

## Influence of Uses and Gratifications on Television News Recall among Non-Teaching Staff of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University

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### ABSTRACT

News consumption is a central aspect of everyday life in modern societies. While people desire to be informed of the daily happenings, they differently concentrate on different media for exposure to information based on their individual dispositions. Hence, this study focused on television news, the assessment of uses and gratifications influence and news recall. The study examined the gratifications which the SSANU members of COOU derive from exposure to TV news. Among the objectives of the study are to ascertain the frequency of exposure to Network news of preferred station and the type of viewers that recall news the most. The study covered a total of 175 registered SSANU members in the university. Among the 175 members, 105 were studied using survey research method while the remaining 70 were studied using FGD. In keeping with the population of the members, census study of all the members was conducted using qualitative and quantitative research methods. The Uses and Gratifications theory of Mass Communication was used to anchor the study. Findings revealed that the SSANU members frequently get exposed to network news, and that the information seekers followed by the casual viewers, recall news the most.

### INTRODUCTION

News consumption is a central aspect of everyday life in modern societies (Butsch, 2008). The above statement describes news as being very important in the activities of man in his daily life. It is on the basis of this importance that the one-time president of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson said, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter" (Ali, 2001, p.198, cited in Agbanu, 2013).

Television news could be defined as the dissemination of current events through the medium of television. Television news is very image-based, showing video footage of many of the events that are reported; sometimes with still pictures. That is to say that television news cannot exist without images or pictures. This is because television enhances information through the use of images or pictures. Nwabueze (2014, p.147) describes television as the medium that impacts most on the audience. TV news is therefore defined as the use of audio

and visuals in imparting believable current information to the audience. Nwabueze (2014) identified it as "seeing is believing".

Meanwhile, people are different both in actions, attitudes, perceptions, ideologies, psychologies and different other concepts that define human characteristics. This is the basis on which the uses and gratifications one makes out from any piece of information especially as it concerns the television are footed. It must be emphasized that uses and gratifications is a theory which is rooted in the assumption that the reception of the content of a mass-mediated message takes place in anticipation of some rewards (Nwabueze, 2014; Agbanu, 2013; Nwodu, 2006). The use of theories in research and the importance attached is underscored by Kerlinger (1973) in (Ekeanyanwu & Peter, 2015) when they observed that a theory contains a set of interrelated concepts, definitions and statements that present a systematic view of a phenomenon by specifying relationships among the concepts with the purpose of explaining the phenomenon for proper understanding of the concept.

Hence, uses and gratification theory is a suggestion that individuals are active and

literate users of the media for reasons of gratification or satisfaction they hope to derive from such experience (Ekeanyanwu & Peter, 2015). Based on their position, the decision to watch television is made by an individual who already knows the type of satisfaction he expects from the exposure. The above points out the position of uses and gratification when it comes to television messages; this is because the gratification one derives from a certain television message has much to tell about that person's attitude towards exposure to television.

In effect, the recall of particular information has something to do with the reasons for which the television news is sought by the viewers. This is so because, while those who watch TV news primarily to gain information recall more than others, casual viewers recall more than those seeking diversion or both diversion and information (Gantz, 1976). Recall according to the Longman Dictionary of contemporary English is defined as the ability to remember something that you have learned or experienced. It is to deliberately remember a particular fact, event or situation from the past, especially in order to tell someone about it.

The reason for which a viewer exposes himself to the television news has a lot of influence on his ability to recall such television message(s). This is the reason for which the needs as attached to television news are segmented. According to McQuail (1983, p. 13), information, personal identity, integration, social integration and entertainment are the basic common reasons for media use as cited in Asemah (2011, pp. 173-4). Asemah (2011) pointed out that the uses and gratification theory emphasizes audience members' motives for making specific consumption choices and the consequences of that media intentional use; showing that the television viewers have intentions for that viewership which make them to or not to remember any television information.

This study is aimed at assessing whether the gratifications the respondents sought encourage message content recall which in turn will translate to acceptance and possibly participation (Owuamalam, 2016). The study equally set out to ascertain the basic need that mostly encourages content recall among respondents and as well as find out the gratifications derived from exposure to television news.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Earlier media scholars conducted several studies concerning exposure to media contents and the effect of media contents on different categories of media audience. The research outcomes from these studies have been used to formulate scholarly postulations, theories and principles in media and communication studies.

