of television regardless of their personal situations (except for living alone), with the difference lying in how they use the medium, rather than how much. The results of present study suggest that seniors with diminished resources due to social, physical, and

psychological factors are more likely to engage in ritualized viewing patterns; thus, it appears that they use television in a different way than seniors with greater resources, rather than using it more.

Another explanation for the lack of a relationship between lower levels of life circumstances and amount of television viewing is that it may be due to the narrow range of scores of life circumstances among the participants as well as their overall viewing being lower than in most studies. The restriction of ranges makes it statistically more difficult for a relationship to appear. Perhaps, if the life circumstances scores of the participants in the present study had a wider range and there was greater variation in amount of TV viewing, some relationships would have been found.

It was predicted that the greater the overall motivation to watch TV (a combination of magnitude and range of motives), the more time they would spend viewing TV. This prediction was confirmed and is congruent with previous research which has found that the greater the number of motives seniors have for watching TV, the more time they spend watching it (Fouts & Abraham, 1988). The researchers concluded that seniors will use television more if it also serves many different functions; the present study provides further evidence for this interpretation.

Amount of Television Use and Daypart Distribution. The present study predicted that viewing in the evening would be

the most popular time to watch TV; this was confirmed by the finding that evening viewing was significantly greater than either morning or afternoon viewing, with no meaningful difference occurring between morning and afternoon viewing. This finding is consistent with previous research which has found evening viewing to be the most popular time for television watching (Fouts, 1989; Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980; Rubin & Rubin, 1982b). The finding suggests that evening viewing perhaps gratifies certain needs that daytime television watching does not and may reflect a carry-over of lifelong media habits into retirement. For example, participants who relied on the evening news to inform them of the day's events before retirement may continue that pattern, even though their retirement from the workforce allows them to watch television news programs at other times of the day; this is especially likely for those who subscribe to cable TV, which was approximately 95% of the participants. Similarly, seniors who once counted on watching television in the evening to relax after a day at work may continue to watch evening television after a day spent doing housework or running errands and shopping. In addition, evening television may offer more programs of interest to the elderly. Outside of soap operas, talk shows, and game shows, daytime television perhaps offers little of interest to the elderly, thus reducing the possiblity of need gratification.

TV Watching as a Shared Activity. Previous research has not examined TV watching with other people or in conjunction with other activities. The present study examined TV viewing as a solitary activity, a socially shared activity, and a conjoint activity; no predictions were made. The results indicated that approximately 30% of the viewing time (63.8 minutes) was spent with at least one other person, with people living with at least one other adult significantly sharing the viewing experience more than those living alone.

These findings suggest that television watching can serve as a social activity. Although the "quality" of such a social activity is open to debate, further research could shed light on whether such socially shared viewing experiences are passive in nature (e.g., viewing a situation comedy which stimulates no verbal exchange among viewers), active (e.g., viewing a documentary which stimulates a lively discussion and exchange of ideas during commercials and/or at the conclusion of the program), or most likely, both.

Almost one-fourth of the viewing time (51 minutes) was spent watching television in conjunction with another activity. Since the schedules and lifestyles of women typically demand that they become adept at doing more than one thing at a time, it is not surprising that women were found to watch significantly more television in conjunction with other activities than men. Many of the household

activities for which most elderly women are responsible (e.g., cooking, housework) easily allow the sharing and/or shifting of attention between the activity and the television. Television may make mundane tasks more tolerable and/or allow seniors to engage in "time deepening" (i.e., engaging in more than one task at a time; Robinson, 1981). Thus, the elderly can accomplish more in a given amount of time and/or gratify two or more needs simultaneously.

The results of the present study regarding TV watching with other people and in conjunction with other activities are important because they provide evidence for viewing styles that have long been assumed but not documented. The findings contribute to our understanding of TV use by seniors because they provide information about the situation surrounding television use; i.e., a certain amount of exposure to TV takes place in a social context and/or takes place without the viewer's total concentration. This, in turn, may subsequently influence the effects of TV viewing (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). That is, since less attention is directed at television, its effects may be ameliorated. For example, a viewer who is only partially listening to a news story on TV may actually become misinformed because he/she missed important details about that story.

Program Preferences. It was predicted that news and information programs would be the most preferred programs by

the elderly. As expected, the results indicated that significantly more news and information programs were watched than each of the other program types. This finding is congruent with previous research which has consistently reported that news and information shows were the most preferred programs by the elderly, although previous research has not reported significant differences as has the present study (Fouts, 1989).

