

Impact of the media

Business



Communication is said to be the passing of information from the source to the recipient through a channel and is completed by the resulting feedback. The channel of communication in this case, the media, is the interest of this research paper.

The media plays the role of bridging the gap between originators of information and recipients and then conveying feedback between the two ends. What happens in between the two interest parties in communication can be enhanced or altered by the medium of communication used. It is at the backdrop of this statement that media assumes a pivotal role of determining the impact of information sent and received by various stakeholders. The media has constantly evolved and established itself as a central piece in information broadcasting. Every possible form of communication is dependent on some form of medium or another for transmission.

The media plays such a key role of information broadcasting but beyond that are a myriad of processes and products that are realized as a result of the interaction between recipients and the source of information. The media stands as a powerful tool in the following areas discussed Agenda Setting. Agenda setting is the practice of media houses to decide on the themes of the day. The major way of agenda setting is through active selection of 'important issues' affecting the nation. What media considers important and decides to give more airtime becomes the center of attention for the nation. Consequently, people believe it too and continue to seek relevant redress on the issues presented thereby successfully attending to those issues more than any other. The media can also set the agenda, through the headlines

set out, the advertisements of the day, the order of presentations whether in a newspaper or electronic broadcast or even through prioritization of events and programs to suit a certain set tempo.

The tacit message that comes through is one that is never realized by an average recipient of information. The relative weight in terms of importance between the true importance of a story and the extent to which the audience esteems a story as important is what reveals the agenda setting power of the media. (Mediatenor, 2010) Even when events are selected to be reported, not everything goes to the public either. This is what McCombs calls agenda cutting. This is where information regarding an important news event is sifted through the corporate opinion of the newsgroup reporting especially where the need to influence public opinion in a certain direction is a prerequisite. He further states that the priority of the media becomes the priority of the public due to the way information is presented and given attention.

(McCombs, 2002) The media gets people thinking in a certain direction by covertly presenting the question of the most important issues affecting the nation at the time. The objective is to get the public thinking in a certain direction and thereby compel law makers to legislate on those affairs. The resulting pattern is a shaped up public agenda that is addressed from the point of information supplied by the media. The fact that the media brought these issues to light gives it immense credibility and it is elevated to a place of an official authority in the public gaze. This is both a marketing strategy as it is a point of establishment for the media. The fact that the media can

create and campaign for an agenda makes accord itself a form of immunity from legislative dissolution.

This is why the media is a constant 'thorn in the flesh' for the politicians as it cannot lay off their backs. Ironically the same politicians have guaranteed the freedom of the press in the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

Shaping public opinion Shaping public opinion is a complex process that must take place, for the most part, in the guise of information sharing. Media accesses information from the key policy and decision makers and then shares that information with the public. The media then does an analysis of the information it wishes to share through its academic analysts or experts who act as filters in order to interpret the information for the consumption of the public. In this process therefore the media successfully turns the eye of the public on the matters it considers of prime importance without necessarily leaving room for speculation.

Creating and Maintaining Popular Culture The media has the ability to create, campaign for, and promote a popular culture. Popular culture is what has come to be accepted and agreed upon as an important, everyday occurrence that can be dependent upon as a representation of the larger masses.

Popular culture manifests in the form of trends, lifestyles, fashion fads, preferences in music, and choice of color, among other identities. This mass culture is produced for the consumption of the wider audience and to create commonalities and points of reference in an increasingly global society. It is worth noting that popular culture is different for different generations and it tends to appeal to the current younger generation so that older folks are

hardly concerned about fussy dress codes or hairstyles and other fashion fads.

But then in their time as young people there were trends that were particular to them and not to the older people of their time. By and large popular culture is born and bred for the consumption of young individuals but at the same time it affects all other sectors in the society. The production and fashion industry for example will rely heavily on what has been popularized as trendy and fashionable in creating market products in order to appeal to the mass consumers who will buy its products. When international students visit America for the first time they may experience culture shock due to the diverse differences in their cultures and what they find in America. However, the media has largely mitigated that due to the universality of some of the pointers or markers of the incumbent young generation everywhere. It follows that due to the increasing globalization foreigners can find it easier to adapt in new environments due to a previous experience, where they have interacted with the target people beforehand.

Creating Spins and Slants in Stories The media has the ability to spin a story like a yarn to read a totally different material from its original intention. It can communicate intentional ambiguity just so that recipients can read different things in bid to allow for bias. The media has the ability to communicate the overall tone on a story by adding its sentiments in order to make the reader, viewer or listener see things through their point of view. What is presented by the media is easily consumed as the true account of the event or situation as it happens. The audience's faith in the media to

report the truth is what generally prevents the masses from churning through the information presented objectively.

This is where