ABSTRACT
            A survey of 320 employees of Honeywell, Inc., was
conducted to collect data on interactions between employees'.levels
of integration into the organizational hierarchy, amount and type of
employee newsletter reading, and purposes for reading newsletters
(keeping track of friends, finding out what was going on in the
ccmpany, improving one's advancement possibilities, monitoring
changes in management perscnnel). Of the 320 employees polled, 95
supplied usable data. There was only limited support for the
hypotheses tested, with weak evidence supporting the idea that
employees who were highly integrated into the organization tended to
have higher overall readership of the newsletter than employees less
highly integrated into the organizational system. Similarly, there
was only partial support for the hypothesis that a higher level of
functional integration into the organization correlated with higher
readership. The least amount of support existed for the hypothesis
that higher integration in the sociability network correlated with
higher readership of newsletter content dealing with the sociability
network. The data did offer scme support for the theoretical model
used; there were numerous, fairly strong relationships between
purposes, readership, and level of career aspiration. It was proposed
that the psychological aspects of integration within the organization
were useful in predicting employee purposes for reading company
newsletters. (RL)

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Public Relations Division

TOWARDS EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS:
A USES AND GRATIFICATIONS APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER READERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Employee communicators are facing ever greater problems in reaching their employee publics. In the past, employee communication was viewed as almost strictly a one-way process: downward communication from management to employees. Management used employee communication channels to serve its own purposes: to inform employees on important company issues, to build good will toward the organization, to develop a homogenous social network among employees, and the like.

In recent years, however, employee needs have become a central consideration in employee communication. Criti argue that no longer should management use internal communication media "to tell employees what they need to know" (in regard to management's purposes). Rather, employee communication channels, such as employee newsletters, should be used to fulfill the purposes of employees (which may differ from the purposes of management).

Our study is an attempt to determine the purposes employees have for reading an employee newsletter, what the factors are that generate these purposes, and how these purposes relate to actual newsletter readership behavior.

Since we are interested in employee communication from the perspective of employees, we have taken an individualistic, or uses and gratifications, approach in designing a theoretical framework for our study.

Uses and gratification research in mass and organizational communication can be traced back to the 1920's, with early studies of the audiences of radio serials. In the 1940's, the research in this area took on an empirical flavor, with studies by Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1942, 1944, 1949)[1], Herzog (1942)[2], Suchman (1942)[3], Wolfe and Fiske (1949)[4] and Berelson (1949)[5].

There has been a revival of this empirical approach in recent times. Attesting to this are studies by Johnstone (1974)[6], Peled and Katz (1973)[7], Kline, Miller and Morrison (1974)[8], McLeod and Becker (1974)[9], McGuire (1974)[10], Rosengren (1974)[11] and McQuail and Gurevitch (1974)[12].

Blumler and Katz in, The Uses of Mass Communications (1974)[13], provide the most definitive and comprehensive single volume on the uses and gratification approach. Contributors to the volume generally posit that the uses and gratifications approach analyses mass communication from the perspective of the individual audience member, considering the various functions the mass media might serve. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch state the uses and gratification model is concerned with "1) the social and psychological origins of 2) needs, which lead to 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."[14]

A variety of communication research questions have been empirically investigated using this model. Kline and Morrison, for instance, explored the relationship between audience needs and media use.[15] They found that the type of medium chosen in highly dependent on the type of information needed (e.g. individuals who need information about family planning are likely to use different information sources than individuals who need information about a political campaign).[16]

The basic assumption of the uses and gratification model, that the
individual has certain information needs and that he/she attempts to
gratify these needs, raises many other questions that are of practical
importance in an organizational setting. For example, what role do the
media play in gratifying the needs of audience members? What are the
conditions under which different channels tend to operate? Which channels
of communication are available to the individual? What types of content
are in these different channels or media? What are the key goals of the
communicator in an organizational milieu?

The present study is, however, not directly aimed at finding answers
to the above questions. Its research focus is the determination of what
the factors are that lead different types of employees to have different
patterns of readership of organizational newsletters. This is one of the
key practical problems faced by an employee communicator who uses a
newsletter to reach the employee public. As noted earlier, there is now
a growing concern in the business world about the effectiveness of employee
newsletters and their ability to reach their intended audiences.

This concern is illustrated by the lamentation of the Director of
Public Relations for a major insurance company that on occasion an employee
newsletter may be widely read by certain groups, but not by those to which
it is primarily aimed at.[17] At other times, the major employee target
audience may have high overall readership, but not of the particular
messages that management most wishes to communicate.

