

Media users

Effects research

1. This type of research attempts to measure the impact of the media

Social learning

1. This focuses on the capacity of individuals to develop behaviours through their observation of others
2. In one experiment, a sample of young children – three experimental groups were exposed to an individual violently attacking an inflatable bobo doll
3. The first group was performed by an adult in the same room, whereas two groups viewed this on television.
4. One of the television scenes portrayed an adult doing this, whilst another a cartoon like cat
5. The groups were subjected to aggression arousal (being refused permission to play with toys)
6. And then placed in a room with toys including a bobo doll and mallet
7. Obviously this study was clearly flawed as direct cause and effect is extremely hard (almost impossible) to note.

Long-term cultivation effects

1. Others focus on longer-term impact of media use on attitudes and outlook.
2. Gerbner argues that television dominates the symbolic environment of those who view it, Helps form understandings of the world
3. Television cultivates attitudes to the real world based on the distorted version of society
4. Gerber noted that television was dominated by crime and violence and sought to assess long term impact.

Methodological problems

1. Although Gerbner identified correlations between heavy television viewing and fearful attitudes towards crime and violence, he did not prove that television was the cause of these attitudes
2. A fearful outlook may contribute to what kind of television one watches or to watch a lot of television in the first place
3. Gunter suggests that other factors – ethnicity, income, working hours need to be analysed as part of this.

Limited effects and two-step flow

1. Research carried out on media and voting behaviour during a US presidential election, found that exposure to newspaper and radio based political campaigning had little direct impact on audiences
2. The study involved repeated interviews with a panel of individuals and one-off interviews with members of their local community,
3. And concluded that political allegiances were more strongly influenced by religion, social class, family ties, local social networks rather than mass media

Media influence.

1. The role of media, was limited to reinforcing existing political intentions, But media influence was not ruled out
2. Media coverage and campaigns could have some influence on some people
3. These people would then pass on their opinions to others – thus there is also indirect influence – opinion leaders or influential others.
4. Researchers call this two-step flow.

Twitter and two step-flow

1. The emergence of social media platforms like Twitter have resulted in changes in information – especially during emergencies
2. For mainstream news, platforms that can capitalise and make use of information on social media – are influential during crisis, disasters and other emergencies.
3. But wrong information can be created and spread – rumours and misinformation (which has been studied in the past) and Misinformation can create panic

Misinformation

1. Misinformation with the possibility of it going online and influencing the way an emergency is reported, framed, interpreted, and how such information spread though individuals who are influencers on other social media platforms alongside Twitter.
2. Misinformation highlights two-step flow theory.
3. Opinion leaders play an important role in propagating or challenging information

Impact

1. An opinion leader or influencer would have a larger follower base and a higher followers/following ratio

2. Those who retweeted misinformation from those who have higher influence on Twitter – have greater overall influence on social media
3. The misinformation spreads to their social networks across platforms

Uses and Gratifications

1. This approach focuses on the uses and gratifications approach to understand how audiences select and utilise media for their own purposes.
2. it is about what people do with the media, rather than what the media does with people

Functionalist model

1. This model is a functionalist one – as it regards mass communications content as a resource that emerges to fulfil individual needs and goals, and enables society as a whole to function more effectively
2. Typically involved surveys or interviews and self-reporting by consumers which resulted in typologies of needs and uses
3. Katz et al. identified 14 needs under different categories.

McQuail: Uses and gratifications categories

1. Information and Education
2. Diversion – short term escape or emotional release, enabling suspension of everyday routines and problems
3. Personal relationships – a substitute for face-to-face social companionship – a facilitator of relationships or a source of community belonging.
4. Personal identity – a resource for the development or reinforcement of personal values, meanings and a sense of one's place in the world.
5. Surveillance – source of knowledge, information and engagement with the world.

Unresolved question

1. The extent to which particular kinds of content or medium are differently suited to particular needs
2. To what extent does the structure or content of media prescribe that it can only result in particular outcomes.

New uses and gratifications

1. **Social interaction**

- To interact and socialise, more contact with people, for a social life.
- To connect and keep in touch with family and friends, interact with people you don't see regularly
- Chat with old acquaintances, meet new friends.

2. Information seeking

- Find information about sales, deals, products,
- Find information on events, birthdays, parties.

3. **Pass time** – idle time, bored, something to do.

4. **Entertainment** -playing games, listening to music, watching videos,

- Humour, comic relief, listening to jokes, watching memes,

5. **Relaxation**. Escape from reality, escape stress of real world.

6. Expression of opinions

- Social media to express thoughts, opinions, make comments, like postings, photos, commenting on updates, sharing comments.

7. **Communicatory utility** – social media giving things to talk about with others. Talk to others about what they found or saw on social media.

8. Convenience utility

- The convenience – readily available and no time restraints.
- Being able to communicate with a lot of people at one time as convenient.

9. **Information sharing** – different from information seeking. Using social media to share information about you with others.

- Interactive nature of social media enables information to be shared
- But also marketing shares information

10. **Surveillance/knowledge** about others. – watching people or things and watching what others are doing. Wanting to know what others are doing – different ways of doing this on social media.

Functionalist and complacent

1. Both uses and gratifications and two step flow remain influential
2. E.g. digital consumption of media is filtered through our social networks on Facebook, Twitter etc. (two step flow)
3. But both are problematic

Two step flow - Issues

1. Also Lazarsfeld was unable to provide understanding of long term influences
2. As some argue that local communities are less important, social class is more fragile and religious participation less universal that these may be less important, Leaving the way open for media to have more influence

Uses and grats - issues

1. Uses and gratifications – assumes that individuals have a clear rationale for media consumption
2. Clear motivations or functions may be less important than factors such as habit
3. The reliance of researchers on surveys may exaggerate rational active choices
4. People don't like admitting to being mindless couch potatoes.

Functionalist perspectives: Issues

1. The functionalist perspective of uses and gratifications results in a perspective that is complacent and uncritical.
2. The media exist to satisfy the demand and needs of audiences
3. Media consumption is active process which – excluding occasional dysfunctional uses – benefits the individual's everyday life and the functioning of a pluralist society -This omits manipulation or propaganda
4. And no acknowledgement of ownership, funding and control (e.g. corporations that dominate)

Twitterverse

1. The Twitterverse contains vast arrays of complex, highly intermeshed networks
2. Which reveal a highly efficient awareness system

History and theory

1. Marshall McLuhan – has shaped how we understand the emergent communication technologies, particularly in relation to technology and community, technology and communicative reach and technology and celebrities
2. Social communication is highly shaped by changes in technology.
3. Twitter is global – but rather than begin locked into a binary analysis (it has strengthened communities/weakened communities)
4. Tweets may flow rapidly between people and there is a feeling by users that their communication is no longer mediated
5. The immediacy of tweets generates a sense of being there – the idea of telepresence

Voice and Influence

1. Whose voice rise above the tweets
2. Celebrities – exert disproportionate influence on the shape of discourse on Twitter
3. The most followed users on Twitter are celebrities – often because of their fame outside Twitter as Twitter has become a mainstream platform.
4. Twitter is a corporate business – but its advertising models have raised controversy amongst Twitter users.

Aware Communities

1. Thus, we can think about the implications of Twitter for modern social, political and economic life. Twitter is both individualistic and communal.
2. The technology is framed as 'me-centric' as opposed to the society centric focus that a map gives (such as the greater context of our surroundings)
3. In a me-centric world, the focus is on you/your life/ things from your vantage point and is myopically oriented to the moment.

Me-centric

1. Twitter can also help maintain communities (especially ad hoc ones) – that resemble more society-centric formations. Thus, Twitter can be viewed from two oppositional perspectives.
2. Moreover our social lives are not constructed from a mutually exclusive relationship between me-centric and society-centric - Many of our daily activities straddle both.
3. Though social communication in the Twitter age may seem me-centric, there is more happening than meets the eye.

Twitter as Mainstream, yet Unique

1. Twitter maintains a unique position in contemporary social, political and economic life.
2. The openness of Twitter being able to engage with anyone is unique aspect of Twitter. Many tweets are not inherently produced to be consumed by others. Not everyone on Twitter wants to be heard.
3. Twitter will be eclipsed at some point but it has shaped modern social communications.