



Evolution of Media: A Sociological Inquiry into Shaping Modern Societies

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Abstract

The present study examines the complex relationship between media and contemporary society in the context of globalization, privatization, and liberalization. Since the 1970s, the ascent of television and subsequent emergence of web 2.0 technologies have transformed media into a powerful tool for entertainment, news dissemination, and public opinion formation. Utilizing a qualitative methodology and drawing from secondary data sources including published books, journals, and websites, the study explores the impact of media on cultural dynamics, emphasizing its role in cultural globalization and awareness creation regarding criminal activities. Social media platforms are identified as instrumental in connecting diverse backgrounds, fostering E-communities, and aiding idea generation through communication. The report highlights the need for public awareness and the role that the media must play in combating illegal operations like drug trafficking, human trafficking, cyberbullying, and cyberterrorism. The study concludes by highlighting the critical role that media plays in attaining literacy goals, showcasing it as an affordable mass education tool, and recognizing its unavoidable influence on modern society and culture.

Keywords: *Media, society, culture, awareness, LPG*

Introduction

In the late 1900s, things changed a lot because of some big ideas like making markets free (liberalization), giving more things to private companies (privatization), and connecting countries all over the world (globalization). It wasn't just about money; it also changed how we share information, make opinions, and talk about different cultures. One big part of this change was how we use media, like TV and pictures, to show things. TV got really popular in the late 1970s, and it changed the way we get entertained and know what's happening. The pictures and stories on TV aren't just for fun; they also shape how we see the world and what we think about our cultures. This study looks closely at how TV and other visual media affect how we act in society. It wants to understand how they shape our views and make us follow certain cultural norms. It's like taking apart a puzzle to see how each piece affects the whole picture.

The internet changed how we talk to each other. First, there was the World Wide Web, and then came Web 2.0. These changes allowed regular people to share their thoughts on blogs, websites, and social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms connect people worldwide. The study looks into how social media affects sharing info, creating online groups, and making sure everyone can express themselves.

In the ever-changing world of technology, we're not only looking at the digital side but also exploring the more familiar electronic and print media. Radio, with its ability to reach far and

wide, becomes crucial, especially in sharing information with far-off places. Television, being the second most popular worldwide, uses both visuals and sound to tell us about what's happening around us. And don't forget about print media – the newspapers, books, and magazines that have been around for a long time. They still play a big role in shaping what people think by giving detailed insights and different points of view. These traditional forms of media keep influencing how we see the world.

This study aims to comprehensively explore the multifaceted relationship between media and modern society, encompassing its influence on culture and its role in a globalized world. The purpose of this study is to examine how societal norms, beliefs, and behaviors are shaped and reflected in the media. Our second goal is to comprehend the dynamic interaction that exists between culture and media. We will look at how the media conveys cultural narratives, symbols, and behaviors in a potent way. Analyzing how the media affects cultural globalization is the subject of our third goal. We will look at how media helps cultural aspects spread beyond national boundaries, resulting in the hybridization and homogenization of cultural landscapes. Lastly, we address the complex relationship between criminal activity and the media. This goal looks at how the public's opinions and worries are influenced by media portrayals of crime.

As the research continues, it becomes clear how crucial media is to schooling. Imagine programs like V-Sat delivering education to remote locations, or radio reaching the furthest reaches of rural communities. The media acts as a kind of spark that ignites and grows education. This investigation demonstrates the importance of media for meeting learning and reading objectives in locations with limited resources. The last sections of the study will now examine the powerful effects that media, particularly visual media, has on people. Regardless of one's identity, the influence that the media has over our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours raises important issues about how it affects society as a whole.

Review of Literature

The media, encompassing traditional avenues like television and newspapers as well as the burgeoning online platforms, plays a multifaceted role in shaping society. Its influence extends beyond mere entertainment, serving as a crucial source of information, shaping cultural perspectives, and impacting individual and collective behavior. Mehraj et al. (2014) highlight the media's role as a democratic cornerstone, disseminating news and information about public policy and government initiatives. Citizens rely on these channels to remain informed and engaged, fostering active participation in the democratic process. This aligns with McQuail's (2010) observation that media acts as a "gatekeeper" of information, influencing public discourse and agenda-setting. The media's potential to champion social reform and justice should not be underestimated. As Shah (2014) notes, media exposure can raise awareness about critical issues, generate empathy, and mobilize support for marginalized groups. Historical examples abound, from the Civil Rights Movement fueled by televised footage of brutality to the #MeToo movement gaining momentum through social media platforms.