Also indicative of this growing concern about employee newsletter
effectiveness is the succint observation of the vice-president of a U.S.
public utility, Roy Foltz.[18] He stressed the importance of determining
"to what extent information needs vary by location, job, language, etc."[19]

A pilot study at that utility had indicated that of "twenty-four internal communications media, one of the most important was the employee newsletter."[20] The 1978 annual report of that same utility had also stated that "of critical importance to employees is the degree to which they are kept informed and enabled to understand the increasingly complicated issues with which the business is confronted and how various company functions inter-relate in dealing with them."[21]

A number of past studies have examined some of the factors that might be responsible for newsletter readership differences among employee groups. Suzzanne Dunaway in her 1969 thesis looked at readership patterns of organizational newsletters and found few differences among employee types and readership of the employee newsletters.[22] However, she looked at only overall readership, not at particular types of content in the newsletters. It is quite likely that because of different purposes different types of employees could have for reading a newsletter, newsletter readership might vary by type of content.

In fact, in a study done by Custom Research Inc. (CRI), in 1976 for Honeywell, Inc., researchers looked at readership patterns of a Honeywell newsletter and found indications of readership differences across different types of content.[23] They found, for example, that employee status (i.e. whether an employee works part-time or full-time), as well as participation in an employee stock option program tended to be associated with readership of different types of content (e.g. full-time status was positively associated with readership of financial articles and human interest stories).[24]

The present study attempts to examine whether and how factors similar to those in the CRI study lead to differential patterns of employee newsletter readership, both overall and across different types of content.

The factors central to this study are length of employment in, position in the decision-making hierarchy of, and level of career aspiration in an organization. As will be more fully explained later, each of these factors is an indicator of an employee's level of integration into the social structure of an organization. The study hypothesizes that an employee who is more highly integrated into the social structure of an organization will tend to have a greater interest in surveying the general (on-goings) of that organization, consequently leading to higher readership of that organization's company newsletter (than an employee who is less highly integrated into that organization).

The concept of integration has long been identified by organizational and management researchers as a useful indicator for the study of employee behaviors. Douglas McGregor (1960),[25] Douglas T. Hall and Edward E. Lawler (1970)[26] and Chris Argyris (1964)[27] and John H. Barret (1970)[28] have used different approaches to illustrate how integration can be used to achieve organizational ends; including effective employee communications. Implicit in their definitions or descriptions of organizational integration is the fact that it makes the employee take an outward perspective and thus realize that his success in the organization depends on the success of the organization as a group. Douglas McGregor, for instance, defined integration as "the creation of conditions such that the members of the organization can achieve their own goals best by directing their efforts toward the success of the enterprise."[29] This "outward-looking" quality or characteristic of an integrated employee, we suggest would make him have greater interest in reading the newsletter since it will make him more willing or desirous to scan the general goings-on in the organization.

Theoretical Model

The theoretical model designed for this study is an adaptation of the uses and gratifications model. The model as adapted is concerned with:

1) The social and psychological origins of an individual's 2) purposes for 3) use of the media.[30]

This model has been designed to examine only certain parts of the total uses and gratifications picture because: 1) it is impractical to attempt to examine (in a single study) all the elements of any communication situation; and 2) the research questions giving rise to the study deal not with the effects, consequences or gratifications of media use, but rather with the motivations for differential media exposure patterns.

Even more important, this study will not attempt to determine the "needs" that an individual has for using the mass media. Rather, it will examine the "purposes" that he has for using those media. The reasons for this approach are 1) every member of the audience has the same basic "needs," and it is extremely difficult to isolate which needs are accentuated in any given situation (Elliot, 1974)[31], 2) social and psychological needs are very difficult to measure empirically (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch 1974)[32]; 3) according to the uses and gratification approach as laid out by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974)[33], needs seem to bear little direct relationship with the common uses and gratifications dependent variable, media exposure (Elliot, 1974)[34]; and 4) it is difficult and hazardous to attempt to say that a particular need is _the_ reason an individual uses a mass medium. Generally, there may be a whole set of needs, all interacting, that gives rise to one's use of the mass media. Furthermore, it may be difficult for an individual to identify verbally the needs that he fulfills when he uses the mass media (and it may be even more dangerous to infer from observation

THEORETICAL MODEL

Social and Psychological ————————➤ Purposes ————————➤ Media Use

Origins

what an individual's needs are). Instead, an individual may be more capable
of providing the reasons why he uses the mass media (i.e. his purposes for
doing so).

This study, therefore, employs the concept of "purposes" as an
intervening link between the social and psychological factors that lead to
differential use of the mass media (see model above).

In his dissertation, Leo Jeffres (1975)[35] applied this type of approach
to a study of audience use of the mass media. He found systematic
differences in the purposes individuals had for using the mass media.
Jeffres' approach views the audience member as an active seeker of infor-
mation.[36] He or she purposively attends to, or avoids, the media. This
rationale is based, in part, on Lazarsfeld's concept of selective exposure
(1948).[37] Here, the individual tends to purposively (both consciously and
unconsciously) attend to or avoid, certain types of information because of
certain psychological motivations (one of which may include whether he
expects the information to fulfill his purposes).