Among these studies are influence of advertising on women body acceptance (British Medical Association, 2000), the relationship between advertising messages and audience buying behavior (Niazi, Siddiqui, Alishah, & Hunjra, 2012; Krugman, 2013; Ingavale, 2013; Issifu, 2009), the relationship between media exposure and children change of behavior (Zhang & Sood, 2002; McGinnis, Gootman & Kraak, 2006; Pine & Nash, 2002; Livingstone, 2003), media contents exposure and adolescence reactions to screen and internet contents (Wiseman, Sunday & Becker, 2005; Paul, & Bryant, 2005; Gross, 2004), and media exposure, influence and use among Nigerian undergraduates (Adamu, 2011; Chu, 2011; Mohamed & Suleiman, 2013).

Unfortunately, of all these studies, none has been targeted at a given set of working class citizens in Nigeria with a view to investigate and obtain their media content exposure and utilization. It was against this background that the current study was designed to attract media scholars' attention to the fact that SSANU members expose themselves to news media contents and use same for one purpose or the other. This implies that the researcher in this study deemed it fit to explore the area of media exposure and use among working class citizens in Nigeria, herein represented by SSANU members of COOU, given the fact that media of mass communication serve different functions to different audiences: socialization function, agenda setting function, gate keeping function, status conferral function, watch-dog, surveillance functions and several others as pointed by Asemah (2011, pp. 37-49); information, education, transmission of culture, advertizing, national integration (Nwodu, 2009; Agbanu, 2013, pp. 103-117).

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To ascertain the respondents' frequency of exposure to network news of preferred station.
- To ascertain the level of recall of network news by viewers

- To ascertain the type of viewers that recall news the most (a. information seeker, b. information/recreation seeker, c. recreation seeker, d. casual viewer)
- To ascertain if recreational purpose of media content exposure encourages or discourages message recall among respondents
- To ascertain if diversionary purpose of media content exposure encourages or discourages message recall among respondents.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What is the respondents' frequency of exposure to network news of preferred station?
- What is respondents' level of recall of network news by viewers?
- Which type of viewers recall news the most?
- Does recreational purpose of media content exposure encourage or discourage message recall among respondents?
- Does diversionary purpose of media content exposure encourage or discourage message recall among respondents?

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The importance of theories in social science research has over the years been emphasized among communication scholars. Based on the high level of attention focused on the position of theories in communication and media research, the researcher anchored this study on the Uses and Gratifications Theory of mass communication to serve as the theoretical framework for the study.

This theory, which is otherwise called Utility Theory, is based on the assumption that the reception of the content of a mass mediated message takes place in anticipation of some rewards. The basic premise of uses and gratifications theory is that individuals will seek out media among competitors that fulfill their needs and lead to ultimate gratifications (Lariscy *et al.*, 2011). Of course, this anticipation according to Agbanu (2013, p. 176) gave rise to the practice of selective exposure aimed at meeting the expectations. Nwabueze (2014, p. 47) pointed out that the audiences' media use is based on certain satisfaction, needs, wishes or motives, which according to McQuail (2005) in Nwabueze (2014, p. 47), the needs basically

include those for information, relaxation, companionship, diversion or escape.

Hence, applying the position of the Uses and Gratifications theory to this work, it becomes evident that the television audience has their needs previously even before getting exposed to the television depending on the channel which they expose themselves to. By this, it means that the television viewers are always categorized into those whose purposefully watch television to get knowledge or information, those who watch television to be entertained or to escape from stress, and perhaps those who watch television because they have no other option (casual viewers).

Meanwhile, note has to be taken that the propagators of the Uses and Gratifications Theory are Blumer and Katz in the year 1974. One basic assumption of the Uses and Gratifications Theory is that people are actively involved in media usage and interact highly with the communication media by building profile groupings of related uses and theoretically associated gratifications (Luo, 2002). The theory describes why consumers use a particular medium and what functions the medium serves for them (Katerattanakul, 2002). Relating this theory to the current study from the scholarly positions held above, it has been experienced through available literature as examined above that uses of any given content is basically determined by the gratifications such contents can offer to the consumers.

Moreover, gratifications control exposure, selection and recall of media contents. From this assertion, the position of gratifications in both news content consumption and recall cannot be better understood in the absence of uses and gratifications theory of mass communication which explores the position of the recipients of media message mostly as an active participant in an era of proliferated media landscape (Barton, 2009). Therefore, the above theoretical framework was considered more apt for this study because of its ability to establish the required detailed explanation of the relationship among media content use, gratification and recall.

