



The Funk Experience

The German public online-only youth content
network from the audience's point of view

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Foreword

My personal experiences that have led to the research at hand are rather simple. As a big fan of the audio podcasts by German entertainer Florentin Will I began researching more of his work and eventually found the YouTube sketch channel Gute Arbeit Originals which he runs with his team. When I saw that the content of this channel is part of the German public broadcast online-only youth channel network Funk, I began researching about Funk and its offered formats. Funk was launched by German public broadcasters ARD and ZDF and hence is financed by broadcasting fees.

Soon I found out about quite some criticism from journalists as well as from private bloggers and YouTubers. This raised my interest: Is Funk really that bad? How beneficial is it for ARD and ZDF as public broadcasters to run such a channel network? Is this just another experiment and how will it go? This project is quite unusual, especially since ARD and ZDF are commonly seen by Germans as TV channels for older generations. Hence, I began looking at Funk as a neutral observer and eventually deemed it interesting enough for me to decide to make it my bachelor thesis topic.

Summary

Over one year after the launch of Funk, the German public online-only youth content network registers exponentially growing viewing numbers. As part of the public broadcasting system it is liable to statutory requirements and is supposed to meet the democratic, cultural and social needs of 14- to 29-year old Germans. It formulates its own objective as to orient, inform, entertain and involve the audience.

Funk's set of objectives is quite a challenge and makes the target audience's opinion and expectations concerning Funk's content and development crucial. This calls for different assessment methods on Funk's performance than just viewing numbers – the audience's perspective as essential element of Funk's focus needs to be investigated. It is key to understand the target audience's experience of Funk in the frame of its social mission as a part of the public broadcasters. The makers have clearly put the target audience in their focus but how exactly audience is experiencing the content network has yet not been researched on and therefore is understood poorly at the German public media broadcasters.

This lack of attention is relevant because knowledge of the target audience's perception is beneficial for Funk in order to meet the objective, while a lack of knowledge of it can be harmful and make Funk miss their point or in the worst case even make it fail as a whole. The problem and this relevance are fundamentally linked.

Taking this into consideration, the focus of the research at hand lays on what gratifications the audience actually obtains from Funk. Hereby the theory of uses and gratifications is deemed most useful in order to investigate fulfillment of consumer or user needs. For that purpose, the gratifications dimensions are taken over from McQuail's Mass Communication Theory (2010): information, personal identity, entertainment, and social interaction. Further, to ensure more reliable and empirical data, while having a rather small time frame, a large-scale online survey was used as data collection method.

Since Gratifications sought were already defined for Funk as per public law contract, the thesis at hand focuses on gratifications obtained and compare those to other variables concerning sociodemographics, viewing behavior and use.

In order to reach respondents a link to the online questionnaire was placed under recent Funk YouTube and Facebook videos of all available formats in the comment section, in order to reach all age and gender sub-groups and get an extensive, global overview of the audience as a whole, ensuring that the respondents have as various traits as possible. The questionnaire comprised a total of 23 items, of which 16 are about the four identified gratifications dimensions with 4 items each.

The results obtained from 185 respondents were computed and analyzed per mean, whereby the gratifications dimensions were treated as indices, as well as Pearson correlations to gain insight into the relation between the gratifications obtained by the respondents from Funk as well as their viewing behavior and use of Funk.

The analysis results reflect an overall gender gap of gratifications obtained (GO) from Funk, whereby males overall receive less gratifications from Funk than females do. However, it should be noted that the values overall are not strikingly high but in fact rather having a tendency towards negative scopes.

Further, the results reveal that overall Funk seems to miss their point of fulfilling a major part of the target audiences' needs according to their set of objectives anchored in the public law contract. Concludingly, the conducted research indicates that Funk is not meeting their own objectives and there is room for improvement.

Concludingly, more understanding of the reality of life as well as interests and characteristics of the target audience is recommendable to Funk. Hence, Funk could request from ARD and ZDF to have more audience research done e.g. in form of control groups. Moreover, a special Funk convention would not only bring Funk, the content creators and the audience closer together, but also make the audience aware of the range of formats Funk offers. Hence, possibly the audience could have more needs fulfilled from the content network when they discover the large range of formats offered.

Another issue that calls for investigation would be whether Funk's focus regarding its contents might lay too much on entertainment. It is recommended to Funk to introspect whether the entertainment factor is represented disproportionally high amongst its offered contents, or generally which factors and contents should be integrated more into the content network's portfolio, in order to adjust accordingly and ensure proportional distribution of gratifications for the audience.

The feedback and involvement of the audience does not appear to be valued by Funk. This outcome is a call for action and it is strongly recommended to Funk to put more time and effort to internalize and develop communication with their audience, not only in order to fulfill audience needs, but also to understand where certain parts of the content network need improvement and what kind of improvement. As a start, more opportunities for involvement should be created, or, if this is already extensively done, raise awareness for the audience about the various involvement opportunities.

Additionally, the results at hand could support further studies that give Funk advice on how to further improve their approaches regarding editorial, financial and strategic aspects. Eventually, the results of the study at hand could also be used for statistical inference on Funk's target audience through further data analysis. It would be interesting and relevant for Funk to have insights into developments over time.

Key words: *audience needs, audience experience, uses and gratification theory, gratification obtained, public service broadcasting*

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1. Introduction

The German public broadcasters "ARD and ZDF promote tasteless content with millions [of euros]", is what was stated by a top ranking German newspaper, namely Welt (Meyer, 2017). The topic of discussion is Funk, the German public service online media offering for young people, which is a cooperation between the two German public broadcast channels ARD and ZDF. Based on their conducted research they concluded that the trend amongst young viewers is to watch content rather online than on the public TV channels, therefore Funk offers its content online only, mostly on YouTube, and is financed by broadcasting fees.

This shows the relevance of the topic for the media and entertainment industry. Just as most media-related issues are related to digitalization and increased internet use, the TV sector is facing changes and challenges as well. ARD and ZDF are simply trying to follow the trend of reaching younger audiences online and by that provide a higher grade of interactivity and possibilities to develop accordingly.

Funk was launched on September 1st, 2016 and defines its target audience as 14- to 29- year olds (SWR, 2016). On the recently updated Funk website the offered formats are now divided into "Music & Entertainment", "Humor & Satire" and "Politics & Opinion". The currently over 60 different formats are offered on the website as well as on the online platforms YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram (Funk, 2017).

Statistics show that at least 20% of the target audience are aware of Funk which is seen as a "good step" by the makers, but they "hope for more" (SWR, 2017). The development of the total viewing numbers shows an exponential growth: while after three months Funk counted 72,7 million views, there were over 346 million views in total on YouTube and Facebook combined (Funk Presseteam, personal communication, 11th of October 2017). However, Funk declares to not have a regular evaluation of success based on viewing figures: the premise is that "success is no longer measured only in quantitative clicks and views" (SWR, 2015). Since the content network is financed by broadcasting fees, the overall approach lies beyond commercial interests and demand-optimized content.

Funk's vice programming director Sophie Burkhardt stated in an interview that much positive feedback came from the audience and even a few prizes were won by Funk formats, such as e.g. European Web Video Academy (EWVA) awards, but still even though the makers state to be satisfied with the developments and reach they are "far from the goal and analyze exactly where [they] have already found good ways and what [they] have to work on even more intensively" (Der Tagesspiegel, 2017). Unfortunately, no further precise information is provided about what data will be analyzed and how it will be analyzed and processed.

Even though the makers claim to have received much positive feedback, there still are negative opinions. One example of a criticizing opinion hereby is the abovementioned article by the German newspaper Welt which states that Funk provides "more tastelessness than informative content". Another article by the same newspaper strikes a balance after one year of Funk by asking whether some formats are unviable because they are "not commercial enough, or because overall not interesting enough?" after citing Funk's director Florian Hager who stated that "none of [Funk's] formats would be viable on the free market" (Meier, 2017).