As can be seen, the rationale implicit in the preceding theoretical
model is based on a combination of the prevailing social-psychological
theories of human cognition and behavior. According to cognitive theorists
(Festinger, 1957),[38] there are a variety of social and psychological elements
that, through either independent action or interaction, produce a set of
conflicts, needs, drives and other stimulus forces within the individual.
These forces motivate the individual to act in some way in order to fulfill
his needs, satisfy his drives or resolve the conflicts he faces.

Thus, one can conclude that the individual uses the mass media in order
to satisfy some socially or psychologically stimulated motivation. In an
organization, an individual may have a variety of motivation for reading

an employee newsletter. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch point out that as of yet, these psychological motivations are little understood. "For example, what [psychological motivations], if any, are created by routine work on an assembly line, and which forms of media exposure will satisfy them?"[39] In this study, we propose that integration is one such general motivation; that the higher an employee's level of integration into an organization's social system, the higher the employee's motivation to purposively seek information about that organization, and that consequently this leads to higher use of company communication media (e.g. readership of the employee newsletter).

At the research level the preceding proposition can be translated into the following testable model (see page 10):

An employee's level of integration into an organization's social system leads him to ac tuate certain purposes for reading that organization's employee newsletters.

To test this model, several indicators of each of the model's key variables have been identified. First, we have identified three major factors as indicators of an employee's level of integration into an organizations' social structure. These indicators are an employee's position in the decision-making hierarchy of, length of employment in and level of career aspirations in an organization.

An employee's position is a designation of his role in an organization. An employee occupying a position higher in the decision-making hierarchy tends to have a more vital role in the general functional maintenance of an organization than an employee lower in position (i.e. an employee in a higher position is more highly integrated functionally).

Research Model

| Relationship to an organization | → | Purposes for seeking information | → | Newsletter readership |

Integration

Purposes

Newsletter Readership

| Position in the decision-making hierarchy | + → | To survey the system functions at Honeywell | + → | Company news |

| Level of career aspirations | + → | To survey the system functions at Honeywell | + → | Company news |

| Length of employment | + → | To survey the Honeywell sociability network | + → | Employee social-relations content |

Level of career aspirations, on the other hand, indicates the degree to which an employee desires to have a part in the functional activities of an organization. An employee with higher aspirations tends to have a greater desire to have an important part in an organization than an employee with lower aspirations (e.g. an employee with higher aspirations is more highly integrated functionally).

Last, length of employment has been identified as an indicator of an employee's integration into the sociability network of an organization. Generally, the longer a person is employed in an organization, the greater the likelihood that he will develop more and closer interpersonal relationships with his fellow employees at that organization (i.e. an individual who has been employed longer tends to be more highly integrated into the employee sociability network). Conceptually, then, each of these indicators shows the degree to which an employee is either functionally or socially integrated into an organization because of social and psychological factors.

Each of these types of integration then leads an employee to place more or less importance on various motivations, or purposes, for reading an organization's newsletters. These purposes fall into two general areas.

First, an employee might read a newsletter in order to survey the system functions of that organization (e.g. policy changes, new products and services). An employee with a higher level of functional integration in the organization would tend to place greater importance on this purpose for reading the newsletter than an employee with a lower level of integration into the sociability network of an organization.

Second, an employee might read a newsletter in order to survey the sociability network of an organization.

If an employee has a higher level of integration into both the functional and the sociability networks of an organization, he would tend to place greater importance on both these purposes for reading the newsletter than an employee who has a lower level of integration.

Hypotheses

Based on the above discussion, we have formulated the following theoretical and research hypotheses for this study:

Our theoretical hypothesis states that a person who has a higher level of integration into an organization will tend to have a higher use of that organization's communications media than a person who has a lower level of integration into that organization. Because of his more intimate level of involvement, the more highly integrated individual tends to be more motivated to survey the functional activities of the organization and to survey the sociability network of that organization.

It must be noted, however, that although each of these types of purposes is theorized to be, in large part, a product of an employee's level of integration into an organization, they are somewhat constrained by the types of content that are available in an organization's newsletter. Research hypotheses:

1) An employee who is more highly integrated into the Honeywell organization will tend to have higher overall readership of the Honeywell employee newsletters than an employee who is less highly integrated into the social system.

2) An employee who has a higher level of functional integration into the Honeywell organization will tend to have higher readership of newsletter content dealing with Honeywell system functions than an employee who is less integrated functionally.

