The Interaction between Personality Characteristics and Mood States in Media Contents Selection

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the relationship between personality characteristics and mood in the selection of media content. Using meta-analysis, this study analyzed past studies regarding media content selection in television program. The results of this research showed that the preference of a given media content would depend on the viewer's mood, personality characteristics and the interaction between personality characteristics and mood states. The secondary data of television programs supported the association.

Key words: Mood Management Theory, Media Selection, Mood State, Personality Characteristics, Selective Exposure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mood management theory has been used for explaining people's selective exposure to media content. The most basic and underlying assumption that mood-management theory makes is that hedonistic motivation governs much of human [1], [2]. That is, individuals tend to arrange their environments so that pleasure is maximized or maintained and pain is diminished or alleviated [3].

Many studies have long supported mood management theory through various media such as television programs, music, or film, and through media material such as comedy, humor, game-show, drama, action-adventure, and so on. These studies have shown selective exposure to media entertainment as function of physiological arousal or as relief from bad moods is affective. Previous studies for mood management through selective exposure showed consistency in theoretical framework.

However, these studies suffer from the limitation that specific situations and related moods cannot be explained. Some other scholars suggested that consideration of the personality characteristics of an audience can offer considerable illumination of many content preference [4], [5]. As pointed out in mood management theory, preference could

not explain the dynamic media choice to audience and how the audience's different situations different mood, emotion, affect affect media content selection while they watch TV programs, movie, or listen to music. Therefore, it is necessary to explain how an audience's personality in different mood states influences media content choice. The research tries to explore the relation among mood states and personality. People have general preference to media use, but they also might have the potential possibility to change pattern according to mood states. This research asks how personality in different mood states influences media choice and whether the outcome of media choice relates with media content preference. Fig. 1 showed this study tries to explore the interaction between mood and personality characteristics in selecting media contents.

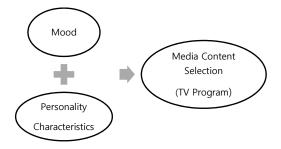


Fig. 1. Model for Interaction between Mood & Personality Characteristics

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2. MOOD MANAGEMENT AND SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

2.1 Mood Management Theory

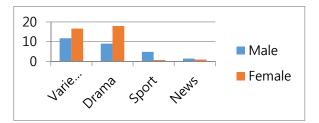
The theoretical goal of mood management is to explain selective media exposure. The key of mood management theory is that individuals consume media functionally to enhance their moods [1]. The theory assumes that media users are hedonistically oriented, maintain and foster their positive mood and to alter their negative moods by selecting those media products on offer that best serve these interest [2]. Oliver said that habit, tastes, and enduring disposition are obviously important predictors of media content choice, but people can easily be influenced by phrases that viewers frequently voice that capture this type of variability, including comment such as "I feel like a good mystery tonight", or "I'm in the mood for a comedy" (p.85) [3]. The mood management theory embraces these variations.

Accordingly, many studies related with mood management have been focused on what media content people choose in different mood states. Bryant and Zillmann evidenced that "acutely aversive states foster selective exposure to television program capable of providing relief" (p.18) [6]. For example, people who were stressed watched a far greater proportion of tranquil programming than people who were bored, while bored subjects were more attracted to exciting fare than stressed subjects. This investigation examined arousal states and induced boredom or stress by having participants either perform tedious manual tasks or complete intellectual exam tasks under time pressure [7].

Enhancement of mood state is not limited to exciting and calming materials but extends to other messages characteristics [8]. Meadowcrpft & Zillmann explored females in different phases of their menstrual cycle given the opportunity to select comedy, drama, and game-show programs for an evening's worth of watching television [9]. They found that premenstrual and menstrual women preferred comedy over alternative choices more strongly than did women midway through the cycle. Helregel and Weaver (1989) used a similar design for pregnant and non-pregnant women, and new mothers [10]. The finding showed that a preference for comedy was apparent when dysphoric states attributable to physiological changes prevailed. A preference for action adventure programming was evident during times of physiologically-induced heightened positive affect. These studies theoretically are based on the hedonistic premise that individuals are motivated to minimize aversion from negative experiential states and to maximize gratification from positive states [1], [2].