Also, when looking at Funk's official Facebook page the 305 users who rated Funk resulted in an overall 2,5 out of 5 Stars rating, which is clearly not solely positive. (Facebook, accessed on 26th of November 2017).

Funk recently celebrated its first birthday and as young project it still seems to be at identification stage. For Funk, to know more about how the target audience experiences the content network after the first year of its existence can give clear leads about what needs to be adjusted, improved, removed or changed in order to stick to its objectives. Since the overall opinions on Funk appear to be mixed it raises the questions whether the target audience feels appealed and understood, and it therefore is about time for an investigation of the user's points of view. This is especially relevant since as a part of the public broadcasting network Funk operates in a certain frame of rules and values.

Generally, according to the statutory order of Telemedia (§ 11d Rundfunkstaatsvertrag), German public broadcasters need to apply a so-called three-stage test which is used to test each (intended) online offer of the public broadcast institutions, to see whether it meets the legislation order (Peters, 2009).

However, Funk does not need this test and further restrictions of the statutory order are omitted for Funk (SWR, 2015). Instead, the function and purpose of Funk are defined in the public-law contract of 18 April 2016 on the organization of the youth offer of ARD and ZDF, which is based on § 11 Rundfunkstaatsvertrag. The contract states that Funk is supposed to "meet the democratic, social and cultural needs" of the younger audience by focusing on the reality of life and interests of the target group, ensuring that the communication is interactive and geared to the target group, ensuring opportunities for audience participation and ensuring diversity of opinions.

The abidance to the social mission is ensured at ZDF's control center in the city of Mainz by Funk's editorial department where "it is editorially approved what should and may be put on the web" (SWR, 2016), which indicates that the mission-abidance mainly takes place through communication between the content creators and the editorial staff. To achieve actual mission-abidance however, a thorough understanding of the audience is key.

To fulfill its social mission, Funk formulates the following objectives:

"funk wants to give people under 30 a voice, give them the opportunity to orient themselves, to be informed and entertained. This is reflected in the selection of the topics, but also in the support of young, talented media-makers, who are the faces of funk. The users of funk co-determine the formats. They are involved in the development and influence the further developments through their feedback" (ZDF, 2016).

To summarize, if Funk is orienting, informing, entertaining and involving its audience, then the content network is meeting its objectives and fulfilling the needs stated in the social mission. Overall, those four dimensions of Funk's objectives are interconnected and are a translation of the democratic, social and cultural needs. Therefore orientation, information, entertainment and involvement are the audience needs which Funk has to fulfill by public-law contract. This is comparable to McQuail's Mass Communication Theory (2010) on "fundamental motives for media use" which, as Kim et al. (2015) summarize, "generally include fulfilling needs for information, personal identity, entertainment, and social interaction".

Funk's set of objectives is quite a challenge and makes the target audience's opinion and expectations concerning Funk's content and development crucial. This calls for different assessment methods on Funk's performance than just viewing numbers – the audience's perspective as essential element of Funk's focus needs to be investigated. It is key to understand the target audience's experience of Funk in the frame of its social mission as a part of the public broadcasters. The makers have clearly put the target audience in their focus but how exactly audience is experiencing the content network has yet not been researched on and therefore is understood poorly at the German public media broadcasters.

This lack of attention is relevant because knowledge of the target audience's perception is beneficial for Funk in order to meet the objective, while a lack of knowledge of it can be harmful and make Funk miss their point or in the worst case even make it fail as a whole. The problem and this relevance are fundamentally linked.

Only when Funk has knowledge about "if" and "to what extent" the audience feels oriented, informed, entertained and involved overall it can understand its performance on its mission and adjust or improve accordingly as a content network. To provide reliable insight, empirical data about the target audiences experience needs to be gathered and analyzed. Therefore the uses and gratification theory will play a notable role, which according to Ruggiero (2000) is "useful in explaining audience activity when individuals are most active in consciously making use of media for intended purposes" and it answers the basic questions "Why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another, and what gratifications do they receive from it?". More specifically the research at hand will focus on investigating the gratifications the audience receives from Funk in order to examine the extent of the fulfillment of their needs. According to Palmgreen & Rayburn (1983) research of media user gratification can be used to understand consumer experience and as an approach to explaining and predicting media satisfaction, which again is closely linked to marketing variables and thus could provide insight on improvement steps regarding Funk's image and reach.

Considering all of the above, in order to give insight on how the audience experiences Funk, the following main question can be formulated:

What gratifications does Funk's audience obtain from the content network?

The objective of the thesis at hand is to gain insights into the audience's view on Funk in order to provide Funk with an overview about how their goal of reaching and understanding that audience and hence fulfilling their needs is met so far while sticking to their social mission as a public broadcasting channel.

The rest of the thesis is structured as follows: First, the theoretical framework of the research is established through literature review and analysis of theoretical models, also in order to identify research questions and the research method. Subsequently, the research method is described in depth. The results of the research are provided thereafter comprising an analysis of these. Eventually, conclusions on the findings are drawn as well as recommendations are given to Funk. Finally, the limitations of the research at hand as well as outlooks of future research on the topic are provided.

2. Theoretical Framework

In order to understand why, how and to what extent audiences are engaging with certain media types or programs and by that investigate fulfillment of consumer or user needs, uses & gratification (U&G) is a useful research theory (Ruggiero, 2000). Therefore, in the following literature about U&G will be summarized, analyzed and adapted for the purpose of researching Funk's audience's experience of Funk, or more precisely what gratifications the audience receives from Funk.

2.1 Uses & Gratifications

As Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade (2004) summarize Herzog (1944), U&G theory is useful to understand consumer motivations, also "since gratifications are typically defined as some aspect of satisfaction reported by users, related to the active use of the medium in question". According to research by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973), U&G's focus lays on "the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones".

Further, as summarized by Rubin (1993), U&G theory is grounded in the assumption, that "people select and use communication sources and messages to satisfy felt needs or desires" and that media use is a means to satisfy those, meaning that media consumers are active consumers.

Besides media use there moreover are the associated gratifications in the context of U&G which can be itemized in order to investigate the process by which audience members make choices regarding media as well as its actual use (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004).

However, researchers such as Rubin (1993) dispute that it is sufficient to assume that media consumers are active but that rather the factors comprising specific consideration must be in the focus of the research as well. Rubin (1993) hereby differentiates between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO). Generally, research uses those two categories to identify and classify the reasons and motivations for consumers to decide for certain media and whether those were satisfied. According to Ruggiero (2000), until the 1970's U&G research focused on either GS or GO, which changed with e.g. Palmgreen and Rayburn's (1979) study on "viewers' exposure to public television who concluded that the U&G approach served well as a complement to other determinant factors such as media availability, work schedules, and social constraints" and that media researchers should "integrate the roles played by gratifications and other factors into a general theory of media consumption". However, as stated by Ruggiero (2000), McLeod, Bybee, and Durall (1982) conclude that GS and GO are two different conceptual entities that deserve independent treatment in any future U&G research.

McQuail (2010) and Palmgreen & Rayburn (1985) associate GS and GO with expectancy-value theory which suggests that gratifications sought are based on gratifications obtained whereby the consumers make use of experience with certain media in order to predict GO and define GS subsequently.

With GO as the substantial outcome, expectancy-value theory bases on the probability of a valued expectation or reward whereby consumers could have various motivations that lead to media consumption simultaneously at different levels (Rubin, 2009).