3) An employee who has a higher level of integration into the Honeywell sociability network will tend to have higher readership of newsletter content dealing with the sociability network than an employee who is less integrated.

Although not stated explicitly in hypothesis form, this study will examine the relationship between the intervening variable, purposes for reading the ne letters, and the independent and dependent variables. An examination of these relationships is essential to a complete testing of the theoretical model employed in this study (i.e. a uses and gratifications approach, which assumes that mass media use is purposive).

Specifically, we will examine the relationships of the dependent and independent variables with the following four purposes:

1) Reading the newsletters to keep track of what one's friends at Honeywell are doing;

2) To find out what is going on in the company;

3) To improve one's advancement possibilities by learning more about Honeywell; and

4) To keep track of changes in management personnel.

METHODOLOGY

To gather our data, we employed a sample survey technique (using a mail questionnaire) and a media content analysis. Between January and March of 1979, we conducted a content analysis of several newsletters in the Twin Cities (Minnesota) area. From this analysis we developed a set of exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories for classifying the content of those news-letters under study. Those categories include: personnel announcements,

company financial news, content dealing with employee benefits and news about company products and services.

With this set of categories in hand, it was then possible to provide a set of content types for use in the readership questionnaire designed for the sample survey.

We then contacted each of the organizations included in the content analysis study, and chose Honeywell, Inc., because it offered the most favorable climate for a theoretically based study. The Honeywell newsletters under study are The Circulator and The World, which are distributed via newspaper stands free of charge to all employees.

We conducted an informal pretest on employee readership to get in touch with employee feelings about the newsletters. Face-to-face interviews with employees indicated that: 1) newsletter readership was generally high; and 2) many employees regarded the newsletter favorably.

The population for this study was defined as all Honeywell employees in the Twin Cities area--a total of approximately 17,600 employees. Our sample of 320 employees was considered a practical sample size for the mail-distributed questionnaire study. To draw the sample, we used a systematic random sample procedure. (Only currently employed staff members in the Twin Cities area were selected.)

The questionnaires were mailed out in mid-May of 1979. A total of 95 questionnaires, representing a return rate of 35%, were returned. The analysis that follows is based on this final figure.

Descriptive Findings

Employees who responded to our survey tended to occupy relatively high positions in the Honeywell decision-making hierarchy (i.e. two-thirds held managerial, professional or supervisory positions). A little less than half of the respondents had relatively high career aspirations (i.e. 40 percent placed a high degree of importance on advancement in their jobs). Nearly all the respondents were full-time employees.

While our study seems to oversample management and undersample labor, this is not particularly the case for Honeywell in the Twin Cities. Honeywell locates its executive offices in the Twin Cities; thus, there are a proportionately large number of managerial personnel in the employee population.

Compared to other organizations, however, this sample does include a relatively high proportion of employees from high positions (and who are fairly well educated). We might, therefore, expect newsletter readership to be high generally, as compared to readership of newsletters in other organizations. In fact, the data show a total of 72 percent of employees reported reading every issue of The Circulator, a localized weekly newsletter, and 52 percent reported reading every issue of The World, an international, company-wide newsletter (see tables 1 and 2, page 16).

While overall readership was fairly high, a review of table 3 (page 17) shows considerable variability in the amounts of each type of content read. Viewership of pictures and readership of job-related content were the highest readership categories (i.e. in any single issue of the newsletters, 59 percent of the employees looked at all the pictures, and 68 percent read all the job-related stories).

Table 1

Newsletter Readership Within a Single Issue

Readership	Newsletter	
	The Circulator	The World
Read most	38%	25%
Scan/read certain things	62%	75%
	100% N = 95	100% N = 91

Table 2

Newsletter Readership Across Issues

Readership	Newsletter	
	The Circulator	The World
Four times a month	72%	XXXXXX
Three times	10%	XXXXXX
Twice	10%	52%
Once	08%	37%
Never	00%	11%
	100% N = 94	100% N = 93

Table 3

Newsletter Readership Within any Single Issue

Readership	Type of Content						
	Personnel Announcements	Vital Statistics	Company Financial	Employee Investment	Products/Services	Company News	Job Related
All stories	20%	21%	28%	28%	20%	22%	68%
Most	39	33	38	35	55	56	21
A few	38	32	29	33	25	20	10
None	02	14	05	04	00	01	01
	100% N=94	100% N=94	100% N=94	100% N=95	100% N=95	100% N=94	100% N=94

Readership	Benefits	Social Activities	Announcements of Social Events	Department Features	Employee Features	Pictures	Want Ads
All stories	47%	26%	21%	17%	22%	59%	32%
Most	38	41	34	37	39	36	37
A few	12	28	38	44	38	05	29
None	03	04	07	02	01	00	02
	100% N=94	100# N=95	100% N=95	100% N=95	100% N=95	100% N=94	100% N=94

