Understanding Media and Culture An Introduction to Mass Communication Version 2 0 2nd edition Lule Solutions Manual

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Chapter 2

Media Effects

Harry Potter and the Media Bogeyman

1. Mass Media and Its Messages

- Explain the different ways mass media affects culture
- Analyze cultural messages that the media send.
- Explain the ways new media have affected culture.

Section Outline

- Propaganda and persuasion
- Media effects and behavior
    - Violence and media
    - Sex and the media
- Cultural messages and the media
- New media and society
    - Information
    - Literacy
    - News
    - Convergence culture

Key Takeaways

- Propaganda and persuasion have long been a part of the interactions between media and culture.
- Most studies on media and behavior do not establish direct links between the two but do reveal important correlations among media, violence, and sexual behavior.

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- Through the media, celebrities have come to signify important cultural values and tendencies, and they transmit specific cultural messages.
- New digital forms of media have revolutionized the way people access and consume media content. Rather than simply replacing old media, however, new forms of media encourage participatory media consumption and content migration.

Exercises

1. Celebrities can represent cultural values and principles when they are portrayed in the media. The same celebrity can represent very different things depending on the form of media and its portrayal of that person. Find a celebrity magazine, such as *People* or *Us Weekly*, either online or in print, and choose one of the celebrities mentioned. Then, answer the following questions:
    a. How is this celebrity portrayed in the magazine?
    b. What kind of roles does the celebrity take in other forms of media, such as television or film?
    c. How do these portrayals associate with specific cultural values?
2. Explain how the media has affected culture. Be sure to discuss the following topics and to provide examples of each.
    a. Propaganda and persuasion
    b. Behavior
    c. Cultural messages
3. How has new media affected literacy and information consumption? How is this different from older forms of media?
4. Answer the following questions based on what you learned in this section, "Mass Media and Its Messages":
    a. List three historical events that have relied on propaganda.

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b. Provide three examples of cultural messages that the media send.

c. How have new media affected older forms of media?

Key Term

- **stereotype** – An image or character that generalizes and oversimplifies a particular group of people.

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2. Media Effects Theories

- Identify the basic theories of media effects.
- Explain the uses of various media effects theories.

Section Outline

- Definition of the direct effects theory

- Challenges to the direct effects theory
  - Marshall McLuhan's Influence on Media Studies
  - Agenda-Setting Theory
  - Uses and Gratifications Theory
  - Symbolic Interactionism
  - Spiral of Silence
  - Media Logic
  - Cultivation Analysis

Key Takeaways

- The now largely discredited direct effects model of media studies assumes that media audiences passively accept media messages and exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages.

- Credible media theories generally do not give as much power to the media, such as the

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agenda-setting theory, or give a more active role to the media consumer, such as the uses and gratifications theory.

- Other theories focus on specific aspects of media influence, such as the spiral of silence theory's focus on the power of the majority opinion or the symbolic interactionism theory's exploration of shared cultural symbolism.
- Media logic and cultivation analysis theories deal with how media consumers' perceptions of reality can be influenced by media messages.

Exercises

1. Media theories have a variety of uses and applications. Research one of the following topics and its effect on culture. Examine the topic using at least two of the approaches discussed in this section. Then, write a one-page essay about the topic you've selected.
    a. Media bias
    b. Internet habits
    c. Television's effect on attention span
    d. Advertising and self-image
    e. Racial stereotyping in film
2. Many of the theories discussed in this section were developed decades ago. Identify how each of these theories can be used today. Do you think these theories are still relevant for modern mass media? Why?
3. Answer the following questions based on what you've learned in this section, "Media Effects Theories":
    a. How does agenda-setting theory differ from direct effects theory?
    b. Use the spiral of silence to explain an actual lapse in media coverage.
    c. Why would uses and gratifications theory be an appropriate theory for a study of Internet purchasing habits?