Interestingly, researchers conclude that consumers also obtain gratifications which were not expected: Palmgreen, Wenner & Rosengren (1985) state that models which were developed to support statistical correlations between GS and GO do not always match and the relationships are not necessarily causal because gratifications can be obtained through selected media exposure, even if those are not the sought by the consumer.

Thus, critics of the U&G theory argue that its methodologies, especially those involving self-reported typologies and rather depending on interpretation of attitude and lifestyle variables than on observable audience behavior, are "suspect", as Rosenstein & Grant (1997) formulate it. They further state that self-reports likely rather measure the individual's awareness and interpretation of their behavior than actual behavior, which concludingly makes individuals base their self-reports on "a priori, casual theories influenced by whatever stimuli happen to be salient" (Rosenstein & Grant, 1997). As summarized by Ruggiero (2000), Nisbett & Wilson (1977) support this dilemma with evidence, concluding that generally, individuals have rather limited direct introspective access to the higher order cognitive processes that drive their behavior.

As a concrete example of procedure, Rubin (1983) researched Television Uses and Gratifications by examining television viewing patterns, (which included viewing behavior and program preferences) and television viewing motivations via a large-scale questionnaire survey with adult respondents. One part of questionnaire was divided into 5 factors such as e.g. Information/Learning and Entertainment whereby each factor comprised 3 items, such as e.g. "Because it helps me learn things about myself and others" for the factor Information/Learning or "Because it entertains me" for the dimension of Entertainment.

Other parts of the questionnaire were sociodemographic items and items about program preferences and viewing behavior. Later the results were analyzed per factor and Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to assess the bivariate associations among viewing motivation dimensions.

Moreover, for the sake of putting U&G research a greater picture, Palmgreen & Rayburn (1984) developed and tested various models to compute the relation between gratifications and satisfaction, such as e.g. an "Gratifications Obtained Model" whereby it is assumed that all gratifications are valued equally by the consumer or an "Absolute Value Discrepancy Model" where a negative correlation with satisfaction is predicted, with the premise that "the greater the absolute discrepancy between GS and GO, the lower the satisfaction level should be".

Concludingly, U&G is a constantly developing research theory which is crucial, since "as new communication technologies rapidly materialize, the range of possible topics for U&G research also multiplies" (Ruggiero, 2000). And even though scholars still debate "whether U&G satisfies the standard of a full-fledged theory" (Ruggiero, 2000) continues, even critical scholars such as Stevenson (1997) recognize that U&G research, "has brought to the forefront the concept that the audience's perceptions of media messages may be altogether different from the meanings intended by their producers" that "one of the major strengths of the U&G perspective has been its capacity to develop over time into a more sophisticated theoretical model" (Ruggiero, 2000).

2.2 U&G Perspective of Internet Experience

As stated by Ruggiero (2000), with U&G there always was "a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium" such as "newspapers, radio, television, and now the Internet".

The results of the research conducted by Stafford, Stafford & Schkade (2004) on determining uses & gratifications of consumers for the use of Internet comprise three key dimensions such as "process and content gratifications as previously found in studies of television, as well as an entirely new social gratification that is unique to Internet use" (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004). They further state, that Internet media involves "inherent interactivity" and is of "user-directed nature" which makes the user-level approach of U&G seem "particularly well suited for examining consumer Internet use" (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004).

Ruggiero (2000) summarizes the findings of Stone & Stone (1990) that the conception of a passive audience generally leads to applying "the escapist model of media use, particularly in television viewing", but which is not applicable for Internet users, since those are rather active and have more control over the communication process of the medium e.g. by "virtuing their power to initiate access to commercial sites" or "even through the choice of whether to be online at all" (Stafford & Stafford, 2001).

Since Funk is an online-only content network offering its videos on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and the own App and Website, it is key to understand U&G theory in the context of social media and Internet videos.

Uses & Gratifications and Internet Videos

With the emergence of online video and social platforms where individuals can be creators and consumers simultaneously, the assumption of consumers being active is strongly supported especially regarding the users of these platforms. According to Haridakis & Hanson (2009), YouTube, as an environment where its users can switch between viewing and sharing content, leads to the consideration that "mass communication and interpersonal communication motives identified in previous research may not be mutually exclusive". According to Kim (2012), YouTube is "a convergence medium between the Internet and TV".

Per medium, different U&G dimensions have been attributed by different scholars:

Ko et al. (2005) attribute the U&G dimensions entertainment, social interaction, information and convenience to the Internet as a medium while Rubin (1983) attributes the U&G dimensions entertainment, pass time, escape, information, companionship to television as a medium.

More concretely, as a blend of the two, Haridakis & Hanson (2009) attribute the U&G dimensions convenient entertainment, convenient information, co-viewing and social interaction to video-sharing websites such as e.g. YouTube as medium. When it comes to social media however, Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2011) attribute the U&G dimensions personal integrative needs, social integrative needs and tension release needs to it.

Uses & Gratifications and Social Media

The Internet users' motivations for online communication are associated with obtaining gratifications such as "social identity, interpersonal communication, parasocial interaction, companionship, escape, entertainment, and surveillance" (Lin, 1998). Those categories can be used to investigate consumer's attitudes toward media consumption through such variables as GO and GS, for the Internet as well as for other media consumers (December, 1996).

Quan-Haase & Young (2010) compared gratifications obtained between users of instant messaging and Facebook users and conclude that Facebook is especially susceptible of being a "social vehicle" among friends due to its identified GO dimensions of problem sharing, affection, fashion, sociability, pastime, and social information whereby instant messaging is rather used for cultivating deeper friendships than Facebook is.

U&G was further used by Steinfield, Ellison and Lampe (2008) in order to prove a positive correlation between the rate of Facebook use and its users' belief in their connectedness with unfamiliar people on the network. This gratification dimension of connectedness is similarly obtained through a frequent use of Twitter and high frequency of interactions on the platform (Chen, 2011).

According to Sundar & Limperos (2013), researchers face the challenge to adapt media gratifications when it comes to better reflecting the distinctions of new media, since hereby the research still depends on gratifications that have not moved beyond traditional media.

2.3 Needs per Gratifications Dimension

Orientation, information, entertainment and involvement are the audience needs which Funk has to fulfill by public-law contract.

Since it is rather unclear which of the dimensions identified from literature research above would apply to Funk as an online video network acting on various platforms and having user involvement as one of their key objectives, a more general set of dimensions, in accordance with Funk's set of objectives, would suit best, such as McQuail's Mass Communication Theory (2010) defines the "fundamental motives for media use" which, as Kim et al. (2015) summarize, "generally include fulfilling needs for information, personal identity, entertainment, and social interaction".

In the following, those four dimensions of needs are described based on literature but also on the German public-law contract which Funk is liable to.

Information

Regarding informing the audience, according to the public-law contract of April 18th, 2016, Funk offers "journalistically and editorially featured interactive forms of offer" which indicates that the contents of Funk are linked to journalism (Medienkorrespondenz, 2016) and should hence provide high quality of information.

Further, Malthouse et al. (2007) suggest, as summarized by Kim et al. (2015), that in the context of information gratification, people have surveillance needs which are about learning, confirming, reinforcing or modifying views about their environment.

Moreover, research by Kim et al. (2015) suggests in that context that items as "It's relevant and useful to me", "I'm inspired.", and "It improves me, and helps me try new things." Which the researchers describe as "relevant scale items for measuring surveillance needs in U&G".

Personal Identification

According to Katz, Blumler (1992) in the context of U&G theory, personal identification includes "personal reference, reality exploration, and value reinforcement". McQuail (2010) summarizes Identification to refer to "a shared sense of belonging to a culture, society, place or social grouping".

