**Dual screening in dual conflicts: Israel dealing with external and internal conflicts in May 2021 as a case study**

**Abstract**

This study examines how Israelis used dual screening duringtwo violent conflicts in Israel in May 2021: That between Israelis and Hamas in Gaza and that within Israel between Muslims and Jews. It maps the news platforms and identifies the variables that shape the use of dual screening in internal and external conflicts. The results from a survey of 400 participants during these conflicts revealed that news consumption on all platforms is less for internal than external events but that the consumption patterns are the same. The most common information sources for both events were online news websites and social media networks. The analysis revealed that fear and integrative needs predicted dual screening in both cases, while the emotional and cognitive needs of media consumption did not significantly.

**Introduction**

In May of 2021, Israelis were confronted with an unprecedented circumstance in which Israelis were threatened from outside of the country and from the inside. The Israelis and Hamas engaged in another round of violent conflict in Gaza that lasted 12 days. For the first time, there was also an eruption of violence inside Israel between Muslims and Jews, particularly in mixed urban areas like Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, and Haifa. This uniquely involved most Israelis directly or indirectly in one or both conflicts.

This study examines how Israelis used dual screening during these violent internal and external conflicts. Dual screening has become increasingly common in recent years, but most research on it has been done in relation to live sporting events (Weimann-Saks, Ariel, and Elishar-Malka, 2019; Kim and Kim, 2020) and political events (Segijn et al., 2017) as the focus. Media coverage of war and violent conflict has garnered significant scholarly attention (Blondheim and Shifman, 2009; Knüpfer and Entman, 2018; Melki and Kozman, 2021), but there is a dearth of research on dual screening during such times.

*Media during conflict*

Researchers have examined media coverage during wartime and how coverage influences decision-makers and public opinion (Nohrstedt et al., 2000; White, 2020; Hammond, 2018; Sobel, Kim, and Riffe, 2020; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Researchers have also turned their attention recently to the new media’s coverage of political conflicts and other crises (Evans, 2016; Knüpfer and Entman, 2018; Melki and Kozman, 2021). The media plays an important role in people’s lives during violent conflicts such as terrorist attacks and wars (Katz and Liebes, 2007; Wolfsfeld and Weimann, 1997) and research has examined, for example, the significance of smartphones and social media in relation to 9/11 (Katz and Rice,2002; Bracken et al., 2005).

In addition, several studies revealed a correlation between time spent on social media and negative feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression (Arikan, Acar, and Ustundag-Budak , 2022; Haand and Shuwang, 2020). Fear is the feeling one experiences when confronting something you deem a disaster (Hornby, 1995: 425). For example, research has observed a correlation between exposure to news broadcast on crime and increased fear (LaGrange and Ferraro, 2017; Romer, Jamieson, and Aday, 2003).

Israelis extensively used online platforms throughout the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict to disseminate humorous messages, information regarding the health of family members, and criticism of decision-makers (Lev-On, 2010; Naveh, 2008).

Kozman and Melki (2016) investigated the way information was provided to Syrian civilians via the internet and social media during the civil war. Schejter and Cohen (2013) highlighted the fact that smartphones can be used during times of war due to their portability of smartphones. Malka, Ariel, and Avidar (2015) also found that during Israel and Gaza conflict in 2014, citizens of Israel used the WhatsApp smartphone application, a trustworthy news source, to fulfill their cognitive requirements during the conflict and found a correlation between the use of WhatsApp by civilians and their proximity to the Gaza conflict area, attributable to higher levels of danger and anxiety experienced.

In this context, our two key research questions for this study were:

RQ1: What are the prominent news information platforms for internal conflict (the May 2021 riots within Israel) and external conflict (the May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict)?

*Dual screening*

Using dual screens simultaneously has become common, with people able to connect to multiple portable devices simultaneously. The “second screen experience” (Blake, 2016) and dual screening is defined by Gil de Zúñiga, Garcia-Perdomo, and McGregor (2015) as using an electronic device to access the internet via web or social networks, watch broadcasts, or consume additional information while consuming media from a primary screen, most often television. Guo (2020) suggests that media practitioners benefit from understanding dual screening viewing patterns and second-screen activities can lead to more engagement between content producers, broadcasters, and advertisers and their audiences.

