

CHANGING LIVES, CHANGING MEDIA: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN LIFE TRANSITION AND NEWS MEDIA USE

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ABSTRACT

For decades, marketing researchers have been interested in understanding the relationship between life-changing events and individual consumer preferences and behaviors. Researchers have examined the influences of significant life changes on a number of products, including appliances, clothing and food, and have determined that these changes often predicate shifts in the brands people prefer and the products they purchase. However, news media is rarely folded into the discussion despite the fact that news media consumption is in many ways the same as the consumption of any other consumer good. This research helps bring media consumption into the conversation by examining — via a survey — changes in media consumption habits individuals experience after undergoing a particular life change, the transition from life as a college student to life as a working adult. It finds that people tend to spend different amounts of time with various media forms and that they also tend to consume different media outlets upon leaving college and entering the workforce full-time. It also finds that the magnitude of the life change plays an important role in determining the degree to which individual media consumption habits are altered. The research shows that media consumption does, in fact, deserve a place in the discussion began by marketing researchers almost four decades ago.