No predictions were made regarding the order of preference for other programs, and the analyses revealed that no significant differences existed among the other 15 program types. This is consistent with and may explain the variation of program preferences reported in previous studies which used non-statistical methods to determine program preferences. For example, Rubin & Rubin (1982a) reported that their elderly sample preferred, in descending order, news, music-variety, documentary-magazine, drama, game shows, talk shows, sports, situation comedies, movies, religion, action-adventure, daytime serials, general comedies, and children's programs; Davis, et. al.(1976) found that their sample preferred news and public affairs, followed by game shows, comedies, and drama. Thus, the findings of the present study suggest that when statistical analyses are employed to determine meaningful differences among non-news program types, none were found. Thus, it can be concluded that although seniors do watch a wide variety of programs on television, the ordering of preferences of

non-news programs are not meaningful, thus casting doubt on some interpretations of non-news preferences by previous researchers.

When all the information programs watched were combined (news, hard information, talk shows, infotainment, self-improvement) and compared with all the combined non-reality programs watched (drama, soaps/serials, situation comedies, movies, action-adventure), the total information programs watched was significantly greater than non-reality based programs, lending further support to the elderly's overwhelming fondness for informational programming.

Previous research has typically reported the elderly's program preferences as a group, and has tended not to relate these preferences to a variety of important demographic characteristics, i.e., do not present the variation of preferences within the elderly population. The present study examined the contribution of age, education, income, and gender to the program preferences of elderly viewers.

The relationship between age of elderly viewers and their preferences was examined. Older viewers were found to watch significantly more combined information programs (and specifically news and information programs and talk shows) than younger seniors. This is congruent with the previouly reported finding that older seniors were significantly more likely to report watching TV to be informed than younger seniors. These findings are consistent with the notion that the older elderly are entering Erikson's (1963) last life

stage, and consequently have an increased need for information and/or use TV more as their source of information. Older people were also found to watch more combined non-reality programs (particularly soaps/serials and situation comedies) than those who were younger. This may be due to the fact that older viewers watch more TV in general; thus, one might expect an increase in reality as well as non-reality based programs.

Perhaps not surprisingly, seniors with more education and income spent significantly less time watching talk shows and combined non-reality programs (particularly soaps/serials) than those older people with less education and lower incomes. In addition, women watched significantly more talk shows, games shows, and combined non-reality programs than men. One explanation for this is that women were found to watch significantly more television in conjunction with other activities than men; thus, women may choose to watch these particular programs while engaging in routine activities in an effort to make these tasks more tolerable. Finally, viewers who were widowed watched more talk shows than those who were married. This last finding may suggest that talk shows serve as a substitute for a lost companion for those who are widowed, thus suggesting a parasocial function of television.

Program Preferences and Life Circumstances. Life circumstances and overall life satisfaction were found to relate to program preferences. Older people who were

restricted in the ability to travel about watched significantly more soaps/serials, drama programs and programs in the combined non-reality category than those who had greater mobility. Seniors in poorer health also watched significantly more drama programs and music and variety programs. The unhappier seniors were, the more they watched movies. Thus, it appears that seniors with less advantageous life circumstances are more likely to choose non-reality programs.

Although seniors with lower levels of mobility, health, and happiness spent more time watching non-reality programs, seniors with higher levels of overall life satisfaction spent significantly more time watching talk shows, and also watched a greater number of different types of programs than seniors who were less satisfied with their lives. A possible explanation for this last finding is that people who are more satisfied with their lives may also watch a greater variety of program types because they are more likely to have several interests, to be "well-rounded," and/or to have a balance in their TV watching patterns than those who are less satisfied with their lives. This idea is compatible with the premise of disengagement theory, a theory of aging in social gerontology, which maintains that as the elderly decline, they begin to disengage from society and constrict their life-space (Cummings & Henry, 1961).

These results are consistent with the one previous research study relating individual characteristics to

program type viewing (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b). They reported that socially active, self-reliant, but economically insecure people watch comedies, music-variety, talk shows, and action-adventure programs, but infrequently watch the news. Self-reliant but socially inactive seniors were found to watch sports and drama, but infrequently watched soap operas (Rubin & Rubin, 1982b). The results from the present study indicate that seniors with fewer resources (i.e., older people with restricted mobility, poorer health, depression) are more likely to spend time watching non-reality programs than those with greater resources. These results represent a replication and extention of the literature which has received only skant attention and examination.