In contrast to the studies described above, field studies on mood management examined selective exposure to both entertainment and information fare, with participant reporting moods and TV consumption in diaries at specific times of the day for an extended period. For instance, Anderson, Collins, Schmitt, and Jacobvitz found that stressed women watched more game and variety programs, and stressed men watched more action and violent programming [11]. Fig. 1 showed the difference in watching television programs between male and female. The data was collected by Korean Broadcasting Institute in 2017. The data showed gender difference in viewing

television program. It supported indirectly that female liked to watch variety programs (16.6% vs. 11.7%) and dramas (17.9 vs. 9.0) than male. In addition, male more watched sport programs (4.8% vs. 0.7%) than female. Four thousand two hundred people participated in the survey.



Data: 2017 Korean Broadcasting Institute

Fig. 2. Pattern of Watching TV Program based on Gender

2.2 Selective Exposure

Though mood management theory has tended to focus on viewer's selection of television entertainment, additional research has applied this theory to viewers' selective exposure to other types of media format and genres [3]. As other types of examples, Biswas, Riff, and Zillmann explored effects of positive and negative mood states in the context of news exposure [12]. In their study, female participants selected fewer bad-news stories in the negative-affect condition than in the positive-affect condition, which is consistent with mood-management prediction. In contrast, men showed a slight tendency in the opposite direction, selecting a greater number of bad-news stories in the negative than positive-affect condition.

In more recent study, Knobloch and Zillmann explored viewer's selective exposure to different type of music as a function of mood state [7]. In this study, respondents were placed in states of bad, neutral, or good mood and then provided the opportunity to freely choose from the sets of musical selections among popular music from *Top 30* charts. Consistent with prediction from mood-management theory, respondents in bad moods elected to listen to highly energetic-joyful music for longer periods than did respondents in good moods.

2.3 Selective Exposure to Media Managed Mood

These studies described above consistently supports mood management through selective exposure. Regulation of arousal and relief from bad moods through selective exposure to media content such as comedy, humor, or music are beneficial to people. This statement raises a question that a genre shown to be efficient in enhancing mood state might be affective to all people. That is, can we expect the same result in the same condition to each person in mood management theory? We can ask about individual differences in mood management through selective exposure. In fact, mood management considers personality traits in terms of individual difference. Yet this approach suffers from the limitation that specific situations and related mood cannot be examined, even though this is what mood management theory is about [7]. Thus, this research focuses more on analyzing the relationship between mood

states and personality characteristics. To do this, it is need to look at the effect of personality characteristics

3. PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS AND MEDIA USE

3.1 Personality Characteristics

Personality characteristic, a variable explaining individual differences in media effect has long been studied by many scholars. Many contemporary theories of personality are built on the pioneering "disposition model" advanced by [13]. Allport and Odbert that identified common personality characteristics friendliness, ambitiousness, cleanliness, enthusiasm, shyness, talkativeness which distinguish behavior of one human being from another [14]. Weaver (2000) [15] described three distinct levels of most contemporary dispositional models of personality. The first, the lowest level, is "habitual cognitions or behavior" (p. 224) [16]. The intermediate level, the second level, "generalized and personalized determining tendencies consistent and stable modes of an individual's adjustment to his environment" (p. 26) [17]. The third level, the highest level, is that personality dimension emerges from clusters of personality traits. In other words, personality can be classified based on similarities and differences across several personality trait characteristics. It is now widely agreed that a model for personality must be hierarchical as described above.

Eysenck provide a particularly functional framework from which to explore interrelationships between personality characteristics and preference for the mass media content[16]. Eysenck and his colleagues have identified three predominant types of personality extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. The personality types are conceptualized as orthogonal "dispositional factors that regularly and persistently determine our conduct in many different types of situations" (p. 17) [18]. Extraversion is conceptualized as tapping trait characteristics such as an individual's level of social adaptability, affiliation, and activity. Neuroticism involves an individual's level of anxiety, emotionality, and social isolation [4]. Finally, psychoticism assays an individual's inclination toward "a lack of restraint, responsibility, need for cognitive structure, and willingness to live by society's rules and mores (socialization)" (p. 104) [19]. These personality characteristics have been shown to provide substantial "predictive and explanatory power across a heterogeneous collection of real life situation" (p. 342) [18].