Table 4

(Second Factor Analysis)

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix After Rotation
With Kaiser Normalization

Item	Factors (i.e. content category scales)*			
	1--Employee Social-Relations Content	2--Company News	3--Job-Related Content	
19	.65511	-.17782	.31835	(Personnel announcements)
20	.62106	.08232	.26919	(Emp. Vital statistics)
21	.05288	.69117	.15684	(Company financial news)
22	.09489	.68787	.27268	(Employee invest. program)
23	.08347	.75049	.14901	(Products and services)
24	.35192	.63795	.05379	(Gen. company news)
25	.15048	.33975	.57632	(Job-related news)
26	.32220	.23725	.81998	(Benefits news)
27	.89798	.03162	.11320	(Announcements of emp. social events)
28	.69138	.05408	.12651	(Employee social activities)
29	.57167**	.53313**	.12975	(Dept. features)
30	.58632**	.34218**	.15507	(Individual empl. features)
31	.52582	.22116	.03524	(Pictures)
32	.42273	.05914	.04016	(Want Ads)

*All scores are positive.

**These items had relatively high loadings on more than one factor, so they were dropped from the scales.

At the other extreme, department features was the lowest readership category, with 17 percent of the employees reading all the features in any single issue of the newsletters.

As we stated earlier, we developed several readership categories based on an earlier content analysis. To test the validity of these content categories, we conducted two factor analyses of the readership data (table 4). The first analysis revealed that when an employee reports reading one part of the newsletters regularly, he tends to report reading other parts with the same frequency. The second analysis suggested that when readership is measured within a single issue (amount read), the factors are grouped into three major content categories. They are: 1) employee social-relations content, 2) company news; and 3) job-related content. These categories not only supported our earlier content classification scheme, but also supported Grunig's findings in his study of employee communication. Grunig found that newsletter readership generally fell into three categories: administrative content, research content and employee content.[40] Two of these general categories, employee content and administrative content, roughly correspond to the employee-social relations content and company news content categories in our study. Grunig's third category, research content, related mainly to news of technical programs in the research institution he studied.[41] This category would also be considered as "company news" in our own study.

For our study, we employed the three above content categories (i.e. company news, employee social-relations content and job-related content) as readership scales.

Readership of job-related content is the highest of the three scales, with almost two-thirds of the respondents reporting high readership of this category (i.e. two-thirds read all the job-related content in any single issue of the newsletters). About one-third of the respondents reported high readership of employee social-relations content. Lowest readership was reported for company news, with a quarter of the respondents falling into the high readership category of this scale.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

An examination of table 5 (page 21) suggests that integration is a relatively poor predictor of overall newsletter reader-ship: none of the correlations between our indicators of integration and overall readership is greater than $r=.10$. Similarly, integration seems to be a poor predictor of readership of particular types of content. The strongest correlations between any of our indicators of integration and readership is $r=-.44$ (between position in the decision-making hierarchy and readership of employee social-relations content). Most of the correlations, however, are less than $r=.20$.

A review of table 6 (page 23), which includes data about our inter-vening variable, purposes, paints a slightly different picture, however. This table shows that while two of the indicators of integration we used in our study--position in the decision-making hierarchy and length of employment--seem to be largely unrelated to employee purposes for reading the newsletter, a third indi-cator--level of career aspirations--is moderately related to several purposes.

Table 5

Newsletter Readership by Level of Integration

		Integration	
Readership	Position	Level of Career Aspirations	Length of Employment
Overall	+ -.10	+ +.03	+ +.06
Company News	+ +.08	+ * +.22	no prediction +.03
Employee Social-Relations	no prediction * -.44	no prediction * +.21	+ +.05
Job-related Content	no prediction -.04	no prediction +.16	no prediction * +.30

Key: Table is read: predicted relationship/Pearson correlation found

*These findings were significant at the .05 level.

Position in the decision-making hierarchy is related to only a single indicator of an employee's purpose for reading the newsletters. An employee lower in position tends to place greater importance on reading the newsletters to keep track of what his friends at the company are doing than an employee higher in position. Controlling for the sex of the respondents, however, eliminates this relationship, suggesting that women tend to have a special interest beyond job position in reading about employee social relations.

Similarly, controlling for the sex of the respondent largely eliminates the relationship between length of employment and reading the newsletters to find out what is going on in the company.

Level of career aspirations, however, is related to several of the
study's indicators of purposes for readership. First, an employee with
higher career aspirations tends to place greater importance on reading
to improve his advancement possibilities by learning more about the company
than an employee with lower career aspirations. Secondly, an employee
with higher career aspirations tends to place greater importance on reading
to keep track of changes in management and to find out what is going on in
the company generally than an employee with lower career aspirations.