Dual-screen viewing allows users to communicate during a live broadcast (Weimann-Saks, Ariel, and Elishar-Malka, 2019). Gil de Ziga and Liu (2017) found that media consumers reported more interest when they watched political events on a second screen. Kim and Kim (2020) argue that there is a correlation between social live streaming and the level of social well-being and feeling of isolation. Other researchers have found that the emotional needs of media consumers and their ability to multitask between different media platforms determined the level of emotional satisfaction the consumer reported. People with high emotional demands find multitasking helps them feel more satisfied (Wang and Tchernev, 2012). Media consumers reported that they experienced a diminished sense of movement when they tweeted while watching television (Park et al., 2019). Jiang et al. (2022) find that people who use dual screens extensively during television are also key users on Twitter. Furthermore, high levels of second screening can increase awareness of television programs, as well as their authority and credibility in digital spaces. Dias (2016) finds that people use multiple screens to make the most of their time, avoid ads, and meet integrative needs by feeling connected to their loved ones and the world. Stacks, Salwen, and Eichhorn (2019) say that consumers can watch the news on their screens while gathering information via their smartphones. The current media environment is evolving due to the proliferation of media outlets and social media platforms and the increasing number of users.

Uses and gratifications

The most heinous crimes occur during civil wars that transform the home front into a battlefield. Likewise, inner conflict transforms the home front into a combat zone in this context. When confronted with such intolerable conditions, civilians turn to the media to fulfill their specific needs and manage the situation more effectively (Kozman and Melki, 2016; Lev-On, 2010; Malka, Ariel, and Avidar, 2015; Naveh, 2008). In times of conflict, people physically close to events may feel a greater need for up-to-date information and knowledge. This correlates with uses and gratifications theory, an effective way to look at how people use different media to meet their needs (Ruggerio, 2000). For example, Katz et al. (1974) suggest that individuals’ thoughts and feelings influence what they anticipate receiving from the media and identify five clusters of needs: cognitive, affective, integrative (personal and social), and diversion. Cognitive needs represent the inherent desire for information acquisition, knowledge, and understanding; affective needs relate to emotional experiences and an inherent desire for pleasure, entertainment, and aesthetic enjoyment; personal integrative needs derive from individuals’ desires to appear credible, to be perceived as confident, and to have high self-esteem; integrative social needs relate to wanting to be part of a group and have a sense of belonging; and diversion needs relate to escaping problems and routines. Ruggerio (2000) points out that many studies provide alternative cluster taxonomies, although most still drawn on those suggested by Katz, Haas, and Gurevitch (1973).

Cognitive needs are intellectual needs in which individuals use media to acquire knowledge and locate information (Malloli, 2020). Cognitive needs involve acquiring knowledge and information and comprehending social environments, exploration, and inquisitiveness (Ruggiero, 2000). In addition, cognition is related to the event and product information, consultation, the satisfaction of curiosity, learning, and the acquisition of safety-related knowledge (Nambisan and Baron, 2007). Emotional needs are based on people's desires to experience specific feelings or emotions (Malloli, 2020). Moreover, emotional needs refer to fulfilling an effective strengthening experience (Chiang, 2013, Nambisan and Baron, 2007).

Integration encompasses personal integration or identity and social integration in terms of the outcomes of social relationships (Nambisan and Baron, 2007). Integrative gratification, for instance, refers to the gratification of forming an identity, enhancing individual values, and forming a sense of closeness or belonging through media (Nambisan and Baron, 2007). Integrative needs are interconnected with those of family, friends, and society. As a result, people turn to mass media and social media networks to satisfy these needs (Malloli, 2020).

Our working hypotheses for the study were as follows:

H1: Significant correlations will be found between dual screening and fear level regarding (a) May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict and (b) May 2021 riots.

H2: significant correlations will be found between dual screening during May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict and cognitive, integrative, and emotional needs.

H3: Significant correlations will be found between dual screening during May 2021 riots and cognitive, integrative, and emotional needs.

