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## Translation

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# Media Gratifications and Successful Aging Among the “Young Old”\*

Keywords:

uses and gratifications, media, retired, successful aging, morale

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### Abstract

Research literature about media use in aging has argued that the motivations to fulfill the need to connect with others or societies facilitate the elderly’s use of media and has suggested that media contribute to their fulfilling life or successful aging. From the uses and gratifications perspective, this study examines how the elderly’s use of media relate to their successful aging.

The results of a convenience sample survey in the Tokyo area (n=1644) indicated that most media gratifications may not contribute to successful aging among the Japanese “young old” (58 ~70 years). Scores from the Morale Scale are negatively correlated with media gratifications, especially consummatory gratification in television viewing. This suggests that the previous view about the role of television in aging is invalid and may be too optimistic.

In addition, the contribution of media gratifications to scores on the Morale showed little difference between retired and non-retired. This result raises questions about prevailing notions that the retired elderly lose motivation in their life and media complement their commitment to society and their social activities.

Although previous research has tended to accept the activity theory which supposes that communication would be maintained at an active level throughout the aging process, this study does not support this hypothesis.

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## 1. Introduction

With the aging of the population well underway, much effort has been devoted to utilizing new technology, either to improve health/welfare services or to open up senior markets. These proactive approaches to technology in an aging society may mitigate concerns about the socially vulnerable, contribute to their safety, and promote their adoption of a healthy and active life. However, these initiatives often ignore the perceptions of end-users and do not consider whether media contribute to the elderly's happiness or "successful aging."

Is it obvious that media contribute to successful aging? As the paradigm of a media-driven aging society is touted by the non-elderly, the popular perception of media may not necessarily match the elderly's actual views. If media use does not contribute to their successful aging, there may be a need to question anew the paradigm of media in the information society.

Based on these concerns, this study examines whether the elderly's use of media contributes to their successful aging. In particular, by applying the uses and gratifications approach, this research investigates which types of media produce what types of gratification and how these relate to the elderly's positive attitudes about their later years.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Media Gratifications and "Successful Aging"

### 2.1 Media Use and "Successful Aging"

Several studies of media use among the elderly have been conducted, with a particular focus on television use. From the uses and gratifications perspective, there have been many attempts to

ascertain the motivations for the elderly's use of media as well as to clarify the meaning and value of media for the elderly.

Investigative research has shown that the elderly's media use is not driven by entertainment-related motivations but by information-related motivations (Bower, 1973; Davis, 1971; Steiner, 1963; Wenner, 1976). Some scholars have stated that this tendency is due to the function of television in linking people to society and providing them with a sense of societal belonging (Davis et al., 1976; Harwood, 2018; Hilt & Lipschultz, 2005; Katori, 2000; Schramm, 1969). Others have mentioned that the elderly possess a strong motivation to view television because they desire to remain socially active and learn about themselves and social matters (Ostman & Jeffers, 1983). The motivation to stay connected with others and with society also seems to drive their use of other forms of media, such as the telephone (O'Keefe & Sulanowski, 1995) or the Internet (Dixon, 1997; Kong & Lee, 2017; Quinn, 2013).

These studies share the view that the elderly are "active consumers" (Young, 1979), and ascribe a positive meaning to their media use. That is to say, media use enables social participation in no small measure and fosters a happy and purposeful life.

As for successful aging, there is an ongoing debate based on the two opposing theories of disengagement and activity in the field of gerontology. The former argues that as one ages, social disengagement affects individual happiness (Cumming & Henry, 1961), and the latter argues that remaining active in one's later life leads to higher levels of happiness (Lemon et al., 1972).

However, there is no research that directly tackles the relationship between media use and successful aging. Using a panel survey, Graney

and Graney (1974) discovered evidence suggesting that, with age, media use increases as physical activity decreases; they also noted that the elderly continue to interact with society in “somewhat different ways than in their younger years.” Other findings also posit that the elderly’s media use cannot be explained through disengagement theory and that positive attitudes toward media are positively correlated with successful aging (Davis et al., 1976; Nussbaum et al., 2000; Schramm, 1969).

These, however, are just only analogical hypotheses extrapolated from the amount or frequency of media consumption among the aged, not from empirical research about the impact of media use on successful aging. It is undeniable that they are just optimistic interpretations of media use.

Do media promote active and happy lives? The aim of this study is to directly reveal the kind of relationship that media gratification has with successful aging. In other words, it will verify whether media gratifications possess a positive relationship with successful aging (Hypothesis 1).