Hereby Kim et al. (2015), in the context of a uses and gratifications (U&G) approach to investigate the relation between magazine reading experience and advertising engagement, assign items to this dimension "that include the terms designating the readers themselves (i.e., "my" or "me")" which "denote self-attachment to the magazine reading experience (i.e., how people project their concepts of self through the experience of magazine reading)". Moreover, "based on an array of principles about self-concept that each individual possesses, the items in this factor stress the congruence between self-concept and magazine reading" (Kim et al. , 2015) . How people think and feel about themselves is hereby significant and the "impulse to absorb or reject information depends on its consistency with the reader's existing structure of self". Therefore, exemplary items used in Kim et al.'s (2015) survey are "It's for people like me", "The stories absorb me" and "I feel I know the writers". In the case of Funk, where "young, talented media-makers, who are the faces of Funk" (ZDF, 2016) a feeling about wanting to know the makers better is therefore a relevant gratification which should be obtained by the audience.

Entertainment

Concerning the entertainment of audiences, McKee (2012) identifies a "distinct aesthetic system of entertainment – the characteristics that make for successful entertainment products: vulgarity, story, seriality and adaptation, happy endings, interactivity, a fast and loud aesthetic, spectacle, emotion and fun". More concretely, Bartsch & Hartmann (2015) conclude that "film viewers often seem to be attracted to content that is perceived as meaningful, moving, and thought-provoking".

Moreover, "entertainment consumption has been linked to experiences of competence and autonomy, contemplation of moral dilemmas, as well as deeper reflection about the characters, and re-evaluation of one's own life" (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2015).

Further research by Bartsch & Hartmann (2015) suggest that "individuals feel entertained by media content to the extent that they have fun and enjoy the cognitive and affective states that are elicited during media exposure" and that "entertainment consumption serves to induce lighthearted and cheerful states that are characterized by positive valence and balanced arousal, and help distract the person from negative thoughts".

Malthouse (2007) analyzed the effects of magazine experiences on attitude toward the advertisement, after controlling for current bottled water consumption and general advertising interest. The experience labels were ranked by slope, which indicate that the higher the slope value is for a label, the more favorable the reader is to the bottled water ad.

Amongst the top ten items, which thus have the strongest influence on magazine readers when it comes to consumption experience, is "I feel good when I read it", which can be linked to the findings of Bartsch & Hartmann (2015) and thus be used as an item in the dimension of entertainment needs.

Social Interaction

Derived from the public-law contract of April 18th, 2016, audience involvement for Funk means ensuring interactive communication, ensuring communication is geared to the target group and ensuring opportunities for audience participation. Further, after having investigated three European public broadcasters which have common difficulties in terms of attracting younger audiences and adopt participation strategies to resolve this, Vanhaeght & Donders (2015) conclude that Audience participation needs to be valued more and in concrete ways by the public broadcasters instead of implementing it as short-term audience strategies.

Moreover, interactivity was defined by Heeter (1989) as a multidimensional concept which amongst other comprises extent of effort for a user to access information, quantity of choice provided to the users as well as the degree to which a media system facilitates interpersonal communication between certain users.

Based on his research, Rubin (1983) formulates the initial viewing motivation statements for the index of social interaction to be involving friends and family which is physically present and e.g. "So I can talk with other people about what's on", meaning that the topics presented by the program to be discussed is a viewing motivation and thus a need that calls for fulfillment.

2.4 Conclusions

The outcomes from the literature research unfold the following catalogue of research questions which need to be investigated in order to conduct an adequate research and to answer the main question. Hereby the findings of McQuail (2010) regarding general motives for media use are used as gratification dimensions, namely information, personal identity, entertainment, and social interaction.

1. To what extent is the audience's need of information fulfilled by Funk?
2. To what extent is the audience's need of personal identification fulfilled by Funk?
3. To what extent is the audience's need of entertainment fulfilled by Funk?
4. To what extent is the audience's need of social interaction fulfilled by Funk?
5. How do socio-demographics factors and the fulfillment of needs correlate?
6. How do viewing behavior and use and the fulfillment of needs correlate?

Based on the findings recommendations can be given to Funk regarding the fulfillment of their objectives, or more precisely recommendations for Funk on how to ensure the audience obtains more gratification from the content network.

Since Gratifications sought were already defined for Funk as per public law contract, the thesis at hand focuses on gratifications obtained and compare those to other variables such as age, gender, frequency of use etc.

Further, as drawn conclusions from the literature review above for the thesis at hand, a quantitative study with a large-scale survey using a structured questionnaire with having the items divided into gratification dimensions is most suitable - similarly to the researches conducted by Kim et al. (2015) and Rubin (1983). Also, similarly to Rubin (1983) results are analyzed per factor and Pearson product-moment correlations which are computed to assess the bivariate associations among the gratification dimensions and other variables.

3. Research Methods

Since the primary purpose of my research is “to portray an accurate profile of persons [...]” it is descriptive by definition (Robson, 2002). It is conclusive in nature and gathers quantifiable information on various metrics explained hereafter. Descriptive research is well suited for gaining knowledge concerning the correlations of sociodemographic factors for Funk to take more target-group-specific measures. However, the reasons for those correlations cannot be examined and require separate research.

The descriptive study assesses the audiences point of view after one year of Funk – something that is yet missing, especially in correlation with their set of objectives. Funk already has stats about viewing figures which are exponentially growing. But since they declare this to not yet be completely satisfying the research at hand gives further recommendations for improvement based on investigating the audience’s experience, or, more precisely: by analyzing the gratifications the audience obtains from Funk.

The variables for the analysis are within the four identified needs as well as sociodemographic dimensions: Funk differentiates between four sub groups, namely 14- to 16-, 17- to 19, 20- to 24- and 25- to 29-year olds. Funk further divides its audience into male and female (Funk, personal communication, 5th of October 2017). Moreover, to identify possible correlations between the use of Funk and the gratifications obtained from Funk, variables such as consumption frequency, amount of regularly watched formats and preferred formats are included as items in the questionnaire.

A structured questionnaire was used to conduct the survey. It was a large-scale survey, representative of the people who are aware of Funk and watch Funk’s content and are part of the target audience, meaning 14- to 29- year old Germans. Questionnaires can be cheaper than personal interviewing and quicker if the sample is large and widely dispersed. In the case at hand the sample is likely dispersed all over Germany.

In order to reach respondents a link to the online questionnaire was placed under recent Funk YouTube and Facebook videos of all available formats in the comment section, in order to reach all age and gender sub-groups and get an extensive, global overview of the audience as a whole, ensuring that the respondents have as various traits as possible. With an online questionnaire more respondents can be reached in a shorter time period compared to other approaches, leading to more empirical data and ensuring its generalizability and hence its validity (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). With this method it is also facilitated to reveal where strong opinions and attitude differences occur for example between genders or age groups. However, survey research has major depth and knowledge limitations since the depth is limited and the knowledge obtained solely covers the identified variables. But this is the downside which has to be considered and accepted “in order to gain a complete overview of a wide and/or dispersed area, and knowledge that can be generalized” (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010).

Then, the analysis of the results of the survey describes the substantial differences between the sub groups and objective dimensions. Rubin (1983) researched Television Uses and Gratifications by examining television viewing patterns, (which included viewing behavior and program preferences) and television viewing motivations via a large-scale questionnaire survey with adult respondents. One part of questionnaire was divided into 5 factors such as e.g. “Information/Learning” and “Entertainment” whereby each factor comprised 3 items, such as e.g. “Because it helps me learn things about myself and others” for the factor “Information/Learning”.

Other parts of the questionnaire were sociodemographic items and items about program preferences and viewing behavior. Later the results were analyzed per factor and Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to assess the bivariate associations among viewing motivation dimensions. Similarly, the analysis of results at hand comprises an examination of correlations between variables regarding viewing behavior, use, sociodemographics and gratifications obtained.