**Methodology**

Four hundred participants with equal gender distribution and ages ranging from 18 to 74 years (M = 43, SD = 15.8) were identified for the study from Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (2019) data using an online panel that sampled a representative distribution of the Israeli population. The maximum standard error is 4.5%. G\*Power (Faulet al. 2009) was used to estimate the sample size based on a medium-sized effect size so that, 90% of the time, significant differences can be found. Participants were asked to complete a short anonymous survey (response time = 10 minutes That, in addition to eliciting demographic information, measured the following variables:

Independent variables:

1. Emotional needswere assessed usinga three-item scale (Cronbach’s alpha =.76), rated from 1 (“very much”) to 5 (“not at all”). Based on Malka, Ariel, and Avidar (2015), the items included statements like: “Consuming information helps me relieve stress.”
2. Cognitive needs were assessed usinga three-item scale (Cronbach’s alpha =.83), rated from 1 (“very much”) to 5 (“not at all”). Based on Malka, Ariel, and Avidar (2015), the items included statements such as: “Consuming information helps me understand what is going on.”
3. Integrative needs were assessed using a four-item scale (Cronbach’s alpha =.94), with ratings ranging from 1 (“very much”) to 5 (“not at all”). The items included statements based on Malka, Ariel, and Avidar (2015), such as: “Consuming information strengthens my sense of belonging to the place where I live.”
4. Fear was assessedusing a three-item scale (Cronbach’s alpha =.65) ranging from 1 (“very much”) to 5 (“not at all”). Such items assessed how scared people felt because of the security situation during and after the violent incidents, such as: “I am worried about friends or family in a security threat zone.”

Dependent variable:

Dual screening: We used a three-item scale (Cronbach’s alpha =.97) to assess dual screening use, ranging from 1 (“several times an hour or more”) to 7 (“not at all”). The questions were based on the Weimann-Saks, Ariel, and Elishar-Malka (2019) questionnaire, with minor changes to fit the security events, such as: “I use a smartphone while watching TV to stay up to date on events on both platforms.”

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of research variables*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Min.** | **Max.** |
| Cognitive needs | 3.69 | .87 | 1 | 5 |
| Integrative needs | 3.30 | 1.21 | 1 | 5 |
| Emotional needs | 2.47 | 1.02 | 1 | 5 |
| Fear regarding Israel-Gaza conflict | 3.66 | .82 | 1 | 5 |
| Fear regarding riots | 3.71 | .79 | 1 | 5 |
| Dual Screening regarding Israel-Gaza conflict | 3.49 | 2.10 | 1 | 7 |
| Dual Screening regarding riots | 3.33 | 2.02 | 1 | 7 |

**Results**

In order to examine news consumption habits (RQ1), we asked the participants about the frequency with which they used the various media platforms in order to be updated on events related to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict and the May 2021 internal riots.

The most common source of updates on both events was online news websites, then television, then WhatsApp groups and, finally, social networks: Facebook (most often) private WhatsApp chats, and Telegram and Twitter).

Table 2: Respondents’ sources for updating in each event at least once a day

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Platform** | **May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict** | **May 2021 riots** |
|
| WhatsApp groups | 56% | 50% |
| WhatsApp private groups | 52% | 45% |
| Facebook | 49% | 47% |
| Twitter | 14% | 14% |
| Telegram | 21% | 20% |
| Emergency applications | 42% | 33% |
| News websites | 77% | 73% |
| TV | 70% | 67% |
| Radio | 43% | 41% |

**Pearson correlations were conducted for** dual screening and fear level **(H1). A** significant correlation was found between dual screening and fear levels regarding the May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict (r=.220, p <. 001) and the May 2021 riots (r=.169, p <.01). Thus, H1a and H1b were confirmed.

**Pearson correlations revealed correlations between** dual screening during May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict and (H2a) cognitive needs (r=.240, p<.001), (H2b) integrative needs (r=.272, p<.001), (H2c) emotional needs (r=.224, p<.001). Thus, H2a, H2b, and H2c were confirmed.