## 2.2 Retirement and Substitutional Function of Media

According to the uses and gratifications theory, media functions as an alternative for social activities and interpersonal relationships. In other words, media is a means to achieve human goals and acts as a substitute when those goals cannot be achieved directly (Katz et al., 1974).

There is some mentions of media offering functional alternatives in light of the elderly’s diminishing capacities for daily activity. Scholars contend that “mass media provide to older persons a socially acceptable means of

accomplishing activity substitution” (Powell & Williamson, 1985) or that an “older person will tend to substitute mass media communication for interpersonal communication” (Bliese, 1982). People use media to satiate their desires when they cannot be as socially active as they once were.

If this is true, retirement (leaving work) could have a significant impact on media use as it is a pivotal event in later life social activities. Comstock et al. (1978) concluded that television viewing increased with age because media “serve as a source of information and stimulation in regard to the outside world that was once provided by interpersonal ties.” Kubey (1980) also posited that “television is sought to supply a need for serious local information which, prior to retirement, was found to some extent at work.” If these substitution functions of media existed, media use should affect retirees far more than non-retirees and should contribute more to successful aging among retirees than non-retirees. In other words, retiree happiness is positively affected more by media use than non-retiree happiness (Hypothesis 2).

## 3. Methods

This study used a social survey to investigate the above issue. The survey was conducted by sending out a questionnaire to 2,600 residents aged 58 to 69 years living in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region (Tokyo Metropolis, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, and Kanagawa Prefecture).<sup>2</sup>

The questionnaire focused on media gratifications and successful aging and featured questions on the participant’s gender, age, current employment status, and employment

status ten years prior (to which participants could answer “full-time,” “part-time,” or “unemployed,” which includes housewife duties).

### 3.1 Media Gratifications

For media gratifications, participants were asked about twelve purposes of media use for ten forms of media (newspapers, books and magazines, television, radio, VCR and DVD, landline telephones, mobile phones, PCs, friends, and music). Respondents used a four-point scale to signify the applicability of the purposes to their lives (1=not applicable, 2=somewhat applicable, 3=applicable, 4=very applicable). As this questionnaire did not ask about the frequency of use for these forms of media, they were instructed to select “not applicable” if they did not consume a specific form of media.

For the gratification items, a meta-analysis of preceding research, including Lometti et al. (1977), Elliott and Quattlebaum (1979), Kippax and Murray (1980), Rubin (1983), and Perse and Coutright (1993), was conducted to create a series of items with high versatility. These items were as follows: (a) to obtain information on daily life, (b) to know what goes on in the world, (c) to learn how to do things, (d) to develop ideas, (e) to learn what other people think, (f) to release tension, (g) to kill time, (h) to get away from daily problems, (i) to be entertained, (j) to share experiences with others, (k) to feel less lonely, and (l) to get energy.

### 3.2 Successful Aging

What is happiness and what makes someone happy? The answers could differ depending on the field in which the term is used. Discourse on the definition of “happiness” is often substituted with an operational definition of how happiness is

measured. An economic approach, for example, measures elements that are thought to contribute to happiness, such as political climate, infrastructure, public services, and living environment. These are used to quantify a region’s or a nation’s happiness (Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Graham, 2011).

As successful aging, which indicates a desirable later life, is also difficult to define and evaluate, approaches to ascertain subjective well-being independent of social attributes or living situation have been adopted in the fields of psychology and sociology. To investigate the factors that influence successful aging empirically, a multitude of operational concepts, such as life satisfaction or self-esteem, have been applied in these fields. In Japan, a unique overarching concept referred to as *ikigai*, or reason for being, has been discussed in the context of successful aging. While the refinement of this concept has been attempted for empirical studies, consensus on the concept has not been achieved (Hasegawa et al., 2001; Shibasaki & Aoki, 2011).

The present study used the Revised PGC Morale Scale (Lawton, 1975; translated into Japanese by Koyano, 1981) as a measure of successful aging, because it is a standardized self-reporting scale that has been widely used. Morale originally referred to unit cohesion in the military or satisfaction within a workplace setting. Kutner et al. (1956) introduced this concept in the field of gerontology, and many studies have built on this concept.

The Lawton’s Revised Scale is made up of 17 questions that include statements such as “sometimes I feel lonely,” “aging has been better than I thought,” “I am satisfied with my life,” and “I am just as happy as when I was young.” One point is assigned for positively answering each

question. The higher the number of points, the higher the morale (the maximum number of points that can be gained is 17).

