

< abstract >

The study uses media system dependency theory to analyze the media system of the soliciting talk radio and the audience. To explore the structural media system relationships, the methods of participatory observation and in-depth interviews were used. Major elements in the system of soliciting talk radio include the radio station, the program producing company, the drugstore, and the pharmaceutical factory. It was found that drugstores are comparatively more dependent on the radio station and production company, while radio stations need the production company to buy air times.

The relation between the radio station and the production company is interdependent. The radio station has the channel resources, and the production company owns the resources of the message content. The two must work hand in hand to send the soliciting message to the audience.

To investigate the individual media system dependency, telephone survey was used. The total amount of purchase of product recommended was found positively related to daily listening time, the degree of media dependency, the degree of parasocial interaction, the degree of broadcasting participation effect, and the frequency of listeners' call-ins. The listening time, the degree of media dependency, the degree of parasocial interaction, and the degree of broadcasting participation effect are also interrelated. People with higher level of education listen to less of the show, make fewer call-ins, are less dependent on the soliciting talk radio, have less parasocial interaction with the show host, and also have less degree of broadcasting participation effect than those with lower level of education. Buyers listen in longer daily, have more parasocial interaction, and are more dependent on the media than non-buyers.

The audience regards the soliciting talk radio as a good company in life and work, and further depends on it. Through parasocial interaction, the show host becomes a friend to listeners. This virtual relationship among the host, the audience and the callers is considered conducive to sale. Although the general public regards the soliciting talk radio negatively, the listeners gain their gratification from this kind of programs.

Key words: radio, the soliciting talk radio, media system dependency theory, parasocial interaction, audience.