Moreover, the technique of stratified random sampling will be made use of when applying a questionnaire as research instrument, whereby the population is divided into 4 strata, which are the 4 target audience age sub-groups. A random systematic sample is then drawn from each of the strata. Stratified random sampling has better comparison and hence representation across strata than cluster, systematic and simple random sampling and it can be ensured that each of the strata is represented proportionally within the sample (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Of all respondents 50% should be male and 50% should be female; and 25% of all respondents should be in one of the four respective age groups, again similar to Rubin's (1983) procedure. However, Rubin (1983) states that future gratifications investigations should refocus "questions of individual needs and motivations in light of societal structure, media characteristics and audience relations" which my research will be doing by broadening the conception of the audience-medium relationship (Rubin, 1983).

According to Stutely's (2003), it is advised to have a minimum number of 30 respondents for statistical analyses. To increase the reliability however, in the research at hand a larger sample size is more suitable.

As deduced from the literature review and problem analysis, the questions in the questionnaire would be divided into the topic sections: Sociodemographic, Viewing Behavior and Gratification, whereby the gratification section is sub-divided into Information, Personal identification, Entertainment and Social Interaction while each of those variables consists of 4 items.

In order to apply uses and gratification theory for an examination of correlations between magazine reading experience and advertising engagement, Kim et al. (2015) make use of a thirty-nine item list proposed by Malthouse et al. (2007) which they deemed to be "culture free" thus also applicable for German respondents.

Even though the items were generated for the purpose of surveying magazine readers, most items are kept general enough to be applicable for consumers of other media. Moreover, Kim et al. (2015) categorized the items respectively to four identified audience needs: information, personal identity, entertainment, and social interaction. Some needs can be translated to the objectives of Funk aiming at informing, orienting, entertaining and involving the audience and thus are the basis for some of the questionnaire items. For the variable "Information" that would be e.g. "it improves me, and helps me try new things" or "It's relevant and useful to me".

Hence, the questionnaire for Funk's audience will include some of the items used by Kim et al. (2015) and Rubin (1983) as well as other items formulated based on literature review.

The questionnaire would be provided in German and the outcomes later translated to English. Also, using a scale from 1-5 is more adequate than just yes/no questions, because probably not every respondent has strong opinions on certain topics (e.g. if they are not Funk users for a long time) and the scale provides more accuracy and insights into tendencies. Moreover, stating the questions in the ego-perspective facilitates for the respondents to rate their experience on the scales and be more personal about their views.

(The questionnaire is provided in the Appendices)

4. Results and Analysis

The survey was accessed online by 199 people. 14 questionnaires were excluded because respondents skipped one or more questions. The total usable sample was then 185. The sample skewed male with 73.51% ($n = 136$) and 26.49% female ($n = 49$) respondents. In the following are the results from the online survey which is later analyzed as well as compared to earlier findings.

4.1 Viewing Behavior and Use Results

When asked about the number of videos watched per week (1 = Less than once a month, 2 = Less than once a week, 3 = Only a few times a week, 4 = Several times a week, 5 = Daily), most respondents watch Funk videos several times a week ($N = 66$; 35.68%) while only 12.97% watch them daily and less than one-tenth watches them less than once a month (8.11%). Overall, most respondents watch Funk videos more than once a week ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.13$).

Further, regarding the amounts of regularly watched Funk formats (1 = 0, 2 = 1-3, 3 = 3-5, 4 = 5-7, 5 = more than 7), only few report to watch more than 7 formats ($N = 8$; 4.32%) while the majority watches 1 to 3 formats ($N = 85$; 45.95%) or 3 to 5 formats (30.81%). Still, 11.35% ($N = 21$) state to not watch any formats regularly at all. Overall, the respondents likely watch between 1 and 5 formats regularly ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.94$).

Concerning for how long the respondents have been watching Funk now (1 = Less than one month, 2 = More than one month, 3 = More than 3 months, 4 = More than 6 months, 5 = about 1 year), The majority of respondents have been watching Funk for about 1 year ($N = 98$; 52.97%) or at least for more than 6 months ($N = 53$; 28.65%) while only 6 respondents (3.24%) report to have been watching Funk for less than one month. Overall, the respondents appear to know Funk for rather long, for over 6 months on average ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.03$).

When it comes to the platforms on which Funk is consumed, a clear majority of 91.89% ($N = 170$) watches Funk via YouTube. Only 7.03% state to mostly watch Funk's offered content via Facebook and only 2 respondents watch it via the Funk App (1.08%). The Funk website, Snapchat and Instagram were not stated to be used as main platforms to consume Funk.

The seven favorite Funk formats of the respondents are computed by the amount of mentions of a format in the top 3 lists of the respondents. Walulis was mentioned by 64 respondents in their top 3 lists, followed by Coldmirror ($N = 53$), World Wide Wohnzimmer ($N = 34$), MrWissen2Go ($N = 33$), Game Two ($N = 33$), Jäger und Sammler ($N = 26$) and Gute Arbeit Originals ($N = 26$).

From the respondents with an overall GO mean of 2.00 or below ($N = 34$), the most watched formats are Jäger & Sammler ($N = 11$), Game Two ($N = 9$), Coldmirror ($N = 8$), Datteltäter ($N = 7$) and Auf Klo ($N = 7$). However, from the respondents with an overall GO mean of 4.00 or higher ($N = 29$), the most watched formats are Walulis ($N = 11$), Bohemian Browser Ballett ($N = 10$), Y-Kollektiv ($N = 8$), Gute Arbeit Originals ($N = 6$) and Game Two ($N = 6$).

Interestingly, only a minority of respondents with a higher overall GO mean mentioned Jäger & Sammler ($N = 2$), Coldmirror ($N = 2$) and Auf Klo ($N = 4$) while none mentioned Datteltäter. On the other hand, respondents with a lower overall GO mean only a minority reports to like Bohemian Browser Ballett ($N = 1$), Walulis ($N = 3$), Y-Kollektiv ($N = 1$) and Gute Arbeit Originals ($N = 2$).

Another observation is that from the respondents with an overall GO mean of below 3.00 ($N = 95$), 15 mentioned Datteltäter to be in their top 3 favorite format lists, while none of the respondents with an overall GO mean of 3.00 or higher mentioned that format.

4.2 Gratifications Results

Using a five-point Likert scale (1 = fully disagree to 5 = fully agree), the respondents gave their opinions on 16 gratification items proposed in the questionnaire (cf. Table 1).

When looking at the overall GO mean of 2.95 ($SD = 0.35$) for all respondents ($N = 185$), it slightly is a rather negative outcome, since considering that a value of 2.00 would be an overall "rather disagreeing" tendency of the respondents concerning the items and 3.00 would be neutral, everything above 3.00 is considered as rather positive outcome while everything from 3.00 and below is considered a rather negative outcome.

This allows the interpretation of the results, that female respondents ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.39$) have their needs rather positively fulfilled compared to males who have them less fulfilled ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.34$). There also are differences within the age groups: The youngest audience members aged 14 to 16 have their needs more fulfilled by Funk ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.49$) than the respondents of older age groups such as 17 to 19 and 15 to 29 ($M = 2.89$) or 20 to 24 ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.30$).

Females aged 14 to 16 obtain the most gratifications from Funk's offered contents ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.48$), while males aged 25 to 29 obtain the least ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.46$). The females aged 25 to 29 however obtain second most gratifications from Funk ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.31$).