These findings parallel the previously reported findings that seniors with lower levels of life circumstances are significantly more likely to watch TV for escape motives and out of habit than those with higher levels of life circumstances. Thus, elderly people with fewer resources (people with restricted mobility, poorer health, depression) are not only more likely to watch TV for different reasons than those with greater resources, but also appear to watch different types of programs.

Program Preferences and Motives. Although no predictions were made regarding program preferences and motives for TV watching, several significant relationships were found to occur. Not surprisingly, the more viewers

said they watched for information, the more time was spent watching combined information programs, and specifically, news and information programs. Similarly, the more seniors said they watched TV for entertainment, the more time they spent watching combined non-reality programs. The more frequently older people said they watched TV as a shared activity (while doing something else), the more time they spent watching situation comedies. Seniors watching television out of habit spent more time watching soaps/serials, action/adventure programs, and combined non-reality programs. The more frequently older viewers watched for social/parasocial reasons, the more time they spent watching sports, soaps/serials, and situation comedies. Finally, older viewers who watched TV to escape spent more time watching game shows.

These results can be partially understood by examining past research. Some studies have examined similar relationships between program preferences and motives for TV watching. For example, one study (which focused on the relationships between self-concept and TV viewing by seniors) also examined the relationships between program type viewing and motives for TV watching (Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980). The researchers discovered that the more seniors watched reality content, the more they watched for information and the less likely they watched for escape; and the more seniors watched fantasy content, the more likely they watched for escape (Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980).

Similarly, Fouts and Abraham (1988) found that for their elderly participants, information and entertainment motives were positively correlated with watching the news, and negatively correlated with watching soap operas, action/adventure, and drama programs. On the other hand, escapist motives were negatively correlated with watching the news, and positively related with watching TV in the afternoon (a time period which is dominated by soap operas) (Fouts & Abraham, 1988).

These results from both the past and present research suggest that for some particular motives, certain types of programs are more suited than others to fulfill the particular need which prompted the motive. For example, if an elderly individual is interested in keeping up with current affairs, that person is more likely to watch an information program rather than a situation comedy. Social motives may be fulfilled by watching sports programs with family members and/or to provide topics for conversation. And if the need is to be entertained, non-reality programs appear to be the choice, although admittedly there is an overlap across types of programs which could provide "entertainment," due to the subjective nature in determining what is "entertaining" as well as programs being designed to be both entertaining and informative (e.g., talk shows; Fouts, 1989).

Previous research has indicated a positive relationship between non-reality programs and watching TV for escape

motives (Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980; Fouts & Abraham, 1988), with the present study finding a positive correlation between non-reality programs and habitual motives. However, no significant positive relationship between non-reality programs and escape motives was found. One possible explanation for this apparent inconsistency is that the seniors in the present study who watch TV for escape motives may merely choose a wider variety of programs, rather than focusing on non-reality programs, thus making correlations more difficult to find. The uses and dependency model is consistent with this interpretation since it suggests that ritualized and habitual viewing patterns emphasize the actual process of using the medium, not the content (Rubin, 1984; Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Thus, what is on TV is not as important as the fact that the TV is on. Furthermore, one previous study, which did not use elderly people as participants, indicated that when viewers watch TV to escape, no particular programs met the needs for escape (Kippax & Murrary, 1977, as cited in Rubin & Windahl, 1986). Thus, the lack of finding a relationship between non-reality programs and escape motives in the present study appears to be congruent with the assumptions of the uses and dependency model and with some previous research.

Situation Surrounding Television Use

Daily Activities and TV Use. Uses and gratifications/dependency models of communications propose that seniors look to many sources, mediated and non-

mediated, for need gratification. These sources, in turn, may compete with each other for need gratification. Although the present study did not examine which activities or other forms of media were used to meet various needs and expectations of older adults, the investigation sought to better understand the role of television watching in the lives of seniors by looking at the context in which TV viewing takes place by examining the relationships between daily activities and use of other mass media.

