Second Screen Outcomes: Social Capital Affinity and Flow as Knowledge Gain Predictors Among Multiscreening Audiences

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ABSTRACT

Complementary simultaneous media use occurs when television viewers use another screen to seek information or communicate about television content. This online survey (N = 645) assessed social capital affinity and flow as potential mediators in the relationships between social vs. information-seeking motives for second screen use and focused and incidental knowledge gain. Findings confirm that social capital affinity and flow act as mediators, with flow being the more potent of the two in this multiphase context.

INTRODUCTION

Television audiences increasingly use an electronic second screen (cellphone, laptop, tablet) in a manner that relates to the media content they are watching. This phenomenon, known as complementary simultaneous media use (CSMU), includes information seeking about the program being watched and conversing with others using social media or texting. This type of participatory behavior may result in intended and unintended learning via TV or the second screen.

KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES OF CSMU:

This study investigated focused (intended) and incidental (unintended) knowledge-gain outcomes of CSMU, based on informational or social motives for CSMU.

- Focused knowledge gain is defined as the self-reported perception forms of learning have occurred by intentionally seeking information.
- Incidental knowledge gain is the self-reported perception that information has been obtained as a byproduct of CSMU activities.

MEDIATING VARIABLES:

Flow and social capital affinity are also examined as mediators between motives for CSMU and knowledge gains.

- Flow theory describes a psychological state that occurs during intense engagement in an enjoyable and challenging activity. A core flow state is similar to play, but involves other elements including arousal, focused attention, and perceived control.
- Social capital affinity is the sense of loose community and likeness people feel when they interact with others online.

HYPOTHESES

- H1: CSMU social motive for will be positively related to social capital affinity.
- H2a: Social capital affinity will be positively related to reported incidental learning from TV.
- H2b: Social capital affinity will be positively related to reported incidental learning from second screen of choice.
- H3: Social capital affinity will be positively related to flow.
- H4: CSMU information-seeking motive will be positively related to flow.
- H5a: Flow will be positively related to reported incidental learning from TV.
- H5b: Flow will be positively related to reported incidental learning from the second screen of choice.
- H5c: Flow will be positively related to reported focused learning from TV.
- H5d: Flow will be positively related to reported focused learning from the second screen of choice.

METHOD

The survey was fielded through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Respondents received 25 cents for completing the survey. The questionnaire contained items measuring frequency and types of second screen behaviors while watching television. Additionally, a variety of scales were used to measure social capital affinity, flow, incidental knowledge gain, and focused knowledge gain.

The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling via Amos Graphics.

RESPONDENTS

Qualified respondents were:
- At least 18 years old
- Living in the United States
- Daily access to the Internet
- Engaged in second-screen behaviors at least sometimes

Sample demographics:
- Age range 18-69 (M = 31.55; SD = 10.56)
- Female 56.3%
- Caucasian 75.7%
- Latino/Hispanic 11.9%
- African American 10.4%
- Asian 10.4%
- (some people chose multiple ethnicities)

RESULTS

The hypothesized model showed good fit to the data (χ² = 623.56, df = 258, p < .01; χ²/df = 2.42, RMSEA = .047, TLI .94, ILI .95, Parsimony-adjusted NFI .78). All of the relationships were confirmed as hypothesized, as shown below.

Social capital affinity mediates the relationship between the social motive for CSMU and flow. Flow is significantly related to both types of knowledge gain from both screens. These latter relationships are stronger than the direct relationships between social capital affinity and knowledge gains.

Flow partially mediates the relationship between the information motive for CSMU and focused knowledge gain because, as seen below, the relationship is stronger than the direct path from the information motive to focused knowledge gain.

CONCLUSIONS

- Audiences who engage in CSMU make a proactive media-use decision.
- CSMU facilitates flow; i.e., CSMU leads to a sense of intense engagement, enjoyment, and autotelic experience.
- CSMU for an informational purposes correlates highly with flow, which mediates knowledge gain outcomes from both TV and second screen.
- Audiences who engage in CSMU make a proactive media-use decision.
- CSMU facilitates flow; i.e., CSMU leads to a sense of intense engagement, enjoyment, and autotelic experience.
- CSMU for an informational purposes correlates highly with flow, which mediates knowledge gain outcomes from both TV and second screen. Thus, a flow state appears important to the learning experience.
- Clearly, interaction and engagement among active audiences encourages people to participate in public conversations from which they learn about a variety of topics that might be outside of their areas of interest and life experience.