		Overall	Male	Female	Aged 14-16	Aged 17-19	Aged 20-24	Aged 25-29
	<i>Amount of Respondents N</i>	<i>N=185</i>	<i>N=136</i>	<i>N=49</i>	<i>N=25</i>	<i>N=53</i>	<i>N=68</i>	<i>N=39</i>
	<i>Standard Deviation SD</i>	<i>0.35</i>	<i>0.34</i>	<i>0.39</i>	<i>0.49</i>	<i>0.37</i>	<i>0.30</i>	<i>0.42</i>
	<i>Overall Mean M</i>	<i>2.96</i>	<i>2.90</i>	<i>3.13</i>	<i>3.18</i>	<i>2.89</i>	<i>2.98</i>	<i>2.89</i>
	Funk's offers contents which...							
Information		2.86	2.78	3.08	3.20	2.74	2.85	2.83
	Provide trustworthy information	2.69	2.61	2.92	2.76	2.62	2.71	2.72
	Make me improve myself	2.80	2.70	3.08	3.20	2.66	2.78	2.77
	Inspire me	3.01	2.91	3.29	3.32	2.81	3.15	2.85
	Are relevant and useful to me	2.95	2.91	3.04	3.52	2.87	2.76	3.00
Personal Identification		2.93	2.92	2.95	3.12	2.85	2.94	2.88
	Makes me feel I know the content creators better	2.70	2.74	2.61	2.64	2.55	2.74	2.90
	Absorb me	3.30	3.24	3.47	3.64	3.21	3.19	3.38
	Are made for people like me	2.99	2.98	3.04	3.48	2.94	3.07	2.62
	Give me a sense of belonging (e.g. to a sub-culture or fanbase)	2.71	2.73	2.67	2.72	2.70	2.76	2.64
Entertainment		3.23	3.12	3.54	3.47	3.13	3.26	3.16
	Make me feel good when I watch them	3.01	2.87	3.41	3.20	2.79	3.26	2.74
	Entertain me	3.77	3.66	4.06	4.20	3.79	3.54	3.85
	Distract me from negative thought	2.76	2.63	3.12	2.88	2.60	2.82	2.77
	Make me contemplate and reflect	3.39	3.24	3.55	3.60	3.34	3.43	3.28
Social Interaction		2.82	2.78	2.94	2.91	2.83	2.86	2.69
	Offer enough opportunities for participation	2.52	2.49	2.59	2.32	2.60	2.69	2.23
	Target me adequately with their communication	2.94	2.88	3.12	3.08	2.92	3.01	2.74
	Motivate me to discuss (presented) topics with other people (e.g. other audience members)	3.38	3.40	3.31	3.56	3.40	3.26	3.44
	Value my feedback and involvement	2.46	2.36	2.73	2.68	2.42	2.49	2.33

Table 1: Results overall, per gender and per age group

Information

Looking at the results of the information dimension of gratifications, overall the respondents "rather disagree" on the respective item index ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.35$). Hereby there is a difference between the male respondents who feel give the dimension lower scores ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.34$) than females do ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.39$). It is also striking to see the strong difference between young females aged 14 to 16 ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.48$) who feel their information needs are much more fulfilled by Funk than older males aged 17 to 19 ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.43$) as well as aged 25 to 29 years ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 2.70$). In fact, the only other sub group tending their information needs to be rather fulfilled are females aged 25 to 29 years old ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.31$).

In other words, the sub groups of females aged 14 to 16 and 25 to 29 report that Funk offers contents that rather provide trustworthy information, make them improve themselves, inspire them and are relevant and useful to them, while especially males in the age groups 17 to 19 and 20 to 24 tend to disagree on those statements.

Also, males aged 14 to 16 disagree most with the statement that Funk offers contents that provide trustworthy information ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.53$) quite in contrast to their female counterparts ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.48$).

Personal Identification

On the dimension of personal identification, the respondents on average are neutral but slightly tend to rather be disagreeing ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.35$). Especially regarding content that makes the respondents feel they know the content creators better ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.35$) or give them a sense of belonging ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.35$), Funk appears to perform rather poorly. However, the respondents tend to feel that the offered contents absorb them ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.35$).

Again, females aged 14 to 16 ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.48$) and 25 to 29 ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.31$) deem their personal identification needs as rather fulfilled, while males in the age groups 17 to 19 ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.43$) and 20 to 24 ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.46$) tend to not esteem these needs to be fulfilled.

However, also females aged 20 to 24 report that Funk is performing rather poorly on this dimension ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.53$). They especially appear to receive the least sense of belonging from Funk's contents ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 0.53$) and rather disagree to getting the feeling to knowing the content creators better ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 0.53$).

Entertainment

At first glance it appears that the audience obtains high gratification when it comes to be entertained by Funk: of the four need dimension indices entertainment has the highest value overall ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.35$). Especially the female ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.39$) and 14- to 16-year olds ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.49$) feel that Funk offers contents that entertain them. As per sub group, 14-16-year old females feel most entertained by Funk ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.48$). Also, the outcomes show that Funk offers contents which make this sub group contemplate and reflect most ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.48$).

The needs of the entertainment are least fulfilled for male respondents of the age groups 17 to 19 years ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.43$) and 25 to 29 years ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.46$). It is especially striking that 17- to 19-year-old males report the least distraction from negative thought with Funk's offered contents ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.43$).

Social Interaction

Social interaction as a gratification dimension scores the lowest according to the respondents ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.35$). The respondents overall do not feel their feedback and involvement to be valued by Funk ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.35$) and neither do they deem Funk to offer sufficient opportunities for participation ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.35$); especially the older audience of 25-29-year olds ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.42$) as well as the younger audience of 14-16-year olds ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 0.49$) does not think that there are enough participation opportunities for them.

On the other hand, the respondents report the offered contents to be rather motivating when it comes to discussing presented topics with other people ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.35$).

		Female 14-16	Male 14-16	Female 17-19	Male 17-19	Female 20-24	Male 20-24	Female 25-29	Male 25-29
	Amount of Respondents N	N=6	N=19	N=14	N=39	N=23	N=45	N=6	N=33
	Standard Deviation SD	0.48	0.53	0.35	0.43	0.53	0.23	0.31	0.46
	Mean Overall M	3.95	2.93	3.05	2.83	2.85	3.05	3.54	2.77
	Funk's offers contents which...								
	Information	4.17	2.89	2.98	2.65	2.73	2.91	3.58	2.70
	Provide trustworthy information	4.00	2.37	2.79	2.56	2.57	2.78	3.50	2.58
	Make me improve myself	4.50	2.79	3.07	2.51	2.52	2.91	3.83	2.58
	Inspire me	3.83	3.16	3.29	2.64	3.09	3.18	3.50	2.73
	Are relevant and useful to me	4.33	3.26	2.79	2.90	2.74	2.78	3.50	2.91
	Personal Identification	3.63	2.96	2.98	2.80	2.64	3.09	3.38	2.80
	Makes me feel I know the content creators better	3.00	2.53	2.79	2.46	2.17	3.02	3.50	2.79
	Absorb me	4.33	3.42	3.14	3.23	3.43	3.07	3.50	3.36
	Are made for people like me	4.17	3.26	2.93	2.95	2.70	3.27	3.50	2.45
	Give me a sense of belonging (e.g. to a sub-culture or fanbase)	3.00	2.63	3.07	2.56	2.26	3.02	3.00	2.58
	Entertainment	4.25	3.22	3.41	3.03	3.36	3.22	3.79	3.05
	Make me feel good when I watch them	4.17	2.89	3.00	2.72	3.39	3.20	3.67	2.58
	Entertain me	4.50	4.11	4.14	3.67	3.87	3.38	4.17	3.79
	Distract me from negative thought	4.00	2.53	3.21	2.38	2.70	2.89	3.67	2.61
	Make me contemplate and reflect	4.33	3.37	3.29	3.36	3.48	3.40	3.67	3.21
	Social Interaction	3.75	2.64	2.80	2.85	2.68	2.96	3.42	2.55
	Offer enough opportunities for participation	3.33	2.00	2.86	2.51	2.17	2.96	2.83	2.12
	Target me adequately with their communication	3.67	2.89	3.00	2.90	2.87	3.09	3.83	2.55
	Motivate me to discuss (presented) topics with other people (e.g. other audience members)	4.17	3.37	2.71	3.64	3.39	3.20	3.50	3.42
	Value my feedback and involvement	3.83	2.32	2.64	2.33	2.30	2.58	3.50	2.12

