Original Article: Examining the Function of Mass Media

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ABSTRACT

After the introduction of the press as a mass media into the lives of people in the community, due to technical advancements, other mass media emerged. Television, sometimes referred to as the most powerful media, entered social life after World War II, around 1946. The reception of this media was extremely high. So, today in industrialized countries, as well as among the middle classes of non-industrialized countries, not only most households have a TV set, but in some cases second and third TV sets have entered the house so that each family member, without disturbing others, is able to watch his own program. In recent decades, newer phenomena in the field of mass communication have made it possible to change the habits of watching television. The number of television stations allows viewers to choose between multiple transmitters, and the presence of video and the ability to record television programs reduces the time dependence of individuals on television and allows them to watch the program at any time. The expansion of satellites will also bring about major changes. But these new phenomena have not yet brought about fundamental changes in the habits of watching television, and it is likely that over time, the changes in this field will be clearly visible.

Introduction

At the beginning of the popularity of television and its great popularity, it was mentioned in many discussions and debates as a fierce competitor of cinema and even press [1-4]. In this competition, each of the media tried to create its own activities in the presence of this media without destroying other media. However, in fact, a distinction between the functions of the media was made. In a very general way, it can be argued that the function of television is more entertaining and the function of newspapers is more interpretive and critical [5-7]. Of course, th is division is very broad; because it is possible to have TV stations with news function and also the existence of newspaper with function and entertainment aspect. In a very general division, we can name three functions of media, information function, educational function and recreational function. [8-10].

Although some classifications also refer to cultural and interpretive functions, there is no

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fixed boundary for determining the function of the media. At the same time, it should be noted that even the three divisions of recreation, education and information are confused, because an informational message can well have an educational aspect. An educational message can also be fun and entertaining. There are other definitions, such as LaSolle's, which describes the tasks of the media as observing and controlling the environment, gathering information about important events, writing activities, selecting and interpreting information and events, and passing on the cultural and social heritage of society from generation to generation [11-14].

Entertainment as the fourth function of the media

Although defining the functions of the media creates complexity, it can be said that there is a common function in all media; a function that also greatly enhances the power of the media, and that is the task (selective) function among all media. The volume of news, information, as well as entertainment programs that reach a medium is very high, and the media's ability to broadcast all of these messages is technically limited. The officials of each media must choose certain news from the mass of news and information, according to their technical and organizational limitations, determine how and in what order this news is presented and should decide whether to broadcast or publish a film (TV) or photo (press) with this news [15].

The same problem applies to the selection of educational and recreational programs. Apart from the technical limitations, it should be noted that each media has its own intellectual and worldview frameworks. Because of this, the choice is made not only in terms of technical problems, but also in terms of the way of thinking common in that medium. As a result, we are faced with the phenomenon of selection, selection, screening of information and messages of any kind. Merton and Lazarus Sefeld (2019) placed a great deal of emphasis on the phenomenon of choice, because the media, through the selection of material and its dissemination in society, focuses on those social realities that until then existed individually and separately in society, and possibly individuals in society [16].

They were aware - but did not attach much importance to it - of a social aspect. That is, by choosing the media, a phenomenon that people in the society were aware of becomes a social phenomenon and attracts the attention of all people and becomes the subject of discussion with society. In other words, it became the subject of conversation of ordinary people. Because everyone is widely and socially aware of its existence and discuss it. This phenomenon becomes especially important when we pay attention to the issue of media credibility and its transfer to the subject of broadcasting. The mass media in society have social credibility in themselves, that is, regardless of the people who work in these organizations [17].

Thus, if a media outlet introduces a person or topic into its discussions, that would receive great attention by the audience. It was noted that this choice is considered in relation to specific organizational frameworks, and this is the case that Merton (2019) refers to as the media's social credentialing function. In this case, it seems to ordinary people in society that the subject, person or group chosen by the media is not an ordinary and everyday phenomenon, but a phenomenon that is important enough to be selected from the available mass of information [18].

