MEDIA USE AND ITS CONSEQUENT EFFECTS

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ABSTRACT

The current state of cross-national media use and media influence research is critically assessed in this paper. The enhanced use of views in communication research is due to the increasing availability of data sources, advances in conceptualization, and the ease with which worldwide research collaboration can be accomplished. Media effects and contingencies resulting from national media systems or the sociopolitical and cultural circumstances of media use have become a fundamental pillar of such research. Based on examples of media effects meta-analyses and bibliometric studies of highly-cited concepts, we identify and evaluate five elements of media effects theories, as well as their empirical support. Each of these traits determines the conditions under which media can have an impact on individual people. Our analysis of media effects in contemporary media situations wraps up. This includes computer-mediated communication theories, which appear to have gone through a similar reformulation process from linear, receiver-oriented perspectives to theories that recognize communication's transactional component.

KEYWORDS: Mass communication, Mass media, Media effects theory, selective exposure, computer-mediated communication (CMC), meta-analysis.

INTRODUCTION

To describe studies on the effects of media, the term "mass communication research" was introduced. In the last five evaluations of media effects published in the Annual Review of Psychology, the word 'mass' appears in the titles (Liebert & Schwartzberg, Roberts & Bachen, et, al.). In response to new techniques to reach large audiences through mass media such as newspapers, radio, and film, the phrase "mass communication" was coined in the 1920s (McQuail 2010). The term "mass," on the other hand, covers not only the quantity of people

exposed by mass media, but also consistent consumption, universal affects, and opacity, all of which are becoming increasingly incompatible with current media use.

Media content has become highly customised since the 1980s, and with the advent of the internet, it has become much more so. According to Castells, the development in individualization and personalization of media use has enabled a type of communication known as mass self-communication (2007). The notions of communications being broadcast to potentially large audiences and media content being self-selected are shared by mass self-communication and mass communication: media users choose media content to satisfy their own needs, regardless of whether those needs align with the content creator's intent (McQuail 2010). This article's structure and content reflect the current coexistence of mass communication (e.g., through newspapers, radio, and television) and widespread self-communication (e.g., via social media).

The purpose of this review is to assess the most important media effects ideas that have emerged in the previous three decades, as well as to chart the growth of media effects thinking from its origins in unidirectional effects assumptions to today's recognition of intricate reciprocal relationships. To do so, we won't go over all of the different media effects theories that have arisen over time. Instead, we'll start with a fast overview of methodology and a description of their results using case studies from media impacts meta-analyses. The rest of our review focuses on five essential components of media impacts theories, including their analytic implications and empirical data. The consequences of mass self-communication in today's media environment are discussed next.

Meta-Analyses of Media Effects

Media effects analysis began in the 1920s and 1930s, but it wasn't until the end of the 1950s that it became a primary focus, leading to the advent of television and the establishment of academic communication departments in Europe and the United States. As in other social science fields, these developments led in a proliferation of media impact ideas and research, albeit at a very rudimentary level at initially. Thousands of empirical research on the cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural effects of media on children and adults were published by the 1980s. These meta-analyses were considered because they span a wide spectrum of media effects researched since the 1960s, such as the effects of media violence on aggressiveness and advertising on purchase behaviour, including the effects of internet use on political activity and Facebook use on loneliness. Several researchers have asserted that the minimal media effects discovered defy common sense, citing several anecdotal examples of significant media consequences.

Despite the fact that a recent meta-analysis of studies on the effects of fear-provoking media on children's fright reactions found a small to moderate average effect on fear and anxiety (r =.18; Pearce & Field 2015), severe media-induced emotional reactions near the clinical threshold have been observed in small subgroups of children (Pearce & Field 2015). Such disparities in results are less incongruent than they appear at first glance. They suggest that individual susceptibility to media influences differs significantly. Main effects or group-level moderator effects are often the focus of media effects meta-analyses.

FIVE FEATURES OF MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

Valkenburg and Peter (2013a) recently attempted to analyze existing micro-level media effects theories in terms of their fundamental assumptions. They discovered that these hypotheses had vastly different perspectives on the media influences process. Some theories, particularly those from the history, are primarily concerned with unidirectional linear relationships between media use and specified outcomes. Other, more comprehensive theories (e.g., Bandura 2009, Slater 2007) place a greater emphasis on the interaction of media and non-media aspects (e.g., media use, media processing) (e.g. disposition, social context). The five primary global elements of existing media effects theories can be identified when looking at existing media effects theories: they address the interactions between media and non-media factors and they establish the boundary conditions of media impacts.

