Motivations, Needs, & Media Use
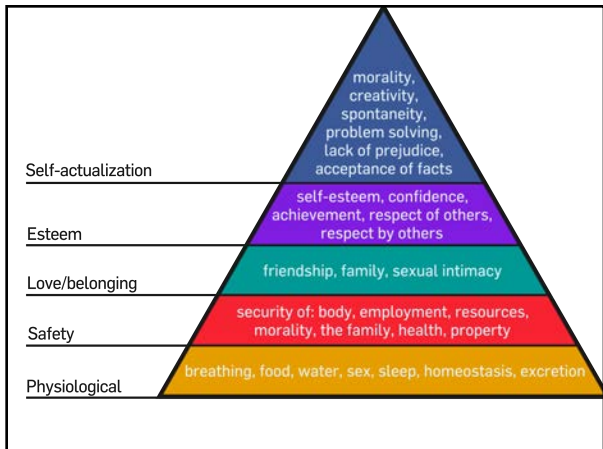
Pop Culture Artifact

Basic Premise is Simple

- Humans have Wants & Needs.
- We use popular culture to meet some of those needs.
- Let's look at two "needs" theories—Maslow's Hierarchy & David McClelland's "Three Needs Theory."

Self-actualization — morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

Esteem — self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

Love/belonging — friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety — security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property

Physiological — breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

MCCLELLAND'S THEORY OF NEEDS

NEED FOR ACHIEVEMENT — drive to excel. Achieve in relation to a set of standards. Strive to succeed

NEED FOR POWER — To control others. To get desired things done

NEED FOR AFFILIATION — Friendship. Good relationship

Uses & Gratification Theory

- Unlike "effects" theories, not a predictive theory.
- Basic strength is as a descriptive framework: People do things to gratify needs.
- With a research object/practice, first questions to ask are What are people doing? And What Needs are they meeting?
- Uses & Grats research has identified **4 primary areas of use.**

For example, think about phone Apps

Think about an app (other than email) or website that you have used today or within the last 24 hours, including Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, or whatever.

(Check your Screen Time monitor in General Settings of your smart phone)

Think about what needs your phone use is gratifying.

U&G 1: Information

- finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world
- seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices
- satisfying curiosity and general interest
- learning; self-education
- gaining a sense of security through knowledge

U&G 2: Personal Identity

- finding reinforcement for personal values
- finding models of behavior
- identifying with valued other (in the media)
- gaining insight into one's self

U&G 3: Integration & Social Interaction

- gaining insight into circumstances of others; social empathy
- identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging
- finding a basis for conversation and social interaction
- having a substitute for real-life companionship
- helping to carry out social roles
- enabling one to connect with family, friends and society

U&G 4: Entertainment

- Escaping, or being diverted, from problems
- Relaxing
- Getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment
- Filling time
- Emotional release
- Sexual arousal
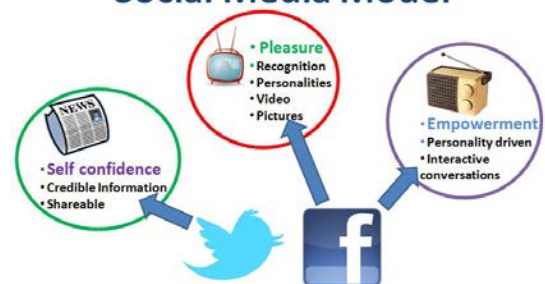
Let's go back to your phone Apps

Think about an app (other than email) or website that you have used today or within the last 24 hours, including Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, or whatever.

(Check your Screen Time monitor in General Settings of your smart phone)

What have you used and what needs do you think you were gratifying?

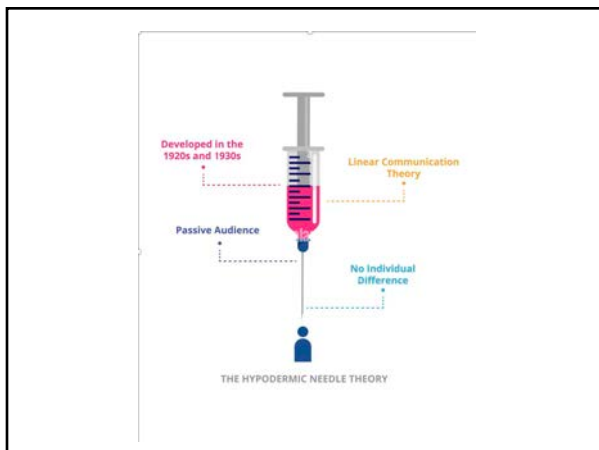Can be applied to media internationally

- *Understand the Misunderstanding: A Study Incorporating Uses and Gratifications Theory on Why Chinese Film Audiences See America the Way They Do* **(MA thesis by Meng Zhao)**

- **Based on Focus Group Research: Which is an option you can pursue in your research project.**

- https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/view content.cgi?article=1053&context=masters

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U&G Crucial to Assessing Social Media Effects

I want to illustrate how looking at *uses* can change research results looking at the effects of Social Media Use.
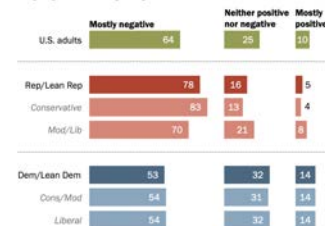

So what does the research say?

- Much of the early research was based on what can be described as the "dose-response" model of media effects.
- This model is similar to the "hypodermic model" of media influence that goes back nearly a century!