Table 2: Results regarding the specific sub groups

		All Respondents
		N=185
	Viewing Behavior and Use	
On average I watch Funk videos...		M = 3.30, SD = 1.13
	5 (Daily)	24 = 12.97 %
	4 (Several times a week)	66 = 35.68 %
	3 (Only a few times a week)	52 = 28.11 %
	2 (Less than once a week)	28 = 15.14 %
	1 (Less than once a month)	15 = 8.11 %
Amount of Funk formats I watch regularly:		M = 2.48, SD= 0.94
	5 (More than 7)	8 = 4.32 %
	4 (5-7)	14 = 7.57 %
	3 (3-5)	57 = 30.81 %
	2 (1-3)	85 = 45.95 %
	1 (0)	21 = 11.35 %
I mostly watch Funk's offered content via:		
	Facebook	13 = 7.03 %
	Youtube	170 = 91.89 %
	Funk App	2 = 1.08 %
	Funk Website	0
	Snapchat	0
	Instagram	0
I have been watching Funk for about:		M = 4.23, SD = 1.02
	5 (1 year)	98 = 52.97 %
	4 (More than 6 months)	53 = 28.65 %
	3 (More than 3 months)	21 = 11.35 %
	2 (More than 1 month)	7 = 3.78 %
	1 (Less than 1 month)	6 = 3.24 %
Funk's offered formats I like to watch most are... (Overall top 7)		<i>Mentioned in their top 3 list by:</i>
	Walulis	64
	Coldmirror	53
	World Wide Wohnzimmer	34
	MrWissen2Go	33
	Game Two	33
	Jäger und Sammler	26
	Gute Arbeit Originals	26

Table 3: Results about viewing behavior

Correlations

By computing Pearson correlations, it is possible to see relations and their effect size between different variables (cf. Table 3).

Table 3 : Pearson-Correlation Factor r between Gratifications Obtained and Other Variables

Gratifications Obtained		Sociodemographics, Viewing behavior and Use					
	Funk's offers contents which...	Gender	Age	Platform	Frequency	Amount	Period
Information	Provide trustworthy information	0,09	0,00	0,22	0,46	0,23	0,06
	Make me improve myself	0,12	-0,07	0,16	0,45	0,23	0,06
	Inspire me	0,12	-0,03	0,27	0,37	0,18	0,05
	Are relevant and useful to me	0,04	-0,14	0,24	0,46	0,27	0,07
Personal Identification	Makes me feel I know the content creators better	-0,04	0,06	0,07	0,10	-0,01	0,03
	Absorb me	0,08	-0,07	0,08	0,31	0,27	0,10
	Are made for people like me	0,02	-0,11	0,15	0,37	0,21	0,08
	Give me a sense of belonging (e.g. to a sub-culture or fanbase)	-0,02	0,00	0,00	0,17	0,21	0,04
Entertainment	Make me feel good when I watch them	0,16	0,01	0,22	0,45	0,24	0,07
	Entertain me	0,14	-0,13	0,19	0,34	0,26	0,08
	Distract me from negative thought	0,16	0,01	0,15	0,34	0,09	0,14
	Make me contemplate and reflect	0,07	-0,04	0,14	0,25	0,20	0,05
Social Interaction	Offer enough opportunities for participation	0,03	0,03	0,22	0,27	0,20	-0,08
	Target me adequately with their communication	0,08	-0,03	0,24	0,41	0,21	0,01
	Motivate me to discuss (presented) topics with other people (e.g. other audience members)	-0,03	-0,05	0,14	0,13	0,25	0,07
	Value my feedback and involvement	0,11	-0,04	0,13	0,33	0,11	0,07
Mean		0,07	-0,04	0,16	0,33	0,20	0,06

Generally, the effect size of correlation means between variables such as age ($r = -0.04$), gender ($r = 0.07$), period for how long the respondents have been watching Funk ($r = 0.06$) and the GO variables is very small. This indicates that factors such as gender, age and using period do not significantly affect how the respondents experience Funk.

The effect size of correlation means between the variables of Amount of Funk contents regularly consumed ($r = 0.20$), platform used to consume Funk contents ($r = 0.16$) and the GO variables is slightly higher, but still considerably small.

More significant are the effect sizes of the correlations between the variable of frequency, meaning how many Funk videos are consumed per week by the respondents, and the GO variables. The correlation mean is of medium effect size ($r = 0.33$). This indicates that the frequency has a medium strong relationship with how many gratification needs are fulfilled. Respondents who consume Funk more frequently especially feel that Funk provides trustworthy information ($r = 0.46$), makes them improve themselves ($r = 0.45$), are relevant and useful to them ($r = 0.46$), makes them feel good when they watch the offered contents ($r = 0.45$) and targets them adequately with their communication ($r = 0.41$). However, the correlations between respondents who watch Funk formats more frequently and the fulfilling of needs such as Funk making them feel the content creators better ($r = 0.10$), giving them a sense of belonging ($r = 0.17$) and motivating them to discuss presented topics with other people ($r = 0.13$) are of rather small effect size.

Moreover, people who watch more different Funk formats also tend to watch Funk videos more frequently per week ($r = 0.57$).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

In the following, the conclusions from the result analysis are drawn accordingly to the formulated research questions (c.f. Chapter 2)

The needs comprised by the gratification dimension of information are rather not fulfilled, especially for males. The difference here is especially striking between older males who feel these needs quite less fulfilled and young females who agree on most information items to be provided by Funk. A significant part of the audience is missing trustworthy information from Funk as well as they are missing contents that make them improve themselves, inspire them and is relevant and useful to them.

On the dimension of personal identification, the respondents on average are neutral but slightly tend to rather be disagreeing. Especially regarding content that makes the respondents feel they know the content creators better or give them a sense of belonging Funk appears to perform rather poorly. However, the respondents tend to feel that the offered contents absorb them. Here, too, young females deem their personal identification as rather fulfilled, while older males tend to not esteem these needs to be fulfilled.

Further, the audience obtains most gratifications on the entertainment dimensions. Here Funk appears to perform well and fulfill most audience needs. The needs of the entertainment are least fulfilled for male respondents of the age groups 17 to 19 years and 25 to 29 years. It is especially striking that 17- to 19-year-old males report the least distraction from negative thought with Funk's offered contents.

Social interaction as a gratification dimension scores the lowest according to the respondents. The respondents overall do not feel their feedback and involvement to be valued by Funk and neither do they deem Funk to offer sufficient opportunities for participation. On the other hand, the respondents report the offered contents to be rather motivating when it comes to discussing presented topics with other people.

When it comes to frequency, respondents who consume Funk formats more often have more of their needs fulfilled. It indicates that either the needs are fulfilled because they consume Funk content more frequently or they consume Funk content more frequently in order to fulfill their needs. Moreover, there is a small correlation between the amount of regularly watched formats and the fulfillment of needs: Analysis results show that there is a tendency that the more formats are regularly consumed, the more gratifications are obtained from Funk.