Feature 1: Quantification of Media Use

The selectivity paradigm outlines the parameters of media effects and is a first characteristic of media effects theories. The two principles of this paradigm are that (a) people only pay attention to a small number of messages out of a huge number that could potentially attract their attention, and (b) only the messages they pick can influence them. In their fundamental research of the 1940 U.S. presidential election, Lazarsfeld et al (1948) found that people prefer political content that confirms their beliefs while avoiding content that seeks to persuade them to change their ideas. The researchers arrived to the conclusion that the media's potential to influence views or behaviour is constrained as a result of this sudden realization.

Feature 2: Media Properties as Predictors

A second component of media effects theories that could be used to determine the boundary conditions of media effects is the qualities of media themselves. Three sorts of media qualities that may influence media effects include modality (e.g., text, auditory, visual, audiovisual), content (e.g., violence, fearfulness, type of character, argument strength), and structural aspects (e.g. special effects, pace, and visual surprises). A third aspect of many media effects theories that may determine the boundary conditions of media effects is that most media effects are indirect rather than explicit.

Feature 3: Media Effects are Ancillary

When one or more intervening (mediating) variables influence the influence of an independent variable (e.g. media usage) on other variables, this is known as an indirect impact (e.g. media use outcomes). It's critical to comprehend indirect media effects for two reasons. Firstly, intervening variables can be valuable in developing prevention and intervention strategies because they elucidate how and why media effects occur. Second, in empirical research, ignoring indirect effects and, as a result, meta-analyses, may lead to erroneous impact size estimations.

Feature 4: Media Effects are Contingent

According to theories that propose contingent media effects, individual differences and social environment can enhance or mitigate media effects. Media effect theories that recognise conditional media effects include the Uses-and-Gratifications Theory (Rubin 2009), the Reinforcing Spiral Model (Slater 2007), the Conditional Model of Political Communication Effects (McLeod et al 2009), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo 1986), and the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model. To put it in other words, media attributes affect how media information is processed (property-driven processing), but the effects of this property-driven processing are influenced by the media user's specific dispositions, developmental stage, and social contextual factors.

Feature 5: Media Effects are Transactional

Furthermore, transactional effects are a part of media effects theories that can specify media effect border requirements (e.g. Anderson & Bushman 2002, Bandura 2009, Slater 2007). Transactional theories postulate reciprocal causal linkages between media users' characteristics, media consumption preferences, environmental factors, and media outcomes (Bandura, 2009). Individuals are thought to shape their own media effects in part by choosing which media to expose themselves to. Transactional models are used to explain how and why this occurs. They acknowledge that media consumers can only be influenced by media content that they choose to use and interpret selectively, therefore defining the limitations of media effects.

'MEDIA EFFECTS' IN THE NEWER MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Theories and studies on the impacts of individual or group behaviour in computer-mediated environments emerged in the 1970s, long before the Internet became ubiquitous. Unlike media effects research, which arose from a combination of interpersonal communication, teleconferencing, and organisational behaviour, this branch of theory and research arose from a mix of interpersonal communication, teleconferencing, and organisational behaviour, with a focus on how computer-mediated communication (CMC) influenced interpersonal and group interaction. The psychological and behavioural implications of face-to-face interaction vs. CMC have historically been the focus of CMC theories.

Computer-Mediated Communication Theories

As the Internet became more widely used for personal use and popular accounts of supportive virtual communities gained attention in the 1990s, a new cluster of ideas with less constrained perspectives of CMC emerged. Walther's (1992) Social Information Processing Theory explicates how CMC partners incorporate and decode social and emotional messages in CMC by using verbal cues and interaction strategies (such as content and style variations, and more direct personal questions and answers) as they progressively overcome the lack of nonverbal cues online. The degree of impression creation among communication partners, as well as the closeness of CMC, can be comparable to face-to-face interaction with plenty of time and message exchanges.

As an alternative, the SIDE (social identification-deindividuation) paradigm says that text-only CMC, which lacks physical appearance signals that communicate partners' individual identities, boosts the social identity's relevance at the expense of the personal identity (Postmes et al 2000). As an outcome of their heightened categorization of themselves and others as members of groups, CMC participants operate according to perceived social norms. As a result, CMC creates more typical behaviour as relative to face-to-face groups.