### **THE MASS MEDIA AND USES AND GRATIFICATIONS**

McQuail (2005) observes that the basic needs which the media supply the audience are information, relaxation, companionship,

diversion or escape. This is why Nwabueze (2014, p. 48) noted that the media audience actively use the media to gratify their own needs and motivations. This follows what Defleur (2010, p. 193) in Agbanu (2013) meant when he said that people selectively expose themselves to mass media contents choosing only those messages that will satisfy or gratify their needs.

The analyses here focus on the fact that the media present their contents to the audiences who watch, listen to or read those contents, focusing attention on the contents that gratify their different needs, and using such contents for their own purpose depending on their psychological inclinations (Barton, 2009). This means that the audiences attach needs to the media contents they are exposed to, using them to satisfy those needs. Today, Uses and Gratifications Theory has more relevance than ever as a tool for understanding how individual media content consumers connect with the technologies around them. These technologies span everything from the Internet to video gaming to television news contents (David, 2016).

Uses and Gratifications Theory research into television news usage has found that people seek a number of gratifications from their television sets, including relaxation, entertainment, diversion, information and escape, among others. As another example of contemporary technology, when using television news contents, users can be motivated by factors like a need to prevent negative feelings, information satisfaction, entertainment, socialization, and cognitive needs. People's ability to recall media content has been another area the uses and gratifications research seeks to explore in media research about the audience behavior and response to media contents after being exposed to them (Barton, 2009).

Uses and Gratifications Theory researchers today are exploring predictive and explanatory possibilities of the theory by connecting media usage with individual factors. There is particular interest in the link between why media are used and the gratifications received (David, 2016). Overall, Uses and Gratifications Theory has been crucial to a shift that focuses on the media users and their agencies in the field of mass media studies. Therefore, the uses which the media audiences make of any media content are based on the gratifications those audiences derive from such media content. And so, the

message of the media is either used by the audiences to satisfy their needs, or not used by them because of the fact that such media message does not gratify them. Note has to be taken that such uses may be in form of information or education, companionship, relaxation, diversion or escape as well as other forms of gratifications depending on the psychological inclinations of the media audiences.

### **CRITICISM OF THE THEORY**

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) has been plagued almost from its inception by criticisms that it does not meet the standards necessary to be a theory (David, 2016). Common criticisms include the fact that gratifications are more dependent on researchers' input than on the subjects and that much of the information collected in studies is self-reported, and as such, difficult to measure. Despite the criticism, UGT may be more relevant and useful today as media users now have hundreds of TV channels, the Internet, and a whole array of other media entertainment options that help solidify the argument that the individual has control over their media consumption. Tankard (2000) and McQuail (2010) have also exposed that Uses and Gratifications Theory discusses how users intentionally choose media that would satisfy their needs and would help them to become more knowledgeable and get relaxation by diversion and social interactions.

### **EARLIER USES AND GRATIFICATIONS STUDIES**

Uses and Gratifications Theory has been used by different researchers in different ages in carrying out researches in media and communication disciplines (Lariscy *et al.*, 2011). Its beginning dates back to research studies of radio listeners in the 1940s. Other research at that time looked into children's comics and the absence of newspapers during a newspaper strike. Uses and Gratifications history can best be understood in stages based on the ages at which different media scholars undertook a given research work using the theory (Beryant, 2008).

In 1944, Herta Hertzog interviewed people who listened to soap operas and found that they sought three different types of gratifications: emotional, wishful thinking, and learning from this form of entertainment (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Later in 1954, Wilbur Schramm's



development of a formula for determining which media an individual might select, prepared the basic foundation for modern developments of Uses and Gratifications Theory. This formula took into account the amount of gratification that an individual expects to get out of a certain form of media and the amount of effort the individual would have to put in to get the desired gratification (Lariscy *et al.*, 2011).

Gantz (1976) studied “How Uses and Gratifications Affect Recall of Television News”. The work focused on three groups of viewers: information seekers, recreation seekers and information/recreation seekers. It was gathered that information seekers recall the most, followed by information/recreation seekers, while recreation seekers recall less at all times. In the case of the current study, the SSANU members were researched on so as to ascertain which group of viewers that recalled the most and the influence of such recall.

Kakembo (2012) studied Edutainment and the Social Media in the Contemporary African Context, using the Uses and Gratifications Model in discourse. The focus of the study was to ascertain the reason behind the captivation of African youths by the globalized multinational media to the detriment of the institutionalized media. It was concluded thus: that the youths select and will continue to select media that serve a better number of their interests and purpose. This is because, while the globalized media focus on presentation of market-driven programmes, the educators themselves are only focusing on maintaining and reinforcing conventional beliefs, norms and values.