However, the media's influence is not without its challenges. Commercial interests often intertwine with content, blurring the lines between information and advertising. Jhally (2011) argues that consumerism thrives on media-generated desires, manipulating audiences through targeted advertising and brand marketing. As Bal (2020) points out, this phenomenon is further amplified by the rise of social media, where influencer culture can distort perceptions of value and fuel an obsession with brand image.

The impact of media violence on youth behavior has been a subject of intense debate. Studies by Anderson and Bushman (2002) suggest a correlation between exposure to violent media and aggressive tendencies, raising concerns about desensitization and imitation. However, the issue remains nuanced, with scholars like Bandura (1973) advocating for a consideration of individual differences and social factors alongside media exposure.

In 1967, George Gerbner proposed the cultivation hypothesis, positing that prolonged exposure to media cultivates a shared perception of reality among audiences (Gerbner, 1967). This "cultivation of dominating visual patterns" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) suggests that media content, despite its fictional nature, can gradually shape viewers' attitudes, beliefs, and even worldviews (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

Building on this theme, Bandura's social learning theory (1977) emphasizes the role of observational learning in shaping behavior. According to this theory, individuals learn by observing and imitating the actions and consequences depicted in media (Bandura, 1977). This suggests that media portrayals of societal norms, behaviors, and social interactions can influence audience members' perceptions and actions (Huesemann & Rubenstein, 2008).

Moving beyond individual-level effects, Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw's agenda-setting theory (1972) examines how media prioritizes certain issues, influencing public salience and agenda-building (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By repeatedly covering specific topics, media can shape public attention and prioritize societal concerns, impacting policy discussions and resource allocation (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

However, audiences are not passive recipients of media influence. The uses and gratifications theory (Katz, 1959) emphasizes the active role of audiences in seeking and utilizing media to fulfill specific needs and desires (Katz, 1959). Individuals actively select and engage with media content based on perceived gratifications, ranging from information seeking to entertainment and social connection (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

Beyond these prominent theories, John Dewey, in his seminal work "Democracy and Education" (1916), eloquently underscored the crucial role of communication in shaping society. He argued that "society not only stays alive through transmission and communication, but it can be said to exist in transmission and communication" (Dewey, 1916). This emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between media and society, where media both reflects and shapes social norms, values, and ultimately, the very fabric of our communities.

Furthermore, the growing emphasis on public understanding of science (PUS) further highlights the transformative potential of media. As noted by Fresco (2015), increased interest from funding agencies and academics has spurred research into facilitating science communication (Fresco, 2015). Lubchenco's (1998) proposed "social contract" for science, where scientists dedicate their knowledge to addressing pressing societal issues in exchange for public support, exemplifies this growing recognition of media's role in bridging the gap between science and society (Lubchenco, 1998).

Methodology

This study takes a broad approach to examining the subtleties of the English educational system by fusing an extensive literature survey with empirical research. A thorough identification, retrieval, and analysis of a wide range of publications—including books, dissertations, conference papers, and scholarly journals - are required for the literature review. Gaining understanding of the various facets of education within the English educational system is the main goal.

The research design used in this study is qualitative, and it is based on secondary data sources that were obtained from online and traditional libraries. The qualitative nature of the research allows for a nuanced exploration of the subject matter, drawing on a rich array of previously published materials. The research incorporates a varied sample, including published books, journals, websites, and other pertinent sources to enhance the credibility of the investigation. Prioritizing secondary data, the sample selection seeks to encompass a wide range of perspectives, thereby enriching the depth and breadth of the study.