Another important method from the same era is Walther's (1996) Hyperpersonal Contact Model, which predicts that text-only talks can lead to more positive opinions of a CMC partner and more intimacy than face-to-face communication.

Since the introduction of Web 2.0 services like Twitter (2006), Facebook (2006), WhatsApp (2009), and Instagram (2010), online communication has expanded to include many more (audio)visual platforms and uses within existing connections. People nowadays use a variety of text-based and audiovisual communication tools. As a consequence of these advancements, comparing various CMC apps to one another or to face-to-face communication has grown more difficult, and often meaningless. Technology developments necessitate new theories and study.

Discussion:

In the context of communication, microlevel processes and macrolevel influences, notably explanation and repercussions of media use, should be examined. While the discoveries have led to some theoretical convergence and, as a result, vital insights into communication processes, there is still much more work to be done. The next sections examine the research evidences in a broader context before offering a critical assessment of the existing state-of-the-art. Finally, we explore the challenges that comparative media consumption and consequences research faces, as well as how the field might progress.

The findings show that context matters; it either structures individual cognitions, attitudes, and behaviours in a predictable way or reveals the boundary conditions of individual influence processes. The importance of media system characteristics is constantly stressed in the research on the antecedents and consequences of media use, particularly in the context of political learning. When media systems have a high level of journalistic professionalism, less press-party parallelism, or low commercialization of media markets (e.g., a stronger public broadcasting system), elevated concentrations of news consumption or political knowledge advances appear to be a direct result. In increasingly commercialized or market segmented media systems, people are less likely to watch news and current affairs programming or learn about political processes.

Researchers discovered numerous noteworthy historical linkages in conceptual thinking within these subdisciplines. To begin, theories that define 'effects' as strong and direct processes, referred to figuratively as a "hypodermic needle" or "magic bullet" in media effects theories and "technological determinism" in CMC theories, underpin both media effects and CMC studies. Second, throughout time, both subdisciplines transitioned from unilateral receiver-oriented to

transactional viewpoints. According to contemporary theories in both subfields, individuals shape and are shaped by their own chosen use of media or communication technology.

Despite the demonstrated advancement in principle, research into the use and impacts of next-generation communication technology is still in its early phases. The notion that the field's subject of study, media and technology, is a 'moving target,' a phenomenon that is continually changing while we attempt to understand it, is a major roadblock. Since the arrival of Web 2.0, these developments have intensified. Publications detailing the technology and applications we study are frequently out of date by the time they are published. Another issue is that our knowledge of the uses and effects of media and communication technologies comes from a variety of unrelated disciplines and subdisciplines that have hitherto largely ignored one another, making the formulation and evaluation of integrative theories challenging.

Integrating mass media and CMC research is much more vital than ever now that we spend several hours each day on social media and mass media communication has transformed into mass self-communication. Considering the phenomenon of Social TV, the most obvious integration of mass media and CMC, in which many people share their TV experience with other viewers via Twitter or Facebook at the same time, dividing their attention between television and the comments of thousands of other viewers. However, there is a dearth of research on such situations at the moment.

More noteworthy technological advances could have an impact on one or more of the five aspects of media effects hypotheses discussed in this study. To commence with, in recent decades, communication technology has grown highly dynamic. They moved from our desks (desktops), to our bags (laptops), and finally to our pockets (smartphones), radically changing our media consumption. Not only has our penchant for media multitasking expanded, but so has the length of hours we spend with communication technologies i.e., the use of one medium in affiliation with another, such as television, radio, print, the internet, or any other medium. Multitasking with media now accounts for around 30% of the time adolescents spend with media (Rideout et, al.). This development has important implications for research.

Personalization of media is at the heart of the "demassification of mass communication" since it allows media users to choose their own media material. Companies such as Amazon, Netflix, and Google News are increasingly seeking to personalise their content for each user in order to enhance interaction and bridge the gap between their offerings and website visitors. Personalization assumes the form of book or movie recommendations, as well as data and advertising tailored to specific individuals. Personalization has the ability to increase the cognitive and emotional involvement of media users, hence enhancing media effects. The underlying mechanisms and complicating factors that can create good or negative transactional impacts from personalised media material should be the focus of future research.

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