Again, Grellhesi *et al.* (2012) studied the Gratifications sought through Text Messaging Practices of Male and Female Undergraduate Students. In the study, eight uses and gratifications were proposed to the students to rank them from high to low. It was ranked as follows: Accessibility, Relaxation, Escape, Entertainment, Information seeking, Coordination for business, Socialization/Affection seeking and Status seeking.

In this sense, it is very clear that text messaging on phones is done on the basis that the phone is very accessible both to the sender and the receiver, and that is the reason why accessibility was ranked the highest. This was followed by relaxation, escape and so on. Hence, it is paramount at this stage to reiterate the point that

people use the media based on their needs and they are gratified accordingly (Obiakor, 2019). Therefore, in the interest of the current study, the uses for which the SSANU members expose themselves to the television news will be underlined; as well as the gratifications that accrue from such exposure.

Uses and Gratifications Theory researchers today are exploring predictive and explanatory possibilities of the theory by connecting media usage with individual factors. There is particular interest in the link between why media are used and the gratifications received. In all, Uses and Gratifications Theory has been crucial to a shift that focuses on the media users in the field of mass media studies (David, 2016).

### **MASS MEDIA CONTENT RECALL**

While some messages are forgotten almost quickly, as they are perceived, others may be recalled with considerable accuracy for a long-time afterwards (Daramola, 2012, p. 81). The above statement depicts the position of certain news stories or events aired on the television; either forgotten or retained. This is the reason why Popoola (2003) revealed the theory of selective exposure, perception and retention. Asemah (2011, p. 183-4) posits that people expose themselves to those mass communication messages which are in agreement with their attitudes and interests; and it is difficult for other media messages which they are not exposed to, to have effect on them. This means that people are exposed to information that is in tandem with their view.

Just like in selective exposure, individuals selectively perceive media messages depending on their belief and worldview (Agbanu, 2013, p. 170). This is practicable where a wrestling entertainment fan who does not like Jack Swagger will always press the forward button on the remote system. This is because he has perceived Jack Swagger as a weakling who always loses his match. For such a person, Roman Reigns is a wrestler to watch since he wins most of his matches; exposure is always to Roman Reigns because the perception is that he fights well.

Selective retention according to Agbanu (2013, p. 170) means that individuals retain only those media messages that they choose to retain, and throw away others. This is simply evident where a wrestling fan of Roman Reigns will automatically retain the fight that concerns

Roman Reigns whose fan he is. Eventually, he is to forget other fights that concern those wrestlers whose fan he is not.

With this, it is clear that one can only recall those media messages that one is exposed to, having positively perceived such media messages, and favorably retained them. Therefore, message recall has something to do with selective exposure, perception and retention. This is so because, one who exposes himself to media information where his perception is in the positive angle, will retain those messages that appeal to his consent. Invariably, the recall of such media information or message is very much easier and more significant (Obiakor, 2019).

### **GRATIFICATIONS SOUGHT VERSUS GRATIFICATIONS OBTAINED**

Individuals are different, both in thought and actions as well as perceptions. Agbanu (2013, p. 169) explained this when he said that every person has unique qualities which make such an individual to react or behave differently to every stimulus including media messages. As such, it is a well-known fact that people (audience) have within their minds the gratifications which they ordinarily want the media to serve them (Obiakor, 2019).

Meanwhile, gratifications sought simply means the role which a viewer, a listener or a reader expected the media to serve him even before he gets exposed to any media message. But gratifications obtained on the other hand means the role which the media finally played for the viewer, the listener or the reader which may be in tandem with the expectations of the said audience or most times in dissonance with those expectations of the audience. This is the reason why Emenyonu (1998) concluded in his study of the review of Uses and Gratifications that people do not at all times get the amount of gratification they seek from television.

More still, media scholars have strengthened the society's understanding of the Uses and Gratifications Theory by making distinctions between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained, when they expanded the concept of gratifications (Kink & Hess, 2008). A practical experience of this gratification sought is underscored in a discussion between the researcher and a World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) fan who has watched Roman Reigns in action most often. This particular wrestler has

on several occasions won his matches even against three other wrestlers. Gratification sought was made manifest in a fight between Roman Reigns and Chris Jericho with Kevin Owens in what they described as a handicap match. The prior expectation was that, as usual, Roman Reigns would win the match since he in some occasions defeated up to three people (Obiakor, 2019).