While the author is aware that the Morale Scale is divided into three factors (agitation, attitude toward one’s own aging, and lonely dissatisfaction), a detailed analysis of each individual factor will not be conducted in this article. Instead, only the sums of this scale will be used to investigate overall positive attitudes toward aging in relation to media use.

#### 4. Results

The questionnaires were sent out on November 10, 2017, and those that were sent back by November 30 were treated as valid responses. The number of collected questionnaires was 1,644, a collection rate of 63.2%. Although there were 87 respondents who were 70 years old at the time of the survey, they have been included in the data.

The mean age of the sample was 64.6 years. There were 750 male (45.6%) and 894 (54.4%) female participants. Their occupational statuses were as follows: 515 (31.3%) were employed full-time, 443 (26.9%) were employed part-time, 682 (41.5%) were unemployed, and 4 did not respond (0.2%).

The overall gratification scores of TV, newspapers, books and magazines, and friends (interpersonal communication) are higher than other media (Table 1). The higher scores for mobile phones compared to landline telephones may indicate some changes in media environment among the elderly. Information-related gratifications from newspapers are evaluated highly as a whole. Friends for entertainment ( $M=3.04$ ) and music for releasing tension ( $M=3.03$ ) are also notably

high.

Next, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to condense the gratification items. From the results of the maximum likelihood factor analysis with promax rotation, a factor score for each of the ten forms of media was calculated. The ten forms of media showed a similar bifactor structure. The following high-load factors were labeled as instrumental gratifications: (a) to obtain information on daily life, (b) to know what goes on in the world, (c) to learn how to do things, (d) to develop ideas, (e) to learn what other people think, and (j) to share experiences with others. The following high-load factors were labeled as consummatory gratifications (f) to release tension, (g) to kill time, (h) to get away from daily problems, (i) to be entertained, (k) to feel less lonely, and (l) to get energy.

Previous research showed that television viewing can be classified as instrumental use (goal-directed use of media content to gratify informational needs) and ritualized use (habitual use of media to gratify diversionary needs) (Rubin, 1984), or content gratification and process gratification (Cutler & Danowski, 1980). This investigation has shown that similar classifications are useful across media types.

The mean value for the Morale Scale was 11.7 points (standard deviation: 3.78). An extremely weak but significantly positive correlation was observed with age ( $r=.087$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Although much research has shown that age is not a direct factor in the reduction of morale, the fact that it shows a positive correlation possibly calls for more investigation from other perspectives. A significant difference was not confirmed between morale and gender or employment status.

[Table 1] Descriptive statistics of gratifications

	Newspapers		Books & Magazines		TV		Radio		VCR&DVD	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
(a) to obtain information on daily life	2.80	0.89	2.62	0.87	2.90	0.75	1.87	0.99	1.53	0.79
(b) to know what goes on in the world	3.07	0.90	2.46	0.88	3.21	0.66	1.97	1.03	1.46	0.72
(c) to learn how to do things	2.00	0.83	2.63	0.89	2.45	0.82	1.47	0.74	1.67	0.89
(d) to develop ideas	2.27	0.89	2.46	0.90	2.22	0.80	1.57	0.78	1.50	0.76
(e) to learn what other people think	2.25	0.88	2.14	0.87	2.40	0.78	1.65	0.84	1.37	0.65
(f) to release tension	1.82	0.83	2.42	0.90	2.77	0.79	1.97	1.00	2.33	1.08
(g) to kill time	1.61	0.73	2.03	0.90	2.49	0.92	1.72	0.91	2.03	1.03
(h) to get away from daily problems	1.10	0.36	1.34	0.66	1.47	0.74	1.18	0.47	1.42	0.78
(i) to be entertained	1.64	0.72	2.34	0.87	2.71	0.77	1.86	0.94	2.37	1.09
(j) to share experiences with others	2.34	0.84	2.20	0.81	2.53	0.77	1.67	0.84	1.72	0.84
(k) to feel less lonely	1.17	0.44	1.33	0.63	1.56	0.78	1.34	0.68	1.39	0.75
(l) to get energy	1.67	0.79	2.10	0.87	2.27	0.86	1.68	0.87	1.98	1.01

  