Using the data from the Daily Activities Diary, an examination of the average amounts of time engaged in the activities indicates that apart from sleeping, seniors spend more time watching television than in any other activity. When comparing time spent watching TV with other activities, statistical analyses revealed that significantly more time was spent watching television than engaged in four activities (which together accounted for only 7% of the participants' available waking time): exercise, appointments, entertainment outside the home, and religious activities. Therefore, although the average amount of time spent watching may appear high in relation to other activities (cooking, reading, and social interaction), there is no meaningful difference. One explanation for this may be that the overall level of TV use by participants in this study was rather low; thus, there is a lower chance of finding significant differences between TV watching and other activities. Another reason may be attributed to the

way seniors coordinate TV watching with other activities; almost one-fourth of the viewing time was spent watching television in conjunction with another activity and approximately one-third of the viewing time was spent watching with another person. TV watching allows seniors to engage in two or more activities simultaneously, thus allowing them to accomplish more in a given amount of time and/or gratify two or more needs concurrently rather than these needs competing with one another.

The present study examined the relationship between television watching (as recorded in the TV Diary) and other leisure, routine, or social activities in which seniors participated (as recorded in the Daily Activities Diary). It was predicted that the greater the participation in various activities (e.g., time outside the home, social interaction), the less time would be spent in TV viewing. The rationale for this prediction was that seniors who participate in many activities are likely to spend more time away from home and/or be engaged in activities which would make it difficult or impossible to watch TV. In addition, based on the assumptions of uses and gratifications and uses and dependency models, participation in many activities may indicate that seniors may seek (and are able to find) need gratification from non-media sources rather than television. On the other hand, for elderly people who are restricted in their ability to satisfy needs through a variety of sources, it was expected that television would be used as a

substitute or as a way of compensating for such loss, thereby increasing their use of TV.

Surprisingly, the results of the study provided little evidence to support this prediction. Analyses revealed only one relationship between the amount of television watched as measured by the TV Diary and time spent with the 15 specific types of activities; the more seniors spent time cooking and eating, the less time was spent watching TV. This finding parallels two other findings of the present study; the more people seniors lived with another, (a) the more time they spent preparing food and eating, and (b) the less time they spent watching TV (as measured by the TV Diary). Thus, the single negative correlation between amount of television watched and cooking and eating may have occurred because seniors who live with others are also more likely to watch less television. Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between the amount of time spent watching TV and the total amount of time spent outside the home. Thus, there is little evidence to suggest that older people who are more active watch less TV, or that TV watching interferes or competes with seniors' involvement with other activities.

One explanation for the lack of support for this prediction may be that retired seniors have large amounts of discretionary time and simply are able to participate in a variety of activities, including larger amounts of television watching. Therefore, television watching takes

its place among the several other activities in which seniors participate without displacing them (i.e., preventing, limiting, or replacing other activities). In fact, seniors appear to find a strategy to decrease the displacement by conjointly engaging in both activities.

Another possible explanation may be attributed to the rather positive life circumstances of the participants in the study (they were relatively happy, healthy, and active) and the rather low average amount of daily TV viewing. Perhaps if there were greater representation of participants with less advantageous life circumstances, more evidence would have been found to support the prediction that greater participation in activities would be negatively correlated with amount of TV watching.

Previous research has not examined TV watching by the elderly in relation to their other activities, although there has been an implicit assumption in the literature that because seniors spend so much time watching television, they may be kept from participating in other activities. The present study casts serious doubt upon this assumption. That is, in the present study, there were several attempts to find relationships between daily activities and amount of TV viewing, e.g., by examining the very detailed record of TV viewing from the TV Diary as well as using the more global measures from the Daily Activities Diary and total viewing from the TV Diary. The Daily Activities Diary also gave a detailed look at their other activities. Therefore,

the lack of finding any relationships between activities and TV viewing may be of some importance, since the measures employed in this study were more objective than using global self-reports, which may have a built-in bias in the participant (i.e., people believe TV interferes with activities, so they may bias their ratings to confirm this belief). Clearly, more research is needed to document this finding. However, the result from the present study is important because it provides the first evidence that television watching does not necessarily interfere with the daily activities of seniors, especially when they appear to have integrated it so well with these activities through daypart bracketing, conjoint viewing, and sharing the viewing experience with others.

It was possible that participation in various activities would be positively related with TV watching while engaging in that activity, especially activities which allow dividing or shifting attention, such as housework or cooking. This prediction was not supported, however, suggesting that particular activities do not appear to foster time sharing, although participants reported an overall sharing of one-fourth of their TV viewing time with activities.