However, gratifications obtained may not be the actual expectation of the audience. Still on the discussion about Roman Reigns and his opponents, it was discovered that Roman Reigns was defeated; thereby depriving him of the opportunity of retaining the United States Championship. Hence, the gratifications sought in this case may be that of diversion or escape or relaxation (Obiakor, 2019). Unfortunately, the gratifications obtained here was that of disappointment and loss of interest. Therefore, it is evident that gratification sought at times competes with gratification obtained; eventually, this competition leaves the audience with the only option of obtaining whatever role the television plays for such an audience (Obiakor, 2019).

### **ISSUES UNDER STUDY**

Certain issues are taken to be lighter than the others while certain events have more relevance than the others. This statement is connected to the fact that the recall of such events may have something to do with the uses attached or the gratifications derived from the viewership of such event.

Meanwhile, certain events which took place within the time of this study, upon which the discussions with the respondents were based for the purpose of retrieval of certain responses, were highlighted. Such issues include: Fulani Herdsmen's invasion of COOU and the Vice-Chancellor's interview about the Herdsmen on Channels Television, Donald Trump's inauguration, peace keeping in Gambia, President Jammeh's exile, Nnamdi Kanu's trial, the Benue flooding and Operation Python Dance at Aba formed the focus of the study with which the Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU) members' news recall and utilization were tested.

Noteworthy is the fact that these issues were not studied in whole but were mentioned lightly during the course of the sessions to help diffuse the discussion process for the purpose of comprehension by the discussants.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using the census study. Census study gives the researcher opportunity of interacting with all the respondents. This method was chosen because the method enabled the researchers to get the required information from the respondents in an organized and participatory manner.

The SSANU of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) has a total number of 175 registered members. This information was made available by the chairman of SSANU, COOU Chapter, Mr. Gabriel Ejiofor. The number could be considered not to be too large and considerably manageable.

The study “Influence of Uses and Gratifications on Television News Recall Among Non-Teaching Staff of Universities” was conducted using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) has a total number of 175 members from where 105 were studied using the survey research method while the remaining 70 participants were studied using the FGD. The interview guide contained a total of 14 questions well-structured to capture the essence of the study as streamlined along the dictates of the research objectives while the research questionnaire contained a total of 13 question items structured to elicit the information that could provide empirical

answers to the research questions posed for the study covering both the demographic and thematic data of the respondents.

Given that the population of the respondents is manageable in number, in this case, all the respondents are qualified as SSANU members to participate in this study and therefore were considered appropriate to be studied since the researcher could handle the size of the entire population.

The researchers organized the participants into seven different groups of equal number of ten participants giving a total of 70. The decision above was guided by Nwodu (2017) who stated that FGD can best be conducted with 6-12 participants. The reason for this decision was based on the need to have a well-controlled group interview that can avail every discussant the desired opportunity to state his or her views in a clear and articulated language. The interview was conducted in different locations and campuses of the university with the three campuses well recognized. Of the 7 group interviews conducted, 3 groups were conducted in Igbariam campus of the university, 3 at the Uli campus and 1 at the Awka campus of the institution under study. All the group discussions lasted for 45 minutes each with follow-up questions and cross-pollination of ideas among the discussants. All the discussions were held during working days with the convenient time of the participants well respected.

**DATA PRESENTATION**

**Table1.** Respondents’ frequency of exposure to network news of preferred station

How frequently are you exposed to the network news of your select news station	Frequency	Percent
Frequently	25	23.8
Very frequently	57	54.2
Rarely	14	13.3
Very rarely	9	8.5
Total	105	100

The empirical data on frequency of exposure to major news hours, the table revealed that majority of the respondents are very frequently exposed to major news hours. The implication

of this is that the people are expected to have high level of message recall given their frequency of exposure as revealed above.

**Table2.** Respondents’ level of recall of network news by viewers?

What is respondents level of network news recall	Frequency	Percent
High	26	24.7
Very high	33	31.4
Moderate	18	17.1
Low	19	18.0
Very low	9	8.5
Total	105	100

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Table 2 above demonstrates that the respondents' level of exposure to network news of preferred stations is reasonably high, given

the reactions presented above. This means that the respondents have interest for information need satisfaction.

