

# Users and Gratification Theory Approach to Understand Why People Use Digital Media Mainly During Lockdown

Dhruv Sabharwal, Sharda University, India

## ABSTRACT

This article seeks to find the uses and gratification that consumers receive by using digital media during the lockdown when there is a situation of Covid. This article tries to provide a more comprehensive understanding of why consumers use digital media. Exploratory research was conducted. In-depth interviews were conducted with over 30 individuals who use social media or digital media during the lockdown. This study identified eight implications of uses and gratifications for using digital media. They are social interaction, seeking information, time-pass, entertainment, relaxation, expression of opinion, information sharing, and knowledge about others.

## KEYWORDS

consumer-generated media, Digital media, exploratory study, gratification theory, in-depth interview, lockdown, qualitative research, social media, uses, use of social media

## INTRODUCTION

Digital media plays a very important and crucial role, and it remains always an area of interest for marketing practitioners. Ninety percent of marketers use digital media to promote a range of goods and services, according to recent research. By 2024, it is anticipated that corporations would have spent approximately 26.3% of their budget on social media (Madan, 2021). It has been noted that most businesses and organizations are promoting their products and services on social media or digital media platforms during the epidemic (Liu, 2020). Therefore, it is critical to comprehend how to use social media in an acceptable way in order to maximize profits for a business or organization. Social media has expanded its reach and now serves as a vital component of peer review, online conversations, scientific information dissemination, continuing medical education, and many more during the current pandemic (Goel, 2020).

The theory of uses and pleasure, which originated in the communication literature, is seen as crucial to comprehending and assessing the comprehension of social media marketing (Madan, 2021). According to the uses and gratification theory, people search for media that will satisfy their wants and provide them with the greatest level of satisfaction. Although this theory is applicable to social

DOI: 10.4018/IJSMOC.336477

This article published as an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and production in any medium, provided the author of the original work and original publication source are properly credited.

media, it has received little attention in the literature on social media and marketing. For this reason, in order to aid in and provide an explanation for why consumers utilise digital media, researchers employ the uses and gratification theory in this work.

In this model, we can find that this theory plays a very important role for Audiences as followed by surveillance, identity, relationship, diversion, and media sought which requires need gratified and results in continued use.

This study shows how important the uses and gratification theory is for understanding the uses and gratification that consumers get from utilising digital media, as well as how to apply this theory to digital media.

We begin by providing a quick overview of the literature on digital media, usage, and satisfaction theory (Whiting *et al*, 2013). Following a description of the methodology, the research findings are presented, and finally, the study's implications and conclusion are drawn.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

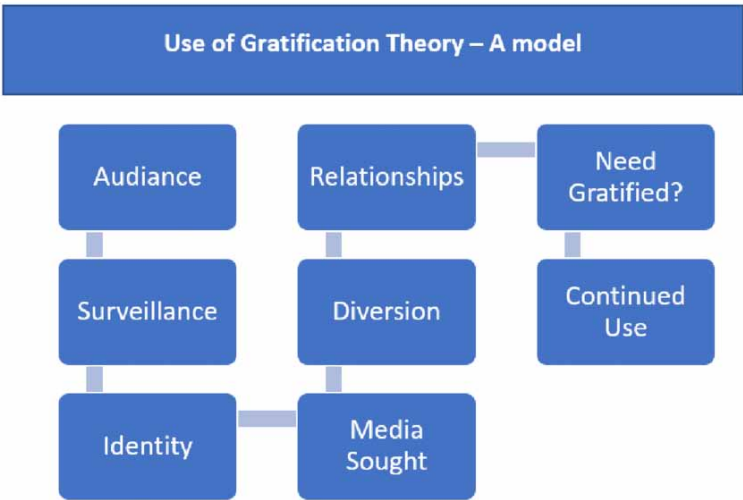
Global pandemics have increased in frequency in recent decades; SARS in 2003, H5N1 in 2006, and H1N1 in 2009, for example, all hindered economic growth and business operations (Chung, 2015).

The term “digital media” refers to “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical Foundation of web 2.0 (Prykhodko,2019), and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” . Social media is made up of a variety of information sources that are developed, created, and shared by users to raise awareness of goods and services (Murugesan, 2007).

Massive data analysis and information dissemination about COVID-19 on Reddit, Gab, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. Analysis of the topic's engagement and interest in COVID-19 was done, and each platform's users were given a unique evaluation of how the discourse has changed globally (Cinelli *et al.*, 2020).

Because Uses and Gratification theory originated in a variety of communication-related literature, it is applicable to social media. According to Williams *et al.* (2012), social media is a platform that has allowed thousands of users to connect with one another. The uses and gratifications theory can be applied in the following very basic way: people will choose media among competitors that best satisfies their needs and provides them with their ultimate satisfaction (Lariscy *et al*, 2011).

Figure 1. Author's own idea of model



7 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/article/users-and-gratification-theory-approach-to-understand-why-people-use-digital-media-mainly-during-lockdown/336477](http://www.igi-global.com/article/users-and-gratification-theory-approach-to-understand-why-people-use-digital-media-mainly-during-lockdown/336477)

## Related Content

---

### Academic and Research Information Sharing Through Social Media and Networks Among Autonomous Arts and Science Colleges in Chennai, India

K. Palanivel (2023). *Information Literacy Skills and the Role of Social Media in Disseminating Scholarly Information in the 21st Century* (pp. 26-42).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/academic-and-research-information-sharing-through-social-media-and-networks-among-autonomous-arts-and-science-colleges-in-chennai-india/325711](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/academic-and-research-information-sharing-through-social-media-and-networks-among-autonomous-arts-and-science-colleges-in-chennai-india/325711)

### Influence of Social Networks in the Decision to Vote: An Exploratory Survey on the Ecuadorian Electorate

Daniel Barredo Ibáñez, Carlos Arcila Calderón, Jesús Arroyave and Roxana Silva (2015). *International Journal of E-Politics* (pp. 15-34).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/influence-of-social-networks-in-the-decision-to-vote/139778](http://www.irma-international.org/article/influence-of-social-networks-in-the-decision-to-vote/139778)

### An Ongoing Journey to Foster Urban Students' Online "Public Voices"

Nick Lawrence and Joe O'Brien (2018). *Social Media in Education: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 219-233).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-ongoing-journey-to-foster-urban-students-online-public-voices/205709](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-ongoing-journey-to-foster-urban-students-online-public-voices/205709)

### Newspaper Framing of Climate Change and Sustainability Issues in India

T Nirmala and I. Arul Aram (2018). *International Journal of E-Politics* (pp. 15-28).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/newspaper-framing-of-climate-change-and-sustainability-issues-in-india/199067](http://www.irma-international.org/article/newspaper-framing-of-climate-change-and-sustainability-issues-in-india/199067)

### Privacy and the Identity Gap in Socio-Technical Systems

Catherine Heeney (2009). *Handbook of Research on Socio-Technical Design and Social Networking Systems* (pp. 110-122).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/privacy-identity-gap-socio-technical/21401](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/privacy-identity-gap-socio-technical/21401)