Other Mass Media Use. The participants in the present research study were all active consumers of the mass media. Seventy-one percent owned video cassette recorders and practically all (approximately 95%) of the participants

subscribed to cable TV. In addition to an average of two working televisions in their homes, these older adults had an average of four working radios. Furthermore, all the participants read the newspaper at least three times a week, and an overwhelming majority (87%) subscribed to at least one magazine.

This heavy use of a variety of mass media is consistent with the literature, and the substantial use of print media may be attributed to the relatively high levels of education and income of the participants (Doolittle, 1979; Young, 1979). It is assumed that seniors with higher levels of education value the detail which newspapers and magazines provide that TV and radio cannot, and with higher levels of income they are not as concerned with the cost print media as those seniors with small, fixed incomes (Doolittle, 1979; Young, 1979).

In addition, the heavy use of print media by the participants in the present study (all read the newspaper at least three times a week and 87% subscribed to at least one magazine) indicates that they may look to several media resources other than TV to satisfy communication and other needs, thereby reducing time spent with television. Rubin and Rubin (1982b) stated that seniors who demonstrate less affinity with TV may depend on other media sources such as print media and radio.

Limitations of the Present Study

The design and execution of research and the generalization and application of the findings should always be subject to theoretical and methodological scrutiny. The following is a discussion of some of the limitations of the present study.

The first limitation of the present study involves the older adults who volunteered to participate in the research. As has been mentioned on numerous occasions, the participants enjoyed positive life circumstances and rather high levels of life satisfaction. In order to assess the generalizability of the results of the present study, future investigations should include participants at the more extreme ends of the continuum (e.g., poorer life circumstances) to obtain a more representive sample of elderly people. Such investigations would be able to determine the reliability of the findings of the present study and their applicability to seniors in general.

A second limitation is that only two weekdays of TV viewing and daily activities were assessed. If a longer time frame had been used, perhaps various aspects of TV viewing and daily activities would have been more variable and/or emphasized; e.g., certain program preferences and particular activities may differ on the weekend. For example, sports and religious programs are more commonly broadcast on the weekend than during the week, and seniors may spend more time in leisure and social activities on

weekends than during the week. Thus, the realtionships between TV use and activities could possibly be different if the assessment period had been longer. Therefore, future investigations using TV and activity diaries should consider assessing TV viewing and daily activities over a longer period of time.

A third limitation is that the life circumstances, motives for TV watching, TV viewing patterns, and daily activities of older adults were assessed at a specific point in their lives, i.e., for two days. Future researchers should consider conducting longitudinal studies, i.e., following the same seniors over an extended period of time, to assess the changes that occur in motives for TV watching, TV viewing patterns, and daily activities as seniors experience changes in their life circumstances and/or demographic status. For example, the death of a spouse, an extended illness, and financial difficulties may all have a profound impact on why the elderly watch TV, the types of programs and amounts of TV they watch, as well as their day-to-day activities. Such research would help explain how TV use may change and/or differ over the course of the life-span.

A fourth limitation of the present study is that correlational analyses do not determine directionality, i.e., we cannot establish which variable causes which. For example, does greater happiness lead to wanting to be more involved with the world (thus the viewer watches news and

information programs), or does habitually watching the news and feeling connected with the community/world at large result in increased happiness, or most likely, both. Therefore, future research should consider examining how correlated variables are related, i.e., determine the direction of influences between the variables.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of the present research have important implications for the television and advertising industries, for health professionals and social agencies concerned with assisting the elderly, and most importantly, for older people themselves. One practical implication is that from an audience numbers and economic point of view, the elderly audience, with their increasing levels of discretionary income, will become a more viable and attractive market for advertisers. Thus, the television and advertising industries may increasingly choose to develop, produce, and support programs of interest to the elderly (e.g., news and information programs) and market products aimed at seniors within such programming. It should be noted, however, that this does not necessarily mean that these programs should be directed exclusively toward the elderly. More research is needed to determine whether older adults prefer programs that contain specialized information and issues which concern the elderly.