The major steps of the research methodology involve first identifying and defining core issues within the English educational system, followed by the formulation of precise research questions to guide the investigation. Subsequently, a comprehensive dataset is gathered through a combination of traditional library resources and online platforms. Thorough critical analysis is performed on the gathered data and documents, with a focus on finding themes, patterns, and

important insights. The final step involves drawing meaningful interpretations from the analyzed data and presenting the findings in a cohesive and insightful manner, contributing nuanced perspectives to the broader discourse on educational systems.

Insights and Key Discoveries

Rethinking Mass Communication: John B. Thompson's Insights on Media Dynamics and Contemporary Challenges

John B. Thompson challenges the conventional usage of the term "mass communication" in the context of contemporary media in his critique. He questions its importance to the present media scene, underscoring that media are currently created for explicit business sectors as opposed to a broad public audience. Thompson is concerned about the misleading nature of the term "mass," which implies a single audience without taking into account the variety of individual viewers. Thompson then explores the idea of one-way mass communication, drawing comparisons with in-person contacts and the dynamic quality of two-way dialogues. Instead, he suggests terminology like "mediated communication" or just "the media," which he claims more accurately conveys the subtleties of communication in the digital age.

In "The Media and Modernity," Thompson lists five essential characteristics that characterize mass communication. He argues that the rise of the media sector is inextricably linked to the advancement of mass communication, starting with the institutional and technological means of production and distribution. Thompson also draws attention to the monetization of symbolic forms, making a distinction between information that has economic value and that which has symbolic importance.

Thompson also makes a significant point about the deliberate delay between the creation and reception of symbolic forms. For media providers, getting timely feedback might be difficult because of this deliberate delay, which suggests that content isn't created at the same time as its audience watches it. The fourth feature from Thompson examines the ways in which mass communication makes symbolic forms more prevalent in different contexts and eras. Thompson concludes by highlighting the importance of the general population to mass communication. This recognition highlights how media and audience interact dynamically, influencing the complexity of modern communication.

In his book "Democracy and Education," John Dewey affirmed a long-held belief among academics and philosophers regarding the importance of communication in society. The dynamics of communication that take place within and between these groups are vital to the operation of every element in a society, from tiny groups to larger communities and institutions.

A vital component is interpersonal communication, which is a private, frequently one-on-one conversation between people. It can happen verbally or nonverbally, although in-person contacts are more typical. It can be difficult at times to distinguish it from mass communication, in which a single source communicates symbolic meaning to a broad audience. This difficulty is especially noticeable in computer-mediated communication, as communications meant for a single individual can swiftly spread to a large number of recipients. Social media platforms, in particular, are designed in ways that facilitate the unintended viral spread of personal messages.

The symbolic transmission of messages with predetermined importance between members of formal organizations is known as organizational communication. In actuality, internal communication is essential to the operation of businesses, organizations, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities. As a result, communication not only takes place among these entities but also influences how they are structured. This educational YouTube movie provides a useful resource for learning more about the particular topic of study known as organizational communication.

Exploring the Dynamics Between Media and Individuals

Catharsis Theory:

One perspective on the relationship between media and individual behaviour is embodied in the Catharsis Theory. This theory posits that exposure to violence in the media can serve as a beneficial outlet for societal tensions. According to this viewpoint, individuals accumulate frustrations in their daily lives, and participating in the vicarious release of aggression portrayed in the media may help alleviate these tensions. In essence, by engaging with others' aggressions through media consumption, individuals find a cathartic release, preventing the potential build-up of internal frustrations that might otherwise manifest in violent or hostile behaviour.

Aggressive Cues Theory:

The Aggressive Cues Theory, in contrast to the Catharsis Theory, maintains that exposure to violent media does have a substantial effect. Within the larger framework of the Violent Cues Theory, this viewpoint is well recognized by academics. The fundamental tenet of the aggressive cues theory is that people's physical and emotional stress can be raised by media portrayals of aggressive cues, which in turn increases the chance of violent behaviour. To put it another way, those who are constantly exposed to violence may experience elevated amounts of stress and adrenaline, which could lead to more aggressive behaviour. It's important to remember that supporters of this theory stress that, although media violence increases the possibility of aggressive behaviour, it does not ensure it. The way that violence is portrayed is also very important in determining how it affects people.