Public Perception is Negative

Public Policy Actions…

Social Media and Youth Mental Health
The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory
2023

POLICY / TIKTOK / CREATORS

Utah governor signs new laws requiring parental consent for under-18s to use social media / The Social Media Regulation Act also sets a 10:30PM curfew for minors and allows parents to access their children's accounts.

Montana governor bans TikTok

By Samantha Delouya, CNN
Updated 12:12 PM EDT, Thu May 18, 2023

Top: Image is in the public domain.

Most Research that finds Negative Effects is Dose-Response

- Night-time use of Social Media can have negative effects: Associated with poor sleep, poor mental health, impaired daytime functioning, & lower academic achievement.
- Independent Variable = Measures Use
- Dependent Variable = Effects

(Key is motive: FOMO)

Scott, Biello, Woods, "Identifying drivers for bedtime social media use despite sleep costs: The adolescent perspective," *Sleep Health*, 6.6 (2020).

Most Research that finds Negative Effects is Dose-Response

- 3 or more hours per day of social media use is related to online harassment, poor sleep, low self-esteem, poor body image, and thus higher depressive symptom scores.

Kelly, Zilanawala, Booker, Sacker, "Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health: Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study," *The Lancet Discovery Science*, 6 (12/1/2018): P59-68.

Limitations of Correlations

- This research looks for a correlation, but cannot ascertain cause.
- Sometimes the causal arrow goes the opposite direction: Perhaps depressed people turn to social media for relief, not that social media use "causes" depression.

More Sophisticated Research = More of a Mixed Verdict

Routine use associated with positive health outcomes. "Emotional connection" (emotional dependence) associated with negative health outcomes. Study n = 1,027. Emotional connection/dependence measured by Qs like "I get upset when I can't log on to SM."

Bekalu, McCloud, & Viswanath, "Association of Social Media Use With Social Well-Being, Positive Mental Health, and Self-Rated Health: Disentangling Routine Use From Emotional Connection to Use", *Health Education & Behavior* 46.2 (2019).

Longitudinal Research

Longitudinal Research is the Gold Standard in Effects Research.

Assesses behavior of the same group of people over a period of years. (Best example of TV violence research = 15-year study)

Longitudinal Research

Participants included 500 adolescents who completed once-yearly questionnaires between the ages of 13 and 20.

Results revealed that increased time spent on social media was *not* associated with increased mental health issues across development when examined at the individual level.

Coyne, Rogers, Zurcher, et al., "Does time spent using social media impact mental health?: An eight year longitudinal study," *Computers in Human Behavior*, 104 (2020):

Another Longitudinal Study

Participants included 2,891 Finnish children, 13-19 years old.

Results also revealed that increased time spent on social media was *not* associated with increased mental health issues across development when examined at the individual level.

Pukko, Hietajärvi, Maksniemi, et al., "Social Media Use and Depressive Symptoms: A Longitudinal Study from Early to Late Adolescence," *International J. of Environmental Research & Public Health* 17.16 (2020).

Meta-Analysis

Meta-Analysis refers to a statistical technique of aggregating the results of multiple studies to get a better understanding of cause & effect.

Stronger evidence than individualized studies.

Meta-Analysis of Social Media Research

This study judged many studies as having poor quality. Too few subjects, for example.

Found that there were contradictory results on Time Spent & Level of Activity, *but* emotional investment did correlate with depressive tendencies.

Keles, McCrae & Grealish, "A systematic review: the influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25:1 (2020): 79-93.

Are Smart Phones Addicting?

Depends on how one defines addiction. Usually it is compulsion + bad effects. Habitual use or heavy dependence is not necessarily an "addiction."

Keles, McCrae & Grealish, "A systematic review: the influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25:1 (2020): 79-93.

Possible Criteria for Addiction

Criteria A	Maladaptive pattern of smartphone use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, occurring at any time within the same 3-month period. Three (or more) of the following symptoms having been present:

1. Recurrent failure to resist the impulse to use the smartphone
2. Withdrawal: as manifested by dysphoria, anxiety and/or irritability after a period without smartphone use
3. Smartphone use for a period longer than intended
4. Persistent desire and/or unsuccessful attempts to quit or reduce smartphone use
5. Excessive time spent on using or quitting the smartphone use
6. Continued excessive smartphone use despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem resulting from smartphone overuse

Possible Criteria for Addiction

Criteria B	Functional impairment: two (or more) of the following symptoms have been present

1. Excessive smartphone use resulting in persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem
2. Smartphone use in a physically hazardous situation (e.g., smartphone use while driving, or crossing the street), or having other negative impacts on daily life
3. Smartphone use resulting in impairment of social relationships, school achievement, or job performance
4. Excessive smartphone use causes significant subjective distress, or is time-consuming

Lin, Chiang, Lin, et al., "Time distortion associated with smartphone addiction: Identifying smartphone addiction via a mobile application (App)", *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, **65 (June 2015): 139-145**

What's the Bottom Line?

There is no simple cause & effect relationship between Social Media Use and good or bad effects.

Overdependence on social media *can* have negative mental health effects, under certain circumstances.

We end where we begin: Depends on Needs & Motivations for social media use.

Paper Assignments

- Oral History: You should let your subject tell their own story first & foremost. Let them tell their story as they see fit. What happened, when, where, who, etc.
- Your follow-up questions can focus on what you perceive as the needs they were meeting. This can be framed as "*why* were you interested in this?"

Paper 2: Autoethnography

- YOUR History: You should tell your own story first & foremost. What happened, when, where, who, etc.
- Your follow-up analysis can focus on what you perceive as the needs you were meeting (with the benefit of hindsight). This can be framed as "*why* were you interested in this?"