3.2 Personal Characteristics and Media Preference

Some researches demonstrated that these personality characteristics (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) of an audience can illuminate of the content of preference. Weaver found that personal characteristics (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) have considerable correlation with media preference [4]. For example, respondents scoring high on neuroticism expressed a strong preference for information/news television program and downbeat music while tending to avoid more lighthearted comedy and action/adventure fare. The respondents who had high scores in psychoticism evidenced

significantly less interest in comedy offerings but displayed a strong preference for graphically violent horror movies. Robinson, Weaver, and Zillmann explored the relation between appreciation of soft/no rebellious and hard/rebellious rock music videotapes and five personality characteristics extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism as well as reactive and proactive rebelliousness [20]. Specially, the findings indicated that respondents scoring high on psychoticism or high on reactive rebelliousness enjoyed hard/rebellious rock-music videotapes more than did their peers scoring low on psychoticism or low on reactive rebelliousness.

More recently, Dillman Carpentier, Knobloch, and Zillman [21] examined the relationship between personality and selective exposure to defiant music. In this study, after the assessment of various traits pertaining to adolescent rebelliousness, respondents were placed in a private situation that allowed them to listen to selection of an assortment of upbeat songs with either socially defiant or non-defiant message. From the study, they found that individuals who scored high in proactive rebelliousness spent more time on rebellious music. Thus even though such music generally stress, conflict and tension, specific personality types preferred listening to these negative lyrics.

3.3 Sensational Seeking as Personality Characteristics

Another personality trait influencing television viewers to be selective is "sensation seeking" [22]. Zuckerman declaimed that sensation seeking is a biologically based personality trait that describes individual's characteristic preferences for and willingness to search for novel, varied, and intense stimuli and/or experiences, that is, experiences with high arousal potential [23]. According to Zuckermann, high sensation seekers prefer stimulating experiences and are easily bored, while low sensation seekers prefer less arousing environment and calmer experiences [23]. In terms of sensation seeking, Edwards evidenced that high sensation seekers liked to watch more horror films [24], and Zuckerman and Litle also found that high sensation seekers correlated positively with horror films and sex films [25].

In sum, personality characteristics are very useful variable to predict media content selection. Weaver assumed that "extraverts should be expected to prefer content that portrays sociability and/or social adaptability as rewarding and appropriate activities, neurotics evidences a preference for content that helps them manage their anxieties, and psychoticism should prefer media content involving deviant, rebellious themes(p. 1294)" [4]. It is fact that those three personality characteristics or sensation seeking are an important factors in media preferences.

There is the trend in personality study in terms of stress and coping. Most contemporary views of stress and coping trace in one way or another to the work of Lazarus and Folkman and their colleagues [26], [27]. They provided support for transactional/process models of stress and coping [27]. According to the *transactional coping theory*, individuals engage in primary appraisals (of the degree of threat, harm, or loss posed by stressors), secondary appraisals (of one's potential resources and ability to cope with stressors) and various ways of coping. It is also assumed that the temporal

associations among variables can be moderated by individual difference (e.g., personality characteristics) or contextual factors (e.g., type or severity of stressor)[28].

Among these stages, this research focuses more on the relation between personality characteristics and coping method. At first, it is common to refer to three classes of coping; "problem-focused coping consists of attempt to remove the obstacle or to minimize its impact; emotion focused coping consists of attempt to reduce the distress emotions caused by the obstacle (which can entail either reappraisal of the obstacle or management of the emotion per se [29]; avoidance coping cuts across the problem—emotions distinction" [30]. Differences in coping methods used by personality characteristics have been found in a number of studies [31], [32]. For example, optimism is related positively to problemfocused coping and negatively to the use of denial and the attempt to distance one-self from the problem. Gunthert, Armeli, and Cohen found that compared with low neuroticism individuals, high neuroticism used less-adaptive coping strategy (e.g., hostile reaction) and reacted with more distress in response to some type of coping strategies [33]. Segerstrom et al. found in terms of personality traits, mood, and coping that avoidance coping partially accounted for the relationship between optimism and mood [34]. These studies supports that copying or managing stress or a problem might be different according to personality characteristics.