This means that this phenomenon has been selected by the media because of its importance and is now being broadcast as a significant phenomenon in the media. Therefore, the seal of media approval has been stamped on this phenomenon. A phenomenon that everyone observes in their daily lives and for special personal reasons considers it important or insignificant. It becomes a social phenomenon and the media disseminates it with a certain kind of intellectual orientation. In this way, the media, by choosing a subject, turns it into a subject of discussion, while presenting the subject as a social position, expresses its positive or negative attitude towards it. Now, people in society can no longer ignore this phenomenon, and now that the subject of dialogue has been determined through the media, people in society must also determine their position and orientation towards it [19-21].

Analysis of the function of mass media

The gap thus created between personal morality and social morality must be filled by deciding for or against. By presenting specific social norms positively, the media insinuates to individuals that the behavior presented in the media is appropriate social behavior. In this way, the media creates harmony in individuals by providing appropriate social behavior. The function of creating appropriate social behavior also creates consistency in relation to the selected function. Socially approved behavior is the same behavior presented through the media. In this regard, it should be noted that in creating an atmosphere, the behaviors presented in the media increase compliance, nd not presenting the behavior is much more important than presenting it. If a particular type of behavior is never selected and disseminated through the media, it is in fact clear that phenomena that the media do not select and disseminate are not interesting and popular enough to be the subject of social debate [22].

At the same time, not presenting the behavior of the media itself means inconsistent behavior in society. This is because the media not only encourages people to engage in similar behaviors by spreading undesirable behaviors, but also drastically reduces the possibility of misbehavior in other ways. The media raises the issue and the social credibility of the issue by presenting a specific issue, the presentation of which is directly related to the selected function [23].

The positive or negative attitude of the media towards the phenomenon under study causes people, who did not think much about it until then and always ignored it, to determine their attitude and attitude towards it. Also, through the presentation of acceptable behavior by the media, behavioral compliance is promoted and encouraged in society [24].

Due to the existence of the media, socially consistent behavior will be the same behavior that the media has proposed and positively evaluated. Unplanned behaviors in the media are in no way consistent with patterns of behavior. Merton and Lazarsfeld (2019) cited the function of other media as influencing people's tastes. The mass media, especially television, is heavily criticized by the intelligentsia. They claim that television causes the decline of society's culture and art. The fact is that the mass media is not mass or popular.

Rather, it means that art is presented to the masses through the media. [25].

Due to special limitations, artists presented their works to the affluent strata of society and were encouraged and supported by them. Every form of art, literature, music, painting and theater was for the affluent class of society, because these people had the high level of literacy of the society of their time and not only were able to understand the works of art, but could afford Pay for artwork.

In this way, this stratum of the art community controlled, encouraged and promoted art. Today, due to the existence of the media, art is out of the control of certain and selected people in society and is available to the public, and through the press, radio and television, the works of art of all great artists can be presented to ordinary people. But the point of criticism is that most media outlets offer art at the same level of literacy and artistic understanding of the masses (the general public). Although there is no illiteracy in most industrialized countries, as well as in other areas, efforts have been made to eliminate illiteracy, but in all countries, the majority of literate people are as literate as what is called formal literacy. These people are able to read and understand simple concepts laid out in a format; but they fail to understand the overall content of the article, especially if the level of written material is difficult [26].

In this case, the general content that needs to be examined and scrutinized is hidden from their view, and a gap is created between readability and comprehensibility. In fact, fewer people are able to comprehend the content (especially complex content), but fewer people are critical of what is being read. The same is true of presenting content from media such as radio and television. The content of these media is for the general public and everyone uses it; but few people pay attention to these issues with a critical view. Undoubtedly, there are people in the middle and lower classes of society who have a very precise and good understanding of art, but in this regard, not every single person in the society is considered. Rather, society as a whole has a low understanding of art, and among the mass media recipients, the elites for whom art was presented only yesterday make up a small percentage. There is a contradiction in the level of artistic taste and consciousness: It must be

acknowledged that the level of literacy and mental intelligence of each individual in society has increased from the previous era; however, at the same time, the general level of taste and art and the aesthetic standards of society have declined and it is said that the media have been involved in the decline of the artistic level of society [27].