**Table 3.** Which type of viewers, recall news the most?

The type of viewers that recall news most	Frequency	Percent
Information seeker	45	42.8
Information/recreation seeker	17	16.1
Recreation seeker	12	11.4
Casual viewer	31	29.5
Total	105	100

The data above revealed that different kinds of viewers, recall media messages differently. Their level of message recall is basically controlled by the purpose for which they sought the message of media. From the table, mass media message recall is more pronounced among the information seekers and the casual

viewers, than what obtained in the information/recreation and recreation seekers. This finding agrees with the reactions from the discussants in the focus group discussion where the recreation seekers admitted paying less attention to details of the media they expose themselves to.

**Table 4.** Recreational purpose of media content exposure and message recall among respondents

Recreational purpose of media content exposure discourages message recall among respondents	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	54
No	25	24
Can't say	23	22
Total	105	100

From the information obtained in this table, the researchers had established that the recreational purpose of media content exposure discourages media message recall among the respondents to a significant extent. This was shown in the

response demonstrated above. The information in the above table was reflected in the finding from the FGD, as a reasonable majority of the discussants accepted not being able to recall what they watch in the media.

**Table 5.** Diversionary purpose of media content exposure and message recall among respondents

Diversionary purpose of media content exposure encourages message recall among respondents	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	10.5
No	76	72.4
Can't say	18	17.1
Total	105	100

The information from the above table has shown that diversionary purpose of media contents exposure does not encourage media message recall among the respondents. The above finding corroborates the information obtained from the focus group discussion where majority of the respondents admitted that they do not recall contents when they are watching for the sake of diversion.

major news hour of their preferred stations. During the Focus Group Discussions, it was observed that majority of the SSANU members frequently get exposed to networks news through television. One of the discussants in the group two said, "Without watching the TV for network news, I hardly know what is happening especially in politics. There is a television set in my office, and also in my house; so I always put on the generator especially when there is no light in my area".

### ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### Research Question One: What is the respondents' frequency of exposure to major news hour of preferred station?

This question sought to find out the frequency at which the SSANU members get exposed to

In his own words, another discussant in the seventh group said that with his position in SSANU, he ought to always be abreast of the daily happenings in the country. "My position in SSANU and as a lover of politics, I am always



exposed to the network news so as to be informed of the daily happenings in the country”, he said. He also said that light is never his problem as there is always light in his area. “We always have light even though I have my generator standby”. It is pertinent to also state that all of the members of the respondents have access to television with a majority having access to it in both at home and their offices. The import of this is that the SSANU members are well exposed to the television news, though at varying times depending on individual concerned.

### **Research Question Two: What is the respondents’ level of network news recall?**

This section sought to find out the level at which the respondents (discussants) recall network news; that is if they recall those news items they viewed through the television. During the Focus Groups, it was evident that majority of the SSANU members recall what they viewed from the television network news and that their recall rate is reasonable to the extent that they discuss news contents among their colleagues in the office the following day especially when the news content concerns them or related to their careers. This information was reflected in the survey data presented in table 1.

Another respondent in the same session also said that he views the television for network news but not always. “There is hardly light in my area, so generator is always my source of light. I do not always watch the television but whenever I do, I tune into the Channels television for the purpose of seeking information and I remember what I watched most of the time”.

A female discussant in group seven said that she hardly watches the television for network news; rather, it is for the purpose of watching movies from African Magic stations. According to her, “I devote more time to watching movies on African Magic than viewing the network news”. To her therefore, watching movies is a better option for recreation purpose and she hardly recalls the news items whenever she views them but recall movies because it is her area of interest. Based on this fact, it is evident that media content recall is a question of personal interest of the viewer which is controlled by the ability of such content to satisfy the gratification sought by the viewer.

### **Research Question Three: Which type of viewers’ recall news the most?**

It is important to state at this point that this study adopted the classification of viewers by

Gantz (1976) where television viewers were classified into the Information seekers, Recreation seekers, Information/Recreation seekers and the Casual viewers. This classification was based on the need for individual selection, exposure, recall and interpretation of media contents among the viewers. This section sought to find out among the above classes, viewers that recall news the most. During the FGDs, it was echoed that most of the SSANU members fall within the class of information seekers and casual viewers.

During the Focus Group Discussion in session three, a member in the FGD was of the view that his eagerness to be in the know of daily happenings in the world makes him get exposed to television network news. He said, “I watch the TV for information and I recall what I watched from the television because I use the information since I am in political leadership”.

Another female discussant in group six said she normally gets exposed to network news only when the husband is around. According to her, “my children normally tune into the Zee World, denying me the opportunity of getting exposed to network news”. She also said that whenever the husband is around, she watches the television for network news. In her words, “I remember what I watched from the network news whenever I watch the network news but not always”.