	Landline Telephones		Mobile Phones		PCs		Friends		Music	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
(a) to obtain information on daily life	1.47	0.77	2.51	1.03	2.45	1.21	2.12	0.85	1.36	0.67
(b) to know what goes on in the world	1.26	0.57	2.33	1.03	2.23	1.15	2.09	0.86	1.36	0.64
(c) to learn how to do things	1.30	0.61	2.22	1.04	2.37	1.17	2.00	0.84	1.24	0.56
(d) to develop ideas	1.21	0.51	1.77	0.86	1.79	0.92	2.14	0.84	1.44	0.73
(e) to learn what other people think	1.41	0.71	1.91	0.90	1.76	0.91	2.38	0.86	1.25	0.56
(f) to release tension	1.23	0.55	1.85	0.90	1.68	0.90	2.67	0.89	3.03	0.97
(g) to kill time	1.15	0.45	1.88	0.95	1.72	0.93	1.83	0.89	2.22	0.99
(h) to get away from daily problems	1.07	0.30	1.26	0.59	1.20	0.55	1.34	0.66	1.59	0.90
(i) to be entertained	1.34	0.66	1.91	0.88	1.69	0.87	3.04	0.86	2.93	0.98
(j) to share experiences with others	1.67	0.87	2.26	0.90	1.80	0.92	2.76	0.86	1.67	0.82
(k) to feel less lonely	1.16	0.45	1.41	0.72	1.27	0.61	1.68	0.87	1.63	0.87
(l) to get energy	1.41	0.74	1.78	0.88	1.51	0.78	2.80	0.92	2.70	1.02

#### 4.1 Media Gratifications and Morale

While controlling for the effects of age, gender, and employment status, the results showed no significant positive correlations in terms of the relationship between media gratifications and morale (Table 2). In particular, a weak yet significantly negative correlation was seen for consummatory gratification among many forms of media, such as newspapers ( $r=-.071$ ,  $p<.01$ ), books and magazines ( $r=-.067$ ,  $p<.05$ ), radio ( $r=-.062$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and mobile phones ( $r=-.059$ ,  $p<.05$ ). A negative correlation was observed for instrumental gratification ( $r=-.058$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and consummatory gratification ( $r=-.181$ ,  $p<.001$ ) of

television, with a comparatively high coefficient compared to other forms of media.

While the possibility that media use has an effect on morale cannot be denied, evidence here suggests that those with high morale perceive media as less useful than those with low morale. It is possible that people with high morale feel that other activities are more useful than media use. In either event, Hypothesis 1 that “media gratifications possess a positive relationship with successful aging” was not only unsupported, but a reverse trend was observed.

To reveal the strength of media gratifications on morale, a multiple regression analysis

[Table 2] Partial correlation between morale and media gratifications (n=1644)

	correlation coefficient
instrumental (Newspapers)	.024
consummatory (Newspapers)	-.071 **
instrumental (Books&Magazines)	.032
consummatory (Books&Magazines)	-.067 *
instrumental (TV)	-.058 *
consummatory (TV)	-.181 ***
instrumental (Radio)	-.029
consummatory (Radio)	-.062 *
instrumental (VCR&DVD)	-.029
consummatory (VCR&DVD)	-.062
instrumental (Landline Telephones)	-.033
consummatory (Landline Telephones)	.009
instrumental (Mobile Phones)	-.022
consummatory (Mobile Phones)	-.059 *
instrumental (PCs)	-.054 *
consummatory (PCs)	.040
instrumental (Friends)	-.036
consummatory (Friends)	-.034
instrumental (Music)	-.005
consummatory (Music)	.011

(\* p<.05, \*\* p<01, \*\*\* p<.001 )

(stepwise) was conducted with morale as the dependent variable, and age, gender (dummy variable: male=1, female=0), presence/absence of employment (dummy variable: employed=1, unemployed=0), as well as media gratifications as the independent variables (Table 3).

The result showed that explanatory power was low overall ( $R^2=.06$ ,  $p<.001$ ). While gender, presence/absence of employment, and many gratification items were excluded as explanatory variables, the results indicated that age, instrumental gratification of books and magazines, and consummatory gratification of PCs exerted positive influences, whereas the consummatory gratification of television and instrumental gratification of PCs exerted negative influences. The influence of media

[Table 3] Variables that affect morale (n=1333)

	$\beta$	p
consummatory (TV)	-.204	***
instrumental (Books&Magazines)	.073	*
age	.104	***
consummatory (PCs)	.144	**
instrumental (PCs)	-.093	*
$R^2$	.060	***

(\* p<.05, \*\* p<01, \*\*\* p<.001 )

gratifications upon morale is limited; however, there is no doubt that there is a negative relation between consummatory use of television and morale.