**Pearson correlations revealed correlations between** dual screening during May 2021 riots and (H3a) cognitive needs (r=.235, p<.001), (H3b) integrative needs (r=.270, p<.001), (H3c) emotional needs (r=.229, p<.001). Thus, H3a, H3b, and H3c were confirmed. Table 3 presents the correlation matrices.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Dual Screening** | **Cognitive** | **Integrative** | **Emotional** | **Fear** |
| May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict | .240\*\*\* | .272\*\*\* | .224\*\*\* | .220\*\*\* |
| May 2021 riots | .235\*\*\* | .270\*\*\* | .229\*\*\* | .169\*\* |

*Table 3: Correlation between research variables*

\*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

We used a multiple linear regression model **to examine which variables predict the use of dual screening in the case of the May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict (RQ2)**. Overall, regression for predicting dual screening in this case was statistically significant (R2 = 0.12, F (4, 202) = 13.123, p <.001). It was found that the variables fear (β =.17, p <.001) and integrative needs (β =.15, p <.001) significantly predicted dual screening. All other variables did not significantly predict dual screening in the case of the operation (See Table 2).

**W**e used a multiple linear regression model to calculate **which variables predict the use of dual screening in the case of the May 2021 riots (RQ3)**. In this case, overall regression for predicting dual screening was statistically significant (R2 = 0.10, F (4, 202) = 10.86, p <.001). It was found that the variables fear (β =.17, p <.001) and integrative needs (β =.15, p <.001) significantly predicted dual screening. All other variables did not significantly predict dual screening in the case of the operation.

*Table 4: Regression results of predicting dual screening*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event** |  | **Variable** | **B** | **β** | **T** |
| May 2021 Israel-Gaza conflict | 1 | Fear | 0.44 | .17 | 3.60\*\*\* |
| 2 | Integrative | 0.26 | .15 | 2.11\* |
| 3 | Emotional | 0.18 | .09 | 1.54 |
| 4 | Cognitive | 0.18 | .08 | 1.18 |
| May 2021 riots | 1 | Integrative | 0.23 | .14 | 1.97\* |
| 2 | Fear | 0.28 | .11 | 2.22\* |
| 3 | Emotional | 0.21 | .10 | 1.83 |
| 4 | Cognitive | 0.18 | .08 | 1.16 |

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

**Discussion**

The study’s results shed light on the role of the media during violent conflicts and contribute to a greater understanding of that role. Technological improvements have made it possible for civilians in danger to stay informed without relying on a single platform.

The significant finding was that the volume of news on all platforms are lower for internal than external events, though the consumption pattern is the same, with the most common source online news sites in both cases. Traditional mainstream media is still the most popular way to obtain news information about internal and external events, which is one factor that contributes to the significance of these outlets.

We also found that fear and integrative needs significantly predicted dual screening in both cases, but that fear was a stronger and more significant predictor regarding the external events. The emotional and cognitive needs of media consumers did not significantly predict dual screening. The reason may be that media consumers feel a need to relax and/or feel good here, rather than feeling the need to gather more information. Nevertheless, fear and the need to be a part of something are more substantial and more immediate.

This study has several limitations. It is a single case study conducted in Israel at a specific time when two violent conflicts co-occurred, so the ability to generalize the findings to other cases is limited. Dual screening should be further examined in studies of other, more commonly-patterned situations. Another limitation is the fact that only native Hebrew speakers participated in this study because of language considerations in the online sampling system. Another is that the study was only restrictedly representative of the Israeli population, so future studies should look at the diversity of the Israeli population, 20% of which is made up of Arabs.

On a theoretical level, Ball-Rokeach (2010) stated that the significant changes in media production resources imply that the Media System Dependency Theory must be reexamined in order to account for the less constrained and more chaotic media landscape of the twenty-first century, for example, the emergence and fusion of internet with traditional media. Media Dependency Theory examines how people depend on the media in times of crisis. The public uses the media for information and support whenever an extreme event occurs. Research has noted that an increase in the level of risk will increase both the micro and the macro dependency on the media (Loges, 1994; Lyu, 2019). The findings of this study indicate that dependence on traditional and social media during conflict is complex. This dependence is not only related to the need for important and relevant information but also for the feeling of belonging as a response to fear and, probably, for interpreting the relevant events.

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