What is the role of the media?

Should the media adapt itself to the level of artistic taste of the masses of the people or offer content higher than their taste and understanding and, in fact, try to raise the general level of society's culture? Some studies show the inability of the media to promote culture. For example, some radio transmitters played classical music in order to raise the level of art for the lower classes.

Subsequent studies showed that people targeted by the media refused to listen to these programs, and only those who were already interested in this type of music remained listeners of the program [28].

Considering the points that Merton and Lazarusfeld (2019) mentioned, we realize the importance and power of the media. In fact, with the dissemination of any kind of content through the media, an issue, a phenomenon or an issue is raised publicly and socially, and the opinion of the media is raised by accepting or rejecting that message. In this case, one can no longer remain indifferent and must express or oppose the opinion of the media. This is true of news, official information, as well as attitudes expressed in movies, TV series, entertainment, and educational programs. In particular, these two researchers believe that the level of presentation of these programs is at the level of taste of ordinary people and thus is understandable for the majority of society [29-33].

The influence of mass media

With the advent of industrial society, fundamental changes took place in societies, and libertarian worldviews-even before the rise of industry - took fundamental steps to change the old society. The most important effect of these thoughts was on the release of the individual from family bonds [34-36]. For a very long time, people lived in families; they earned their livelihood through the family,

and patriarchal power not only affected the individual's responsibilities in the division of labor, but also passed on the traditional patriarchal thoughts and ideas of the family to the younger generation. Thus, individuals were not only economically dependent on the family and the family environment, but also in terms of thought and attitude.

With the disappearance of large families and the growth of nuclear families, the power of the family to provide a way of thinking and attitude to individuals also decreased, especially due to the drastic changes that took place in society in the nineteenth century - and much more drastically today. Objectively, they were no longer able to provide a line of thought to the younger generation. Family thoughts and ideas faded in the face of societal thoughts and in some cases even faced each other as two opposite poles. The emergence of concepts such as freedom, democracy, thought, and logic also necessarily necessitated the need for public opinion, as opposed to individual thought.

Mass media play a major role in other institutions that shape the mindset of society. It is claimed that public opinion in the present age is constructed by the media in such a way that people think that a person's thinking is the result of following the public opinion propagated by the media. Once, it became clear that authoritarian governments were capable of directing public opinion. A series of inquiries into the transient influence of the German Socialist Nationalist Party Hitler responds positively to this view.

At the same time, it seems that in today's societies, with the number of media and different facilities for the masses, the power of the media has somewhat diminished. In fact, it must be said that we have gone through several specific stages of thinking about the influence of the media on people's thoughts and attitudes. Initially, there was a general perception of the infinite power of the media; it was thought that if one controlled the media, one would easily be able to force people to engage in behaviors of their own free will. The theoretical foundations of this attitude were based on two factors. One of these factors was the theory of instinctual psychology, which emphasized the existence of inherent and somewhat similar to biological mechanisms among individuals. There

are certain instincts among the members of society that, due to stimulation, cause approximately similar behavior among them; that is, if the sender sends a message to the masses to stimulate these instincts, the masses will respond approximately in the same direction as the stimulus received.

Conclusion

Sociology in the early twentieth century referred to mass society and considered the individuals of society as a single and isolated mass that communicated with others anonymously. Sociologists believed that the primary groups that preserve and stabilize the personality of individuals have disappeared with the emergence of the industrial-urban community and individuals are isolated in society, thus, completely immune to the stimuli provided by the media. Undoubtedly, the socio-economic conditions of the time were involved in this type of thinking. The industrialization and growth of cities had shifted people from familiar rural environments to strange cities. The person had nothing to do with his work. All production decisions were made without his intervention, and he became an object of ignorance. This ignorance was also seen in his relationship with others. A colleague, a neighbor, a fellow citizen were strangers to him who formally interacted with each other in public places. There were no group affiliations or values for him; the individual was no longer supported through the family, because the family had become a consumer accumulation for its members and the deep and basic dependencies of the family had disappeared.

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