According to one of the male discussants from our group 7 at the Awka campus of the university, “I discuss media content that has relevance to the society or my personal interest. To me, it is a waste of time to indulge in explanation of what I have no interest in. I don’t watch wrestling and so, I cannot stay where it is being discussed”. Another discussant from group 3 was of the view that he cannot afford to crack his throat in putting an interpretation to football match played in Europe as that does not in any way suit his interest nor increase his income. This view was widely held among the discussants from other groups with interest at the top as the basic controller of message recall and interpretation.

### **Research Question Four: Does recreational purpose of media content exposure encourage or discourage message recall among respondents?**

Here, we are to consider the fourth research question which sought to ascertain if

recreational purpose of media content exposure encourages or discourages message recall. During the different sessions of Focus Group Discussions, it was noticed that recreational purpose does not encourage media content recall. This is because, not quite many of the SSANU members use TV news for recreation purpose.

During the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Focus Group Discussions, one of the female discussants said that she normally watches the television while in the office as there is a television set in her office. In her words, “I normally watch the television for news while in the office especially for recreation purpose; but I hardly watch the TV for news at home, I watch movies”. She also said that she recalls very few of the news stories she gathers from the television news report.

Also, another male discussant in session 2 said that absence of electricity in his area prevents him from watching the television for network news. “I only get exposed to the television for news when I am in the office especially when I am bored with my official work, I normally enter the next office for recreation purpose since there is a television set in that office”, he said. He also said that he recalls some of the news stories because he seeks information during the time for his recreation though not always.

**Research Question Five: Does diversionary purpose of media content exposure encourage or discourage message recall among respondents?**

This section sought to find out if the diversionary purpose of media content exposure encourages or discourages message recall. During the different sessions of the FGDs, it was gathered that diversionary motivations (Tension Release Needs: when an individual wants to escape or needs Diversion) does not encourage message recall. This finding correlates with earlier position held in Wilbur Schramm (1954) as cited in David (2016) who argued that there is a relationship between the amount of gratification that an individual expects to get out of a certain form of media and the amount of effort the individual would have to put in to get the desired gratification.

During the Focus Group Discussion in session three, one of the male discussants said that he watches the television for news both in the office and at home but for diversion purpose. According to him, “I watch the television

whenever I wish to divert my attention especially when the workload becomes much; I do not always recall the information I gather from the television news stories”.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The first research question posed for the study which sought to ascertain the respondents’ frequency of exposure to network news of preferred station revealed that the SSANU members were frequently exposed to network news of different preferred stations primarily to get informed on the events in town. This finding agrees with the finding made in Leo, Aniebo and Uduot (2016) which revealed that the youths in Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi are well exposed to radio. Since information rules the world as popularly quoted from Winston Churchill, it becomes clear that the SSANU members in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University get exposed primarily to television for information seeking. This is because, from the reactions and the responses of the discussants, it is evident that most SSANU members need information because of their levels in the civil service and they get it primarily through the television.

This is in line with what Nwabueze (2014, p. 63) called voluntary exposure. Voluntary exposure according to Nwabueze (2014) is a deliberate and selective act whereby the audience decided to expose themselves to particular media content, and as such, there is likelihood for content utilization. In this case, the audience voluntarily exposed himself to the television without any persuasion or force.

However, some of the discussants as found out during the FGDs said that they watch the television even without wishing to do so. This is what Nwabueze (2014, p. 63) called involuntary exposure. In this case, the audience is captive. The audience do not control or determine the choice of channel of television or station in other words, the programme of event on the television or the content to be exposed to.

From the foregone therefore, it is evident that the members of Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University get exposed to network news frequently through the television. This is supportive to the postulation of Nwabueze (2014, p. 63) when he said that several factors are responsible for determining audience exposure to mass media. Hence,

Emenyonu (1998) cited in Ekanem (2006) noted that the major factors are broadly classified into demographic factors (education, age, income, occupation, social status) and psychographic (interests, nature of content, habit) factors.

On the second research question which sought to ascertain the respondents' level of recall of network news, it was found that respondents have reasonable level of media content recall. This was equally corroborated by the responses obtained from the survey research conducted in respect to the research question where majority of SSANU members selected for the survey aspect admitted that they recall what they expose themselves to. This finding disagrees with the earlier finding by Whiting and Williams (2013) which revealed that entertainment media users recall media contents more than every other media consumer. The researchers stated that the entertainment media consumer strictly use what they watch to apply to real life situations and that forces them to sometimes imitate the characters they watch by participating in the media exposure. Recall according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English is the ability to remember something that one has learned or experienced. At this stage, the researcher sought to find out the extent to which the viewers' recall what was viewed through the television especially as it concerns network news.