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Key Terms

- **direct effects model** – A theory that assumes that audiences passively accept media messages and react predictably to those messages.
- **agenda-setting theory** – A theory stating that the mass media determines the issues the public considers important.
- **uses and gratifications theory** – A theory stating that individuals use media to satisfy specific needs or desires.
- **symbolic interactionism** – A theory stating that the self is derived from and develops through human interaction.
- **spiral of silence** – A theory stating that individuals who hold a minority opinion silence themselves to prevent social isolation.
- **media logic** – A theory stating that common media formats and styles serve as a means of perceiving the world.
- **cultivation analysis** – A theory stating that heavy exposure to media cultivates an illusory perception of reality.

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3. Methods of Researching Media Effects

- Identify the prominent media research methods.
- Explain the uses of media research methods in a research project.

Section Outline

- Content analysis
- Archival research
- Surveys

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- Social role analysis
- Depth interviews
- Rhetorical analysis
- Focus groups
- Experiments
- Participant observation

Key Takeaways

- Media research methods are the practical procedures for carrying out a research project. These methods include content analysis, surveys, focus groups, experiments, and participant observation.
- Research methods generally involve either test subjects or analysis of media. Methods involving test subjects include surveys, depth interviews, focus groups, and experiments. Analysis of media can include content, style, format, social roles, and archival analysis.

Exercises

1. Media research methods offer a variety of procedures for performing a media study. Each of these methods varies in cost; thus, a project with a lower budget would be prohibited from using some of the more costly methods. Consider a project on teen violence and video game use. Then answer the following short-response questions. Each response should be a minimum of one paragraph.
    a. Which methods would a research organization with a low budget favor for this project? Why?
    b. How might the results of the project differ from those of one with a higher budget?
2. Questions for Section 2.3 "Methods of Researching Media Effects"

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a. Name the different types of media analysis techniques and explain their uses.

b. Explain the differences among a survey, a depth interview, and a focus group.

c. What resources would be important for a project analyzing the historical representation of women in advertising?

Key Terms

- **content analysis** – A research method in which the content of media is analyzed.
- **social role analysis** – A research method that analyzes the roles that individuals take in the media.
- **depth interviews** – A research method in which researchers conduct lengthy interviews with test subjects.
- **rhetorical analysis** – A research method that examines the styles used in media.
- **focus groups** – A group interview in which participants respond to questions posed about a certain subject.
- **Participant observation** – A research method in which researchers try to become part of the groups they are studying.

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4. Media Studies Controversies

- Explain some of the major objections to specific media theories.
- Identify ways media studies are used to support political opinions.
- Differentiate between proper and improper use of media studies.

Section Outline

- Problems with methodology and theory
    - Active versus passive audience
    - Arguments against agenda-setting theory

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    - Arguments against uses and gratifications theory
    - Arguments against spiral of silence theory
    - Arguments against cultivation analysis theory
- Politics and media studies
    - Media bias
- Media decency
- Media consolidation

Key Takeaways

- Audience interpretation is vital to media studies. Media theories generally fall between the active and passive audience interpretations. Agenda-setting theory favors the passive audience interpretation, and consequently must prove that the public is affected by media agendas. The uses and gratifications theory favors the active audience, and consequently justifies the place of media in the public sphere.
- In politics, media studies are often used to support various opinions. Among the more prominent media studies employed are those that deal with media bias, violence in the media, and indecency.
- The use of media studies in public debate has led to subjective studies that have a predetermined outcome. Many studies conducted by special interest groups use definitions that favor their perspectives. Politicians often copy the style, rather than the substance, of a media study in an attempt to give authority to their points of view.

Exercises

1. Media studies are often used to support specific opinions, regardless of whether their results justify such a use. Studies are also conducted with predetermined outcomes that support a specific view. With this in mind, answer the following short-response questions. Each

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response should be a minimum of one paragraph.

a. How are media studies used to support political opinions? Give two examples.

b. What kind of guidelines should be used to ensure clear and objective use of media studies?

c. Identify weaknesses of popular media theories discussed in this section.

2. Answer the following questions based on what you learned in this section, 4 "Media Studies Controversies":

a. Explain the opposition between theories of passive and active media audiences.

b. How are media studies commonly misused to support political opinions?

c. How might media studies be used in a study on indecency?

