

# FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND YOUNG ADULT TELEVISION VIEWING MOTIVATIONS

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## Abstract

The social institution of family is central to the lives of every individual, but communication patterns within families vary. The purpose of this research study was to determine whether or not family communication patterns influence young adults’ media choices, and if so, whether this relationship is dependent on geographic location. McLeod and Chaffee’s main interest when developing the Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCP) was for media-effect research.

## Literature Review

### FCP Theory

First, **concept-orientation** happens when family members share beliefs about an object based on its perceived attributes. On the other hand, **socio-orientation** occurs when family members reach an agreement about an object by allowing an individual to define it for all of them. These factors produce patterns in family communication and behavior, which will be discussed using a four-fold typology.

### Television viewing motivations

“The analysis provided partial support for the uses of gratifications supposition that individuals seek out media content to gratify their felt needs” (Rubin, 1983, p. 50). Television seems to gratify habitual, time consumption, and entertainment needs more than the other viewing motivations. This study revealed **eight categories** of reasons people seek out media.

## Methodology

**Independent variables:** Geographic location, Sex

**Dependent variables:** FCP, Television Viewing Motivations

**Participants:** Undergraduate students , Average age 19  
228 completed surveys  
65% female, 35% male  
84.3% Caucasian

## Hypotheses & Results

**H1:** A positive relationship will exist between having a socio-oriented family communication pattern and social television viewing motives.

**Result:** There was no significant correlation; relationships are positive, but weak

**Test:** Correlation

**H2:** Participants who reside in the Northeastern region of the country will experience a concept-oriented family communication pattern rather than a socio-oriented family communication pattern.

**Result:** Geographic location does influence family communication patterns; specifically, concept-oriented FCP.

**Test:** Independent samples t-test

**H3:** Television viewing motivations will be predictive of family communication types.

**Result:** Not supported by data

**Test:** ANOVA

**RQ1:** Does living in a specific region of the country predict a family communication pattern?

**Result:** No predictive relationship

**Test:** Independent samples t-test

## Conclusions

- The purpose of this research study was to investigate a potential relationship between the influence of family communication patterns and young adults’ media choices, dependent on geographic location and other demographic variables.
- The hypotheses and research question at hand were partially supported.
- There seems to be a predictive association dependent on geographic location, and possibly culture, and family types based on FCP Theory.
- The present study had some limitations regarding sample size, the representativeness of the sample, and the methodology of the collection of data.

## Limitations

- Participants were given around seven different questionnaires at the same time
- Questionnaire formatting could be improved
- Questionnaire needed to think about the evolution of television and incorporate accommodations
- Lack of ethnic and gender diversity of sample participants

## Future Research

For this reason, future research would need to focus more on the application of FCP in relation to interpersonal relationships and whether these change over time. On the other hand, the television viewing motives scale may need to be modified in a way that it accounts for the evolution of television, from broadcast to streaming/online, such as Netflix and Hulu.

## References

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- Greenberg, B. (1974). Gratifications and motivations of television viewing for British children. *International Communication Association*.
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