Considering the third research question which investigated the type of viewers that recall news the most, the empirical data as well as the qualitative discourse revealed that among the viewers- information seekers, information/recreation seekers, recreation seekers and casual viewers, information seekers recall news the most. This finding differs from the one obtained in Grellhesi, *et al* (2012) where it was found that accessibility was rated highest among the ten sampled uses and gratifications of telephone messages among undergraduates. The difference in reactions above may have been occasioned by the difference in age and occupations of the respondents in the two studies.

Meanwhile, information seekers could involve educational perspective while recreation seekers could also involve escape or diversion and entertainment aspects. This finding agrees with the views of the proponents of uses and gratifications theory of mass communication which maintained that the people expose themselves selectively to different media

contents based on the purpose for which the contents is ready to provide to their welfare (Agbanu, 2014; Nwabueze, 2014). The finding also corroborates an earlier position held in Agbanu (2013, p. 170) where he argued that different individuals retain only those media messages that they choose to retain and throw away others not useful to them.

Meanwhile, the discussants especially those seeking information do remember the information they gather from such exposure to the television and this is always as they said that information is the major motivation for exposure to the television. As for the casual viewers, they said that they remember though not quite often. This shows that the major gratification sought by the SSANU members in getting exposed to the television for network news is information. And the seekers of information through the television recall news the most, followed by the casual viewers who get exposed to the television involuntarily.

In answering the research question four, some of the discussants said that they hardly get exposed to network news except whenever they are bored. The totality of the points made as found out is that exposure to network news in particular and television in general is for the purpose of recreation. This is in line with the postulation of McQuail, Blumer and Brown (1972) in Asemah (2011) that people choose what they want to watch, read or listen to and different media compete to satisfy individual's needs. They categorize the needs as diversion needs, surveillance needs, individual psychology needs, etc., while McQuail (1983) identifies information, entertainment, integration /social integration and personal identity as the reasons for media exposure.

Recreational purpose of media content exposure does not encourage message recall among respondents, both empirical and quantitative data support the view that it does not (see likert table). This finding was not in agreement with those of Cheng and Lee (2011) who found that the recreational media use encourages message recall among media audience.

Meanwhile, some of the discussants pointed out that they recall but not always. This view negates that research finding by Kekembo (2012) who pays high premium attention to edutainment where both educational and entertainment function of the media were articulated in one programme to attract attention

and patronage form the audience. This is because they hardly get exposed to the television for the purpose of seeking information but for the purpose of entertainment. Some others fall under the category of involuntary exposure and they hardly recall; and when they do, the level of recall is not deep. For those who seek information during their recreation, they actually recall the message they gather from their exposure to network news though not often. Therefore, recreational motivations do not encourage recall since those who seek information during recreation recall easily but those who do not seek information do not.

Finally, the fifth research question which investigated whether diversionary purpose of media content exposure encourages or discourages message recall among respondents, it was found that diversionary purpose of media exposure does not encourage message recall (see tables 5 and 6 for details). The reason, as given by the participants in the focus group discussion for this is that, at the diversionary level, the media are playing a role best described as “welcomed distraction” (Ko, 2002) from a mind disturbing issue that forced the respondents to engage in such media exposure.

Therefore, as stated before, majority of the SSANU members who expose themselves to the television for diversion purpose do not recall what they watched from such exposure, while very few of them do recall same. This shows that diversionary motivations do not encourage media content recall.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings from this study have provided more knowledge on related studies as well as opened up new areas for further studies. The study, apart from providing insight into the fact that listening to network news is very crucial in the life of a civil servant, highlighted the importance attached to provision of television sets with cable networks to enable workers either get exposed to television news for information purpose or entertainment purpose as the case may be. This study has also revealed the concept of welcomed distraction in the context of media content use among media audience in the case of casual viewers who are addressed as the captured audience.

The study therefore concluded as follows: That the members of the Senior Staff Association of

Nigerian Universities (SSANU) in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) frequently have exposure to network news of preferred station; That there is a high level of network news recall by the members of Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU); That of those who are exposed to television for network news, information seekers recall news the most, followed by the casual viewers; That recreational motivations do not encourage media content recall; That the diversionary purpose of exposure to media contents does not encourage media content recall.

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