The results of the present study indicated that for elderly viewers who have diminished or lost resources (e.g.,

poorer health, fewer social contacts, restricted mobility, depression, and lower life satisfaction), television may be used as a means to cope with their circumstances, to temporarily escape, and/or as a means of diversion. According to the uses and dependency model, these elderly viewers appear to exhibit a pattern of ritualized use of television; i.e., they watch out of habit or to escape, and thus, may be less active and/or intentional in their use of television than viewers who are more goal-directed. This may also hold true for viewers who use TV in a habitual way (e.g., to pass the time, out of habit, out of boredom, when there is nothing else to do). Although Rubin and Windahl (1986) maintain that only instrumental viewing is goal-directed, it may be argued that viewing habitually for escapist reasons is also goal-directed in the sense that it is done to decrease loneliness or depression and/or as a diversion from problems. Future research is needed to determine whether elderly viewers do receive specific gratifications from ritualized and/or habitualized TV use (e.g., an actual reduction in depression, loneliness). Such information would be beneficial to health professionals and social agencies concerned with helping the elderly. For example, if it can be shown that TV watching can actually reduce loneliness, depression, and/or divert attention from worries and problems, then perhaps television watching is not the passive and negative activity that it has been often assumed to be by social scientists, health professionals,

and the general population. For the aged who are isolated from others and have limited resources for dealing with poor health, restricted mobility, depression, and loneliness, television may be a readily available and less harmful means of escape or diversion than some other methods (e.g., prescription drugs, alcohol addiction).

Furthermore, if it is known how television use affects older adults, programming which better suits their needs and interests may be designed and implemented - if such programs are developed from an understanding of how and why they use TV. For example, in the present study seniors with diminished resources were found to watch more non-reality programs. If however, health education and information programs could be developed which were equally entertaining, then such programs could assist those viewers; e.g., exercise programs could facilitate in keeping aging limbs and muscles flexible and strong and talk shows could provide more advice regarding pertinent issues (e.g., how to deal with the death of a spouse, how to cope with the loneliness that may result when adult children move away). And even if non-reality programs are preferred by those watching TV for escapist reasons, then future research could examine whether the incorporation of gerontological issues within such programs could serve the needs of the elderly population.

The uses and dependency model suggests that viewers who use TV in a ritual way may be inclined to use the medium more and/or may experience the displacement of daily

activities. In the present study, it was expected that elderly people who were restricted in their ability to satisfy needs through a variety of sources would use television as a substitute or as a way of compensating for such loss, thereby increasing their use of TV. Little evidence was found to support this notion. Future research should be conducted to confirm the findings of the present study, or examine under which circumstances, if any, television does serve as a compensatory activity.

Another issue is that TV use for escape and diversionary purposes may lead the audience to accept the stereotypes of characters, roles, and conflict situations as portrayed on entertainment television (Blumler, 1979). Because ritualized patterns of TV use presumes low involvement on the part of audience members, Blumler (1979) argued that their "perceptual guard" may be lower, thus becoming more easily influenced by the frames of reference inherent in the programs they watch. Future research is needed to bridge the findings from the present study (e.g., escapist motives and non-reality program preferences) and the effects of watching such programs. For example, research needs to examine how and why elderly people derive and interpret meaning from television contents, how this information is used, and how it may affect their daily activities and life circumstances.

In the present study, it was found that the elderly overwhelmingly prefer news and informational programming and

watching for information was the most predominant motive for watching TV. Seniors with more education, higher incomes, and who were happier reported using television in a social way by watching with family and friends. According to Rubin and Windahl (1986), these findings describe a specific pattern of TV use referred to as instrumental use. Further research is needed to determine whether such instrumental use is, in fact, meeting the information needs of seniors; i.e., whether it actually results in an information gain, and whether it results in changes in attitudes and/or behaviors toward particular issues. Furthermore, research is needed to determine whether elderly people can become too dependent on the informational content of television and turn into information "junkies" (Fouts, 1989), and what effect this might have on their lives. Perhaps an over-dependency on informational content results in a pattern of watching news programs, talk shows, documentaries, and public affairs throughout the day and into the evening and this may be a particular type of "habitual" TV watching with its own distinctive consequences.

A final implication stems from watching television as a shared activity. The findings of the present study provide evidence for viewing practices that have long been assumed but not documented; i.e., a significant amount of exposure to TV takes place in contexts (sharing with people or activities) which result in less than total attention or concentration to the contents. This, in turn, may influence

any potential effects TV may have on the viewer (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). For example, a viewer who is only partially attentive to a newscast while preparing a meal may possibly become misinformed about an issue because he/she missed important details. Therefore, future research is needed to examine how different TV viewing behaviors, especially sharing behavior, may influence the effect that TV watching has on the viewer.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The terms "elderly," "older adults," and "seniors" are all used in this thesis to designate individuals who are 60 years of age or older, unless otherwise stated.