#### 4.2 Retirement and Media Gratifications

A comparative analysis was conducted to ascertain the extent to which media gratifications affect retirees and non-retirees, respectively.

The sample was divided into six groups based on current occupational status and occupational status 10 years prior. Those who were both currently employed full-time and were employed full-time 10 years prior were labeled “actively employed (full-time)” (30.4%). Those who were employed part-time during both periods were labeled “actively employed (part-time)” (13.0%). Those who were currently part-time but were employed full-time 10 years prior were labeled “actively employed (full-time to part-time)” (12.2%). Those who were not currently working but were employed full-time 10 years prior were labeled “retired (from full-time)” (14.4%). Those who were not currently working but were employed part-time 10 years prior were labeled “retired (from part-time)” (16.5%). Those who were not employed at any of these points in time (including housewives) were labeled “unemployed” (16.5%). Other response patterns

(3.0%) were excluded from the analysis.

As mentioned previously, the uses and gratification theory states that people can maintain social connections in spite of reduced social activity with the help of media. Thus, in the context of this study, retirement may greatly affect attitudes toward media as it is thought to be a life event where social activity is greatly reduced. Media gratifications can be expected to affect the morale of retirees more than non-retirees (actively employed or unemployed respondents).

A multiple regression analysis (stepwise) was conducted by group, with morale as the dependent variable and age, gender (dummy variable: male=1, female=0), and media gratifications as the independent variables to verify the above

hypothesis. However, salient differences were not observed between the retired and non-retired groups (Table 4).

There were some observed characteristics for the six groups. Many gratification items were excluded as explanatory variables, but the consummatory gratification of music remained as a positive influencer of morale in the actively employed (full-time) group ( $\beta=2.471$ ,  $p<.05$ ). In the retired (from full-time) group, the instrumental gratification of books and magazines was observed to be a positive influencer of morale ( $\beta=.197$ ,  $p<.01$ ), as with the consummatory gratification of radio among the retired (from part-time) group ( $\beta=.269$ ,  $p<.01$ ). While one could argue that the instrumental use of books and magazines acts as a substitute for social

[Table 4] Variables that affect morale (by employment pattern)

	actively employed (full-time) n=499 $\beta$	actively employed (full-time to part-time) n=201 $\beta$	actively employed (part-time) n=214 $\beta$
age	2.154 *		
gender (dummy)			
instrumental (Books&Magazines)			
consummatory (TV)	-2.926 **	-.192 *	-.210 **
consummatory (Radio)			
consummatory (Music)	2.471 *		
$R^2$	.040 **	.037 *	.044 **
	retired (from full-time) n=236 $\beta$	retired (from part-time) n=172 $\beta$	unemployed n=272 $\beta$
age	.155 *		2.129 *
gender (dummy)	.185 **		
instrumental (Books&Magazines)	.197 **		
consummatory (TV)	-.253 **	-.383 ***	-3.714 ***
consummatory (Radio)		.269 **	
consummatory (Music)			
$R^2$	.152 ***	.142 ***	.088 ***

( \*  $p<.05$ , \*\*  $p<.01$ , \*\*\*  $p<.001$  )

activity, it must be said that media, as a whole, does not contribute to morale as a substitute for social activity considering the exclusion of many other gratifications.

Furthermore, the consummatory gratification of television was negatively associated with morale regardless of employment or retirement status. This signifies that people with high morale also lacked motivation to use television for consummatory purpose, as has been observed in previous analyses.

It seems valid to conclude that Hypothesis 2, which states that “retiree happiness is positively affected more by media use than non-retiree happiness,” was not supported. However, it must be pointed out that the total explanatory power was weak, and morale mostly could not be explained solely by age/gender or media gratifications. Media use did not have a large effect on successful aging. The role of media was limited, and it may be inappropriate to over-emphasize its role (at least in this research).

## 5. Discussion

Although no clear conclusion regarding the factors of successful aging has been reached in the field of gerontology, the positive correlation between morale and age has confirmed that age is not necessarily an explanatory variable, as shown in this investigation. At least, it appears that participants in this study do not perceive aging negatively.