In addition, it is necessary to add contextual factors such as level of stress or moods states to explain different coping method to each people. There are a number of studies focusing on the relationship between personality and mood. For instance, Raikkonen, Matthews, Flory, Owens, and Gump found that personal characteristics (optimism, pessimism, and anxiety) with mood states affected ambulatory blood pressure (BP) [35]. In this study, personality traits influenced the level of BP, regardless of mood. However, the interaction between mood states and personality characteristics affected on ambulatory BP in Schwartz, Warren, and Pickering's study [36]. More recently, Tamir, Clore, and Robinson examined the relation between personality characteristics and mood states in emotional processing [37]. In this study, they found that extraverts were faster to link events to their personal motivations when in a positive mood state, whereas introverts were faster to do so in a neutral or negative mood state. This study provides support for a new cognitive model of "trait x state interaction", one that is based on the information provides to individuals from both their enduring disposition [37] and their momentary mood states [36]. Revelle confirmed that extraversion and state factors often do interact in prediction performance [38].

In sum, personality characteristics is a significant variable to explain media content selection with mood management. This current study analyzed how many studies previously have used those approaches to explain how people select media content. To see, this study calculated a number of articles using mood management perspectives in television programs. The range of the period is from 2016 to 2018. Most of the previous study used use & gratification model to explain why people chose a certain type of media content. Use and gratification model has been a strong model to associate motivation with selective media exposure. On the other hand, articles

considering individual difference in media selection were very few. Table 1 showed a number of studies regarding mood management and personal characteristics. In table 1, global indicated articles published by foreign authors, and domestics indicated articles published by Korean authors.

Table 1. Two Different Theoretical Approaches in Analyzing Television Program

Search Keywords	A Number of
	Articles
Use & Gratification	Domestics: 90
Motivation	Global: 140
Television programs	
Lifestyle	Domestics: 3
Individual difference	Global: 20
Television program	
	Use & Gratification Motivation Television programs Lifestyle Individual difference

4. DISCUSSION

In sum, we looked at that how personality characteristics is related to coping methods and mood states. At first, the relationship between personality characteristics and coping methods can predict what kind of personality uses which coping methods. In mood management theory, coping methods mentioned in the main body might be limited to emotionfocused coping or avoidance coping because the extent of stimulation is limited to entertainment offering such as TV programs, movies, or music [1]. Nevertheless, problem-focused coping can be considered in consuming media content. For example, people who are optimistic or extraverts might select more positive content in a bad mood state or stressful situation, which is not only enhances mood states but also influences more positive reframe that look a stressful situation with positive perspective. Thus, it should be supported that personality characteristics influence how people manage in a stressful situations or bad mood state, and the mechanism might affect media content selection. Another important point is the relation between mood states and personality. According to the past studies, extraversion or optimistic is positively correlated with good moods. However, it should be considered that when mood state mismatches with personality, how do mood states interact with personality characteristics?

Based on the hedonistic tendency to improve mood, persons experiencing bad mood should be most strongly motivated to diminish and terminate this state. Person experiencing neutral mood should be similarly motivated, but to a lesser degree. Person experiencing good mood should least motivated in these terms. In terms of media content, the study expected that energetic, complex music is intuitively preferred by persons in a bad mood, which is grounded that highly energetic and complex stimulation has greater mood-altering potential than less energetic and complex stimulation [40]. Such discussion in main body also provoked about the interaction between personality characteristics and mood states. There is theoretical conflict between personality characteristic and mood management. Personality characteristics are predictive to expect media preference, but mood management considers more dynamic psychological situations. Some studies have proved that personality characteristics are predictors of mood and that personality characteristics have stable relation with mood positive affective or negative affective [41]. Revelle also mentioned that personal characteristic and states factors often do interact in predicting performance [38]. For example optimistic or extraverts correlates positively with good mood, but there should be exclusive distance between mood and personality because mood is momentary states, while personality is consistent.

The first conclusion is that based on the hedonistic tendency to improve mood, persons experiencing bad mood should be most strongly motivated to diminish and terminate this state. Thus, person experiencing neutral mood should be similarly motivated, but to a lesser degree. Person experiencing good mood should least motivated in these terms. The second conclusion is that there is interaction between personality characteristics and mood states. Personality characteristics are predictive to expect media preference, and mood management considers more dynamic psychological situations.

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