[2]Although the study included 19 married couples, an additional 19 married people participated in the study without their spouses, thus bringing the total number of married participants to 57.

[3]This separate analysis was necessitated by the fact that some of the social/parasocial motives were also included in other categories.

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APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATED EXAMPLE OF THE TV DIARY

TIME	2/7 CFAC	OTHER VIEWING	WATCHED WITH OTHERS	DID YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE WHILE WATCHING THE PROGRAM? YES. PLEASE LIST.
1:00 P.M.	Days of Our Lives		✓	
1:30 P.M.	"		✓	
2:00 P.M.	Bumperstumpers			Sewing

Participants were asked to locate and circle the program(s) they watched, place a check mark (✓) under the column "WATCHED WITH OTHERS" if they watched the program(s) with someone else, and to record concurrent activities (if any) under the column "YES. PLEASE LIST." In this example, the viewer watched the program "Days of our Lives" with at least one other person; she sewed alone while watching "Bumperstumpers."

The original TV diary was 11" by 17" and had program listings for seven different channels. Program listings for the morning, afternoon, and evening each appeared on a separate page.

APPENDIX B

PROGRAM CATEGORIES AND PROGRAM LISTINGS

News, "Hard" Information, Documentaries

Canada AM

Local newscasts

The National

The Journal

Channel 4 news

The Fifth Estate

Marketplace

Man Alive

Midday

Meech Lake Meetings

20-20

Yamamoto

CNN newscasts

This Country

World of Survival

World at War

The Agony and the Ecstasy

Marketing

Baby's Best Chance

Spice of Life

Adrienne Clarkson's Summer Festival

News, "Hard" Information, Documentaries cont.

Nightly Business Report

On the Road

MacNeil/Lehrer Report

Canada in Conflict

Primetime Live

The Man who Loved Birds: The story of John Box

Larry King Live

Living Dangerously

John Kennedy

Good Morning America

Stock Market

Horizon

Edmonton Shooting Stars

Ralph Klein

The Nature of Things

Talk Shows

Donahue

Dini Petty

Oprah Winfrey

Shirley

Sally Jesse Raphael

Self-Improvement

Paint with Pittard

Justine Wilson's Louisiana Cookin'

Come Join me in my Studio

It Figures

Infotainment

Unsolved Mysteries

Entertainment Tonight

Show Biz Ballyhoo

Front Page Challenge

The Judge

Information for the Elderly

No programs were watched in this category.

Soaps/Serials

Dallas

The Young and the Restless

Falcon Crest

Coronation Street

Another World

Knots Landing

The Bold and the Beautiful

All my Children

One Life to Live

General Hospital

Drama

LA Law

Mystery

All Creatures Great and Small

Sherlock Holmes

Twin Peaks

Matlock

48 Hours

Shine on Harvey Moon

Hanlon

ENG

Hardball

Street Legal

Secret ID

The Winslow Boy

Father Dowling Mysteries

In the Heat of the Night

Baywatch

Nasty Boys

Reilly Ace of Spies

Action/Adventure

Paradise

Alien Nation

Situation Comedies

Cosby

Night Court

Full House

Cheers

Who's the Boss

Head of the Class

MASH

Yes, Prime Minister

Murphy Brown

Designing Women

Perfect Strangers

Golden Girls

Newhart

Fresh Fields

Growing Pains

Different World

Just Ten of Us.

Family Matters

Wings

Movies

Cry the Beloved Country

Jesus of Nazareth

Pretty in Pink

O Lucky Man

Lost!

Sports

Hockey

Baseball

TSN

Sports at 11

NHL Awards

Hockey News All Star Awards

Game Shows

Jeopardy

Wheel of Fortune

Family Feud

Price is Right

Religious Shows

Huntley Street

Hallelujah

Testament

Vision TV program (unknown title)

Children's Programs

Fred Penner's Place

3-2-1 Contact

Care Bears

Buckshot

Inspector Gadget

Real Ghostbusters

Music/Variety

Songs from My Fair Lady

Evening with Mel Brooks

Evening at the Improv

Other

Unknown title, program