These findings support our rationale that the "outward-looking"
quality of highly integrated employees does tend to heighten their interest
in reading the company newsletters.

The data regarding purposes and the dependent variable, readership,
show numerous moderately strong, positive relationships. First, as table 7 (page 23)
shows, the strongest correlation is that between reading the newsletters to
keep track of friends at the company, and actual readership of employee
social-relations content (r = +.52). In contrast, we find our weakest
correlation (= +.15) between reading to keep track of one's friends at the
company and readership of company news. This suggests that newsletter
readership is purposive, and not a result of chance occurrence.

Reading the newsletters for the above purposes correlates moderately
to readership of job-related content (r = +.34) and overall readership
(r = +.37).

Reading the newsletters to find out what is going on in the company is
also moderately related to overall readership (r = +.42), while it is only
weakly related to readership of social-relations content.

Table 6

Purposes by Level of Integration

	Integration		
Purposes	Position in Decision-making Hierarchy	Level of Career Aspirations	Length of Employment
Keep track of friends	-.31 *	+.14	+.06
Find out what is going on	+.03	+.18 *	+.19 *
Improve adv. possibilities	-.10	+.44 *	-.07
Keep track of manage. changes	-.04	+.31 *	+.03

Key: Figures reported are Pearson correlation found.

*These findings are significant at the .05 level.

Table 7

Purposes For Newsletter Readers

Readership	Keep Track of Friends	Find Out What Is Going On	Improve Advancement Possibilities	Keep Track of Management Changes
Overall	+.37 *	+.42 *	+.28 *	+.30 *
Company News	+.15	+.40 *	+.34 *	+.46 *
Employee Social- Relations Content	+.52 *	+.26 *	+.22 *	+.33 *
Job-Related Content	+.34 *	+.45 *	+.26 *	+.39 *

Key: Figures reported are Pearson correlations found.

Such a relationship indicates that an employee who reads the newsletters to find out generally what is going on in the company is more interested in surveying the system, or business, functions of that company, rather than the sociability network.

In support of this conclusion, the data show that an employee who places greater importance on reading the newsletters to find out what is going on in the company also tends to have higher readership of company news $(r = +.40)$ than an employee who places less importance on this purpose. Interestingly, the employee who reads to find out what is going on also tends to have higher readership of job-related content $(r = +.45)$ than employees who place little importance on this purpose. Again, this result probably stems from the fact that an employee who reads the newsletters to find out what is going on seems to be reading them in a functional or utilitarian fashion. The employee who reads with this purpose in mind also places less importance on reading the newsletters to keep track of his friends $(r = +.25)$. Apparently, one group of employees tends to read the newsletters to survey the sociability network of the organization, while another group tends to read them to survey the functional or business aspects of the organization. The data also show that those employees who place greater importance on reading the newsletters to either improve their advancement possibilities or to keep track of changes in management personnel tend to have higher readership of company news $(r = +.34, r = +.46)$ than those who place less importance on these purposes. Furthermore, the correlations between these purposes and readership of company news are stronger than correlations between these purposes and any other types of content. This finding indicates that the readership behavior of the employees in this study is in fact goal-directed or purposive.

Summary

In general, then, the data provide only limited support for our hypotheses. We find only weak and partial evidence to support our hypothesis that an employee who is more highly integrated into the Honeywell organization will tend to have higher overall readership of the Honeywell employee newsletters than an employee who is less highly integrated into the social system.

Similarly, we find only partial evidence to support our hypothesis tha. n employee who has a higher level of functional integration into the Honeywell organization will tend to have higher readership of newsletter content dealing with Honeywell system functions than an employee who is less integrated functionally.

Last, we find the least amount of evidence to support our hypothesis that an employee who has a higher level of integration into the Honeywell sociability network will tend to have higher readership of newsletter content dealing with the sociability network than an employee who is less integrated.

On the other hand, the data do in fact suggest some support for our theoretical model. For example, we find numerous, fairly strong relationships between purposes, the intervening variable, and readership, the dependent variable, as well as level of career aspirations, an independent variable. (See diagram 1, page 26.)

We offer four possible explanations for these results.