The gender or age viewed separately do not strongly correlate with the gratifications obtained by Funk (cf. Table 3). But when looking at the 8 different identified subgroups, where age and gender are combined, stronger differences can be identified (cf. Table 2):

The youngest age group of 14- to 16-year olds have their gratification needs most fulfilled by Funk, especially female respondents. Within one age group there is an interesting insight: males aged 25 to 29 obtain the least while the females aged 25 to 29 obtain second most gratifications from Funk as per sub group.

This is reflecting the overall gender gap of GO from Funk, whereby males overall receive less gratifications from Funk than females do. However, it should be noted that the values overall are not strikingly high but in fact rather having a tendency towards negative scopes. This is also reflected in the low Facebook ratings for Funk mentioned in the introduction chapter.

As the results reveal Funk seems to miss their point of fulfilling a major part of the target audiences' needs according to their set of objectives anchored in the public law contract. Concludingly, the conducted research indicates that Funk is not meeting their own objectives and there is room for improvement.

5.2 Recommendations

Overall, more understanding of the reality of life as well as interests and characteristics of the target audience is recommendable to Funk. Hence, Funk could request from ARD and ZDF to have more audience research done e.g. in form of control groups.

Regarding the dimensions of information there is quite some room for improvement. It might be necessary to analyze contents more regarding journalistic standards before making them available online.

When it comes to the personal identification needs, the audience appears to need more relatable content creators, or to have the content creators be more relatable and personal. Therefore, Funk could e.g. expand their range by launching events where the audience can meet the content creators in person. A few content creators went to certain events and conventions (Blog.Funk, 2016), but a special Funk convention would not only bring Funk, the content creators and the audience closer together, but also make the audience aware of the range of formats Funk offers. Hence, possibly the audience could have more needs fulfilled from the content network when they discover the large range of formats offered. Since almost 60% of the audience report to watch 3 or less Funk formats regularly, a step in this direction can be beneficial.

The entertainment dimension of gratifications shows rather positive results but here as well there is room for improvement. It is recommended to analyze in depth which elements are well received and develop those even further accordingly. It is especially recommended to investigate why 17 to 19 year old males feel not distracted from negative thoughts by Funk's offered contents. It raises the question whether Funk's content might even produce negative thought for this sub group. Another issue that calls for investigation would be whether Funk's focus regarding its contents might lay too much on entertainment. It is recommended to Funk to introspect whether the entertainment factor is represented disproportionately high amongst its offered contents, or generally which factors and contents should be integrated more into the content network's portfolio, in order to adjust accordingly and ensure proportional distribution of gratifications for the audience.

That the dimension of social interaction scores the lowest could be an indication to why Funk's performance according to their set of objectives is rather negative. The feedback and involvement of the audience does not appear to be valued by Funk. This outcome is a call for action and it is strongly recommended to Funk to put more time and effort to internalize and develop communication with their audience, not only in order to fulfill audience needs, but also to understand where certain parts of the content network need improvement and what kind of improvement. As a start, more opportunities for involvement should be created, or, if this is already extensively done, raise awareness for the audience about the various involvement opportunities. Also, since respondents report the offered contents to be rather motivating when it comes to discussing presented topics with other people, Funk could gain more insights into their audience's point of view by analyzing the discussions of the audience in case those take place in form of public comments on e.g. YouTube or Facebook.

It also would be recommendable for Funk to divide their target audience sub groups more: Instead of just age and gender, variables such as ethnic background, level of education and occupation are relevant in order to gain deeper insights, which is also applicable for further research.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

There were some limitations to the study at hand. Firstly, the sub groups are not represented as proportionally as anticipated. Because the link to the questionnaire was placed as YouTube comment under every single Funk format, it likely leads to a disproportionality of respondents, since likely more respondents watching the popular channels would take part in the survey than respondents from less popular channels, simply because they have less viewers and hence less potential respondents. With a larger time frame a larger part of the population could be sampled whereby all sub groups as well as viewers of all formats are represented proportionally which would lead to more valid and reliable results.

Another limitation would be that ethnicity/origin as well as level of education of the respondents were not considered during the survey. If those variables were included, deeper analysis and insight would have been possible. Also, a computation of the correlations between the 16 gratifications items could have been beneficial and lead to more conclusions and recommendations, which had to be skipped due to a lack of time.

Moreover, even though my e-mail address was given in the questionnaire for feedback or questions, I only received few. One was from a person concerned about the gender options in the questionnaire being only "female" and "male". The person stated that they felt excluded from participating in the questionnaire.

Also, since Funk is financed by broadcasting fees, financial aspects could be involved in future research. Knowing that some of the Funk users (such as e.g. working individuals aged older than 18 years) are basically paying the fees in order to sustain the channel network it would be of relevance to understand how financial variables correlate to the fulfillment of audience needs.

Although it was attempted in the research at hand, future researchers should take the necessary time to develop the described relationships or otherwise find more ways to add more diversity to the sample and generally dig deeper into exploring the audience, also over a longer time period.

Future researchers could also make use of Palmgreen & Rayburns' (1984) models to compute the relation between gratifications and satisfaction of Funk users (cf. chapter 2).

Furthermore, the results at hand could support further studies that give Funk advice on how to further improve their approaches regarding editorial, financial and strategic aspects. Eventually, the results of the study at hand could also be used for statistical inference on Funk's target audience through further data analysis. It would be interesting and relevant for Funk to have insights into developments over time: how would the research outcomes have been 9 months ago? How will they be in one year from now? By collecting and computing such data trends could be analyzed and the understanding of the audience would be facilitated, allowing Funk to develop better according to their set of objectives.

The results of my thesis could further support an audience development strategy which would use "the information about existing audiences to build new relationships and to increase attendance over time in ways that support corporate objectives" and "must rest on a knowledge of actual [audience] behavior" which can only be explored by "some form of systematic, empirical fieldwork" (Gillard, 2000). The data provided in my research could contribute to the description of Funk's audience. A description of such main user groups is "particularly useful to find out how audience groupings shift in their interests, composition and attendance over time" (Gillard, 2000). The final thesis paper including the developed methodology could moreover be useful for other public broadcasting TV channels – or TV channels in general - with similar conditions facing similar challenges regarding a lack of understanding their target audience for online-only youth-oriented channels.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

A.) Sociodemographic:

1. I am ...

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

2. I am in the following age group:

- ☐ 14-16
- ☐ 17-19
- ☐ 20-24
- ☐ 25-29

B.) Viewing Behavior and Use:

3. On average, I watch Funk videos...

Daily	Several times a week	Only a few times a week	Less than once a week	Less than once a month
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Funk's offered formats I like to watch most are... (Select a maximum of 3)

List of all offered Funk formats

5. Amount of Funk formats I watch regularly

More than 7	5-7	3-5	1-3	0
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I mostly watch Funk's offered content via...

- ☐ Funk App
- ☐ Funk Website
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Instagram

7. I have been watching Funk for about

1 year	More than 6 months	More than 3 months	More than 1 month	Less than 1 month
O	O	O	O	O

C.) Gratifications:

		Fully Agree	Rather Agree	Neutral	Rather Disagree	Fully Disagree
		(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
	Funk's offers content which...					
Information						
8.	Provide trustworthy information					
9.	Make me improve myself					
10.	Inspire me					
11.	Are relevant and useful to me					
Personal Identification						
12.	Makes me feel I know the content creators better					
13.	Absorb me					
14.	Are made for people like me					
15.	Give me a sense of belonging (e.g. to a sub-culture or fanbase)					
Entertainment						
16.	Make me feel good when I watch them					
17.	Entertain me					
18.	Distract me from negative thought					
19.	Make me contemplate and reflect					
Social Interaction						
20.	Offer enough opportunities for participation					
21.	Target me adequately with their communication					
22.	Motivate me to discuss (presented) topics with other people (e.g. other audience members)					
23.	Value my feedback and involvement					