Observational Learning Theory:

The idea of observational learning looks at people's interactions with media from a broader perspective. This idea holds that people can learn about violence by seeing how it is portrayed in the media and, in certain cases, by imitating comparable behaviours.

Reinforcement Theory:

The Reinforcement Theory challenges the theories that violent media exposure either enhances or decreases the risk of violent behavior. According to this hypothesis, media representations serve to reinforce viewers' pre-existing tendencies. Exposure to violent depictions increases the likelihood that someone who views violence and hostility as usual may engage in violent acts. On the other hand, people who were brought up with anti-violent principles are less likely to react violently when they come across violent content because it just serves to confirm their existing beliefs.

Cultivation Theory:

A more recent perspective on the impact of media violence is rooted in the Cultivation Theory. Unlike predicting behavioral responses, this theory explores into how individuals interpret and respond to violence portrayed in the media. It makes the argument that viewers' impressions of the real world are shaped and maintained by the symbolic domain of media, particularly television. Essentially, television creates a hostile and dangerous reality that shapes societal perceptions of the relationships between powerful and vulnerable people. This theory places more emphasis on shaping viewers' perceptions than it does on accurately forecasting behavioral results.

Significant Milestones in Social Media Evolution:

1973: *Emergence of Online Chat Rooms*

1973: *Development of TERM-Talk*

1974: *Birth of the Internet*

1980: *Rise of Bulletin Board System (BBS)*

1996: *Introduction of LunarStorm*

1996: *Arrival of ICQ*

1996: *Pioneering Social Networking with Video*

1998: *Social Blogging Revolution*

1999: *Evolution of Instant Messaging*

1999: *Debut of LiveJournal*

2000: *Introduction of Habbo*

2001: Windows Messenger and XP Integration

2003: Rise of Myspace

2003: Skype's Advent

2004: Facebook Revolution

2004: Introduction of Orkut

2005: Arrival of Bebo

2010: Emergence of Pinterest

2010: Inception of Instagram

2011: Microsoft Acquires Skype

2011: Introduction of Google+

2013: Rise of Vine

2013: Instagram's Video Feature

2013: Inception of Google Hangouts

2013: Myspace's Comeback

2015: Bebo's Return as a Chat App

2015: Introduction of Beme

2017: Launch of TikTok

2018: Emergence of Parler

2020: Anticipation for Clubhouse

Demassification

Within the contemporary media landscape, the traditional model of monolithic audiences targeted by mass media production faces numerous challenges. This essay will explore two prominent factors contributing to this shift: the proliferation of automated agents (bots) and the phenomenon of de-massification.

Firstly, the access of bots on popular platforms disrupts the integrity of information ecosystems. These automated programs can manipulate engagement metrics, create echo chambers, and disseminate misinformation, making it increasingly difficult for audiences to determine reliability and meaning in the vast ocean of content. This poses a significant obstacle for media producers striving to deliver accurate and engaging material, as their work might get drowned out by the noise generated by bots.

Secondly, the rise of countless information sources and distribution platforms raises the phenomenon of de-massification. This refers to the fragmentation of previously cohesive audiences into smaller, niche groups with increasingly specific interests. This trend, fuelled by the exponential growth of information production, poses a new challenge for media creators. Traditional strategies designed to appeal to the broadest demographics become less effective, requiring producers to adapt their content and distribution models to cater to these diverse and dispersed audiences.

It is expected that potential viewers, or enthusiasts, will require deliberate cultivation rather than facile engagement. Embracing a proactive stance represents a strategic approach to augmenting one's following across digital networks. Individuals occupying positions along the political spectrum, around both the right and left, who are prolific creators of news and entertainment content frequently critique mainstream media for presenting viewpoints that are perceived as more or less biased. The phenomena of de-massification are undoubtedly influenced by the apparent political polarization within these groups as well as the tendency of social media platforms to assist and even encourage the establishment of political factions.