First, our intervening variable, purposes, may have been a poor conceptual link between the independent and dependent variables (integration and readership). Such a conclusion would lend support to criticisms of the uses and gratifications approach (Elliot, 1974) that internal mental states

Diagram 1

| Integration | $\xrightarrow{\;/\!/\;}$ | Purposes | $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ | Readership. |

Position $\xrightarrow{\;/\!/\;}$ Purposes

Length of
employment $\xrightarrow{\;/\!/\;}$ Purposes

Level of career $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Read newsletters $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Readership of company news
aspirations   to improve one's
                      advancement
                      possibilities

                      Read newsletters $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Readership of employee
                      to keep track of   social-relations content
                      friends·at
                      Honeywell

                      Read newsletters $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Overall readership
                      to find out what $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Readership of company news
                      is going on in
                      the company $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Readership of job-related.
                                                  content

Key: $\xrightarrow{\;/\!/\;}$ Indicates no relationship found

      $\xrightarrow{\;+\;}$ Indicates positive relationship found

and processes are poor predictors of media behavior differences.[42] If such a criticism were true, however, we would not expect to find that purposes are significantly related to one of our indicators of the independent variable--level of career aspirations--as well as newsletter readership of company news. (A partial correlation analysis supports this interpretation.)

Furthermore, we would not expect to find that the indicators of purposes are consistently related to readership of most types of content.

A second, and more plausible, explanation, is that position in the decision-making hierarchy and length of employment were poor indicators of integration. If we accept this explanation, however, we must also implicitly accept the rationale that 1) employees higher in the decision-making hierarchy do not occupy a more central role, or position, in the organization, and 2) longer-term employees are no more involved in the organization than shorter-term employees.

Rather, we suggest that position in the decision-making hierarchy and length of employement are measures of a different type of integration than level of career aspirations. Position and length of employment do seem to be valid measures of centrality to, or structural integration in, an organization. Level of career aspirations, on the other hand, seems to be a measure of an employee's perceived closeness to, or psychological integration in, an organization.

Structural integration, then, seems to be largely unrelated to an employee's purposes for reading and consequent readership of a newsletter. Psychological integration, on the other hand, appears to be moderately related to purposes and readership.

We suspect that these relationships may be due to the fact that structural integration would have more influence on formal, or required, job-related tasks, while psychological integration would seem to have more impact on voluntary behavior, such as newsletter readership.

An examination of the data regarding several of our test factors also supports our conclusion that psychological integration plays a greater role in determining newsletter readership than structural integration. For example, the data show a positive relationship between readership of employee social-relations content and the length of time an employee plans to stay with Honeywell. (While actual length of employment is unrelated to readership of employee social-relations content.)

Assuming that an employee's employment plans are an indicator of pscyologically motivated integration, this would be further evidence that the psychological origins of integration play a greater role in predicting newsletter readership than the structural origins.

To enhance this predictive power, additional indicators of psychological integration are needed. Loyalty to the organization, plans for future employment, attitudes toward the organization (e.g. an employee of Honeywell may be more or less favorable toward its production of war goods, consequently having different readership patterns of the employee newsletters) all might affect an employee's readership of an employee newsletter.

CONCLUSION

Our interpretation of the data suggests that the uses and gratifications approach to employee newsletter readership is a valid and fruitful one. While not all aspects of integration are useful in predicting employee

purposes for reading the newsletters, the psychological aspects do meet with
some success.

Even more important, it appears that purposes are a valuable link
between readership and the psychological motivations for that readership.

We offer these conclusions as a defense of the uses and gratifications
approach. While critics such as Elliot[43](1974) and Dembo[44](1972) argue that
media use is basically not purposive, our evidence suggests that it is.
Additionally, our results suggest that we can identify these purposes as
well as the forces underlying them. Consequently, we may be able to predict
and explain differences in newsletter readership.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we identified four basic types of purposes that
employees have for reading company newsletters: 1) to find out what is going
on in the organization; 2) to keep track of what one's friends in that
organization are doing; 3) to keep track of changes in management personnel;
and 4) to improve one's advancement possibilities by learning more about
that organization.

These readership purposes are translatable to a more abstract level,
suggesting two major types of information-seeking motivations: 1) the
individual's motivation to connect with (survey) the functional (task-
related) activities of an organization (i.e. purposes two, three and four);
and, 2) the individual's motivation to connect with (survey) an organization's
sociability network (socio-emotional maintenance) (i.e. purpose one). This
finding supports Nordlund's hypothesis that we use the media to partly
fulfill a need for social interaction.[45]

By combining this grouping of purposes with the factors that apparently generate them (such as level of integration), our theoretical model may be applicable to other media-use situations. For example, our model might suggest that higher integration in any situation (whether it be in school, at work or in the community power structure) would tend to lead to higher information seeking or media use, generally.

Of course, there may be a variety of other factors that affect an individual's information seeking, or media exposure, as well.

For instance, it may be that certain media are less useful for some individuals than others. In our study, it may be that an employee higher in the decision-making hierarchy has access to a variety of alternative information channels other than the employee newsletters. This employee may turn to these alternative channels, such as meetings, reports, memos, telephone conversations,etc., when he needs information concerning company news. This would seem quite likely considering the fact that the employee newsletters are one-way communication channels (i.e. allow for no feedback), which are published either once a week (The Circulator) or twice a month (The World).