The results of this investigation did not support the hypothesis that media use contributes to successful aging. The results showed that the influence of media gratification was weak, and it often has a negative relationship with morale. In particular, consummatory gratification of television

was a factor that exhibited a negative correlation with morale in almost all analyses. Previous studies have showed that television use among the elderly is high compared with other age groups, but this may not necessarily indicate that it is a positive behavior. The rationale for consummatory gratification is killing time, escaping daily problems, and feeling less lonely. People with low morale show a strong tendency toward consummatory gratifications, which may signify that television viewing is an introverted behavior for them. If this is the cause of high television viewership among the elderly, it could be said that television does not facilitate social participation, but rather supports their social disengagement.

The analysis showed no evidence that media provide a substitute for declining daily activity among the elderly. The result that instrumental gratification of PCs negatively influenced morale indicates that this activity does not promote social participation. Information gathering via the Internet might have become more of a passive behavior than it had been in the past.

While the uses and gratifications studies theorize the functional alternative of media, some studies refute this assumption. For example, Hays et al. (1998) revealed that religious media is not a substitute for reductions in church participation owing to worsening health conditions. Even Graney (1975), a proponent of media as a substitute for social activities, considered media as being unable to totally compensate for losses and suggested there would be a long-term drop in social relations. He ultimately supported both activity theory and disengagement theory. Bliese (1982) also reported that substitutes do not always increase life satisfaction. If the present study was able to

make any contributions to the above discussion, it would be that it did not find any evidence to support activity theory (at least in the context of Japan).

Meanwhile, there are some forms of media that have a positive impact on morale. In this sense, this study also does not support disengagement theory. The instrumental gratification of books and magazines as well as the consummatory gratification of radio and PCs are factors that positively influenced morale. These media share features that they need to be used actively and can be used at one's own pace even with the reduction in cognitive abilities accompanied by aging. The elderly use media in different ways as compared to the youth and may be gratified differently than people of other ages.

As is clear from the weak explanatory power of several factors throughout the entire analysis, it must be recognized that successful aging among the elderly cannot be explained solely by media gratification and our limited demographic factors. Some studies have found that income, academic background, family structure, and past media experience affect media use (Burnett, 1991; Doolittle, 1979; Morrison, 1979; Robinson et al., 2004; Rubin & Rubin, 1982; Schramm, 1969). The elderly are more complex than other aged groups owing to their health and living conditions (Robinson et al., 2004). Thus, the many complex factors that were not covered in the present investigation are thought to be at play in the relationship between media gratifications and morale. These research findings that media has a negative correlation with morale may be explained by other strong variables that determine both of these factors.

The limitations of this study need to be mentioned. The first is that while the participants

possessed relative generality, they were not selected by random sampling.<sup>2</sup> The analysis might underestimate the effect of residence area because this survey was conducted in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region. Furthermore, the elderly who participated in this type of survey may lead relatively fulfilled lives and may have disproportionately high morale. This could explain the positive correlation between morale and age.

This study utilized morale as a measure of successful aging, but the very concept of successful aging needs to be examined further. This study has refrained from discussing what is successful aging and whether the Morale Scale is an appropriate measure of successful aging. While it is used in many investigations, there are some critiques of this scale and its validity must be further verified. The possibility that utilizing another scale would demonstrate adverse results cannot be denied. In addition, as previously noted, only the sums of the Morale Scale were used in the analysis, though this scale is separated into three factors (Lawton, 1972, 1975). Subsequent analysis would be needed to explain which aspect of morale relates to media gratifications.

This research applied the uses and gratifications approach, which does not employ a relatively objective index, such as amount or frequency of use; instead, it utilizes media gratifications (attitudes toward media), which has been criticized as highly subjective. The validity of this type of research must be critically reviewed. However, it is worth noting that this research showed that the amount or frequency of media use does not indicate a positive commitment to media.

The finding that the link between media gratifications and morale among the elderly is generally negative raises questions about

prevailing notions that media complement or substitute social activities and promote successful aging. Previous research may have been too optimistic. A separate analysis of the biases and context of preceding research is needed, and it is clear that we still do not understand media use in aging.

#### Notes

1. Many Japanese laws and regulations regarding aged individuals define those over 65 years old as older adults. As many respondents below the age of 65 years were included in the survey, the title of this article used the term the “young old” in lieu of older adults.
2. The survey was entrusted to the Nippon Research Center. It utilizes the postal mail survey panel called the TRUST PANEL. In the TRUST PANEL, respondents to the center’s monthly randomly sampled self-administered survey become monitors (respondents who have consented to continuous cooperation become monitors). It is deemed more random than free-registration panels. The monitors used in this survey were selected according to population ratios (six age generations for each gender) based on the Basic Resident Registry as of January 1, 2017.

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