The Blend of Media Worlds

The combination of various media modalities inside the global computer and mobile network platforms is referred to as convergence. This combination includes a variety of media formats, such as text, audio, video, animation, and the related sectors in which they operate. The fragmentation of huge audiences and the increased visibility afforded to voices located at the periphery are the driving forces behind this phenomenon. This process represents the

amalgamation of all types of media into an all-encompassing mixture that surrounds and shapes civilizations and societies. People are undergoing a process of self-reorganization inside this informational state, lining up with cultural and societal concerns that are very important to them.

Cultural Dynamics in Media Narratives

Because of their complicated relationship, media and culture have a difficult time separating out the influences they have on one another. The reciprocal relationship between culture and mass media shapes our understanding of the contemporary world. In the developed world, mass media becomes a channel for cultural dissemination, with societal messages influencing and being influenced by the media landscape. This complex connection is evident in the symbiotic relationship between "high" culture, "popular" culture, and "folk" culture, the three main types of cultural works portrayed in the media. While some scholars may reference "low" culture, here, it is suggested that this term merely denotes the less esteemed aspects of popular culture.

"High" culture, often considered the pinnacle of a civilization's cultural output, is intricately tied to economic status in determining its significance. In contrast, "popular" culture includes a vast range of artistic creations that resonate with the general public, reflecting the pulse of contemporary society. "Folk" culture, rooted in ordinary life and artistically and functionally valuable, is frequently associated with ancient civilizations, demonstrating in everyday items like bowls, baskets, dolls, or masks.

Examining contemporary folk art in comparison to ancient art unveils a unique attempt to capture the beauty and practicality of daily life in modern folk creations. Folk music, characterized by "traditional" instruments and thematic emphasis on the importance of daily life, often weaves stories with moral messages, similar to the moral lessons found in fairy tales, representing some of the greatest folk literature.

Cultural products are interpreted and valued within specific cultural settings; therefore, the value of an object or work of art depends on the viewpoints of other cultures. In the modern era, media significantly shapes our cultural views, underscoring the importance of recognizing the variability of moral standards across cultures. Understanding that certain behaviors should be universally despised and avoided, irrespective of cultural acceptance, is dominant in steering the evolving landscape of media and culture.

Evolving Horizons of Cultural Globalization

In the age of diminishing geographic distances, there is a growing interconnection that is resulting in closer relationships. A overabundance of technologies, such as 3G, video chatting, SMS, emails, blogging, microblogging, and social networking, have become pivotal means of communication in the contemporary world. The latest mediums not only offer data endurance but also economize space. The ability to transmit, receive, and exchange information without constraints holds the inherent potential to propel sustainable development, especially in economically challenged nations. Global e-communities extensively leverage new media as a tool for collaborative idea generation. This transformative landscape is reshaping the entire concept of mass communication, expanding the traditional "media audience" to include active users. However, challenges such as electronic crimes, pornography, unauthorized software replication, hacking, copyright infringement, and electronic plagiarism loom in the realm of new media. The advent of worldwide communication through new media even raises concerns about the vitality of "mass media" and its associated careers. Scholars argue that global communication on new media may potentially overshadow traditional pastimes, impacting societal values and interactions. The power of new media, while fostering global communities with shared cultures, prompts a reevaluation of traditional notions of morality, challenging established norms in online communities (Sharma & Chaturvedi, 1998; Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Craig, 1998).

Digital Media's Impact on Information Societies

Numerous scholarly works, spanning the knowledge industry (Machlup, 1962), the post-industrial society (Bell, 1973), and the network society, have extensively explored the role of new media in shaping information societies through diverse forms of information, communication, and technology (Castells, 1996; van Dijk, 1999). This section outlines the profound influence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on specific users, social groups, and society as a whole, as categorized by Geoff Walshum (2010). ICTs have a diverse impact that ranges from strengthening government services and civic society to stimulating domestic economic activity and elevating the standard of living for the impoverished. UNESCO (2002) defines ICT as the synthesis of informatics technology with communication technology.