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

As we indicated at the outset of this paper, many business communicators are experiencing practical problems in communicating with the employees of their organization. More specifically, many editors are concerned that their employee newsletters may not be fulfilling the informational needs of employees.

The findings of the present study indicate that part of this communication problem may lie in the selective pattern of employee newsletter readership. Employees tend to develop their own purposes for reading a newsletter, depending on their psychological and social motivations (e.g. level of integration into an organization).

As a result, employees may choose not to receive, or interpret correctly, the messages management feels they need to receive.

To deal with this problem, it is important to visualize an organization's employees as segmented target audiences, each with its own purposes for selectively reading the company newsletters.

To make this segmentation, an organization must determine the appropriate set of psychological or social factors that leads its employees to develop their own purposes for selectively reading the company newsletters.

In the present study, we viewed employees as segmented into two major groups. One group included those employees who tended to place greater importance on reading the newsletters to survey the system functions (i.e. business activities) of the Honeywell organization. Others read the newsletters to survey the Honeywell employee sociability network.

These purposes consequently led employees to have different newsletter readership patterns. Those who read to survey the system functions tended to have higher readership of company news. Those who read to survey the sociability network tended to have higher readership of employee social-relations content.

At a more practical level, we would say that some employees tended to read the newsletters to keep track of their friends at work, while others read to just find out what is going on at Honeywell. Beyond this simple surveillance function, some then additionally used this information for a variety of purposes. For instance, some read the newsletters to learn about Honeywell in order to improve their advancement possibilities.

As a result of these purposes, employees tended to selectively read the Honeywell newsletters (see diagram 2, page 33). Employees who read to keep track of their friends tended to have higher readership of personnel announcements, articles dealing with employee social activities and the like. Those who read to find out what is going on tended to have higher reauership of articles dealing with new products and services, the employee investment program, company policy changes and changes in the benefits program.

Employees who read to improve their advancement possibilities tended to have higher readership of stories dealing with the employee investment program, stories about new products and services and features dealing with other company departments and individual employees. Employees who read to keep track of changes in management personnel seemed to be interested in the structural changes of the

organization. They tended to have higher readership of stories dealing with company financial matters, and had a particularly keen interest in reading the company personnel transfers, promotions and awards.

Diagram 2

Purposes   Readership

To keep track of   ──+──➤   Personnel announcements; Articles
friends   dealing with employee social
                                                   activities

⌐ find out what   ──+──➤   Articles dealing with new products
is going on   and services, the employee invest-
                                                   ment program, company policy changes,
                                                   changes in the benefits program

To improve advance-   ──+──➤   Features dealing with other
ment possibilities   departments, individual employees;
                                                   Stories about the employee invest-
                                                   ment program, new products and
                                                   services

To keep track of   ──+──➤   Stories dealing with company
changes in   financial matters; Personnel
management personnel   transfers, promotions and awards
                                                   announcements

Key: ──+──➤   Indicates positive relationship

Similarly, any organization can view its employees as diverse target groups, segmented by the differing purposes that each group has for using the company communication media. Furthermore, the purposes that employees have for using the media may vary greatly from organization to organization. While we examined four specific types of readership purposes, there may be a variety of others operating to produce selective newsletter readership in other organizations. For instance, many employees in a manufacturing firm may selectively read

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the company newsletter to find technical information. Employees in a
retail organization may purposively read the newsletters to learn about
the marketing techniques used by that organization.

It is important to identify each of these media-use purposes
because they can indicate important categories of information that an
organization's employee communication media currently overlook.[46] Grunig
cites this as a major problem facing employee communicators generally.

By viewing the employee audience as segmented into groups with
these diverse media-use purposes, it will become possible to produce and
target messages with a better chance of being received.

Before one can proceed to this final step, however, further,
evaluative research is needed to determine how well company newsletters
are presently serving the needs of employees. We have an indication of
the types of purposes employees have for reading company newsletters,
and of the specific types of content that can serve these purposes. We
do not know, however, how well company newsletters are currently
utilizing these types of content, and whether further, unused types of
content might do the job even better.

This research could be carried out in two steps. First, an
organization could perform a thorough content analysis of its communica-
tions publications, to determine the specific categories of content
systematically appearing in those publications.

Second, the organization could survey its employees to determine
the specific media-use purposes of those employees. In this way, the
organization would be able to segment its employees into specific
target audiences with distinct patterns of selective media exposure.
Additionally, this survey would include measures of employees' level of

satisfaction with the company communication media. This would indicate
whether, and how well, these internal media are serving the needs of
employees.

Consequently, the organization's communication media could be
modified to more effectively meet the informational needs of that
organization's employees.

FOOTNOTES

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