Key Terms

- **Passive audience** – The assumption that audiences passively accept the messages that media give them.
- **Active audience** – The assumption that audiences make informed, rational decisions about media consumption.
- **Media bias** – The allegation that media consistency favors one political position.

Chapter Review: Critical Thinking

1. The media have become an ever-increasing part of modern life. How do you think the media and their messages have affected you personally?
2. Media studies attempt to understand the role that the media play in culture and in individual lives. Given the criticisms of particular media theories, what do you think the limitations of media studies are? Consider the media theories discussed in this chapter. Which ones do you find the most convincing and why? Which ones do you find least convincing?
3. Among the methods used to analyze audiences, which do you think would guarantee the most

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accurate results? How does this affect your opinion of studies that use other results?

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CHAPTER 2
Media Effects

Section 1: Mass Media and Its Messages

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the different ways mass media affects culture.
2. Analyze cultural messages that the media send.
3. Explain the ways new media have affected culture.

Mass Media Affects Culture

- Many studies have been done that show that our behavior is influenced by media:
  - Through persuasion and propaganda
  - Through portrayal of violent behavior
  - Through sexually-themed content

The Media Sends Cultural Messages

- Starting in the mid-20th century, celebrities and other public figures have come to represent gender roles, athleticism, and cultural accomplishments to media viewers

- Some celebrities represented cultural stereotypes that marginalized certain groups



New Media Affects Culture

- The Internet and other digital communication forms:
  - Changed literacy and communication standards
  - Make a wealth of new information available
  - Are easier to access than print sources
  - Allow users to easily filter unwanted information
  - Deliver information rapidly
  - Encourage greater personal participation
  - Allow the flow of information across multiple platforms (convergence)

Section 2: Media Effects Theories

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the basic theories of media effects.
2. Explain the uses of various media effects theories.

Understanding Media

- In 1964, professor Marshall McLuhan wrote *Understanding Media*
- It illustrated how media had changed individual behavior and wider culture
- He coined the phrase “The medium is the message”

Basic Theories

- Scholars have developed many different theories about the effect of mass media on behavior
  - **Direct Effects**
  - **Agenda Setting**
  - **Uses and Gratifications**
  - **Symbolic Interactionism**
  - **Spiral of Silence**
  - **Media Logic**
  - **Cultivation Analysis**

Media Theories in Action

- Direct Effect – largely discredited by 1940
- Agenda-Setting and Uses and Gratification – give extra power to the media or to the consumer
- Symbolic Interactionism – gives media the power, through advertising, to create shared cultural symbolism
- Spiral of Silence – gives the power to the majority opinion
- Media Logic and Cultivation Analysis – show how media influences consumers' perceptions of reality

Section 3: Methods of Researching Media Effects

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the prominent media research methods.
2. Explain the uses of media research methods in a research project.

Media Research Methods

- The practical procedures for carrying out a research project include several methods:
  - **Content Analysis**
  - Surveys
  - **Focus Groups**
  - Experiments
  - **Participant Observation**

Research Methods in Action

- Test Subjects
  - Surveys
  - Depth interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Experiments

- Analysis of Media
  - Content
  - Style
  - Social roles
  - Archival analysis

Section 4: Media Studies Controversies

Learning Objectives

1. Explain some of the major objections to specific media theories.
2. Identify ways media studies are used to support political opinions.
3. Differentiate between proper and improper use of media studies.



Problems with Methodology and Theory

- Theorists are divided about audiences being active or passive
- Studies do not prove cause and effect
- Overall assumptions are unquestioned
- Broad claims discount individual differences



Politics and Media Studies

- Media studies are often used in politics to support various opinions.
- They are often oversimplified and can result in contradictory claims.
- Media bias claims have been made that the media favors a liberal view.

Media Decency

- Media studies are used in trying to establish decency standards
- Media studies cannot prove a word or image is indecent but they can discern its impact
- Groups with stated goals often adjust the language of the studies to fit their agendas