Digital media completely changes the dynamics of human connections by allowing people to communicate with each other over time and across geographic distances. Digital media becomes a bridge for those with limited social circles to connect with like-minded individuals. It facilitates dialogues among people from diverse backgrounds, fostering a deeper understanding. Moreover, the section explores into how digital media plays a pivotal role in disseminating information about humanitarian crises, expediting responses and shedding light on issues. Contrasting traditional media, digital platforms accelerate the global spread of information, empowering individuals to respond promptly to events, expose corruption, and challenge unfair business practices.

The digitization of content and data, coupled with advancements in digital communication technologies, revolutionizes work methodologies. This section examines how the digitization of content enables different approaches to work in terms of location, timing, methodologies, and collaboration. Digital data, high-speed internet, and advanced communication technologies empower individuals to perform tasks at any time and from any location.

Furthermore, the section explores the transformative impact of digital media on education, aligning with the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Education project. It elucidates how digital platforms contribute to acquiring skills deemed essential in the 21st century job market, emphasizing the significance of information and communication technology proficiency, teamwork, problem-solving innovation, flexibility, and cultural awareness. Emphasizing that early mastery of digital skills can pave the way for personal growth, career success, and community engagement, the section underscores the potential of digital media to contribute to a fairer and better world, especially as the global user base continues to expand.

Complex Nexus of Social Media, Crime, and Psychological Vulnerabilities

Social media, while providing a quick way to share information, has its drawbacks, with the potential for fake identities and superficial relationships. Beyond mere deception, it contributes to a sense of hopelessness for some individuals. Additionally, it has become a tool of choice for criminals and terrorists, exploiting the freedom these platforms offer to engage in activities such as cyberbullying, cyberterrorism, human trafficking, and drug trade.

Cyberbullying, in particular, has seen a concerning rise, impacting young people significantly. The anonymity granted by the internet allows bullies to humiliate their victims in front of peers, leading to emotional distress. This issue has prompted legal measures against sending threatening messages online.

The global landscape has witnessed an increase in terrorist attacks not confined to regions with predominantly Muslim populations. Social media plays a pivotal role in these incidents, serving as a means for terrorists to gather information, recruit new members, raise funds, and disseminate propaganda. The spread of false or harmful information is often intertwined with the use of social media platforms.

Understanding the link between terrorism and social media involves examining the profiles of potential recruits. Individuals who are isolated are more likely to join extreme organizations. People who are struggling with mental health conditions like depression make up another category. Furthermore, some people are lured to radical organizations because they feel important and like they belong there.

Psychological factors play a significant role in recruitment, with many recruits exhibiting signs of depression and emotional instability. Moreover, the risk of isolation heightens the likelihood of individuals being attracted to radical ideologies. As technology and social dynamics evolve, ongoing efforts are needed to address the darker aspects of social media and its impact on individuals and societies globally.

Conclusions

Social media, those online forums that connect people from all over the world, provide a rich tapestry of social connections. One of the main components of these platforms is user-generated material, which shapes our worldview while also supporting research and decision-making. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram frequently come to mind when we think of social media since they are all driven by the dynamic contributions of their users. These platforms are extremely powerful and have a big impact on things like venture capital, politics, and corporate practices. Over recent years, researchers and professionals have delved into the multifaceted dimensions of social media, revealing its diverse impacts on our digital society. Recognizing the importance of stakeholder input, organizations often use social media as a feedback channel. Despite this, the user review landscape raises questions about the reliability and validity of published content.

The emergence of microblogging, driven by virtual communities that bring people together with similar interests and objectives, is notable among the various social media communication formats. In the middle of all the news and status updates about people's lives, social media becomes a virtual help desk where people go to ask for help. Notably, certain messages have been found to be socially draining, leading users who feel obliged to respond to experience social overload and adverse behavioural and psychological impacts.

The ever-changing social media landscape demonstrates the profound influence social media has on individuals and groups, influencing our increased dependence on digital communication. In a larger sense, it is impossible to overestimate the contribution of the media to the achievement of the literacy Millennium Development Goal. Using media outlets to support mass education proves to be the most cost-effective strategy. As our globalized society develops beliefs, dispositions, and actions, the ubiquitous impact of media, especially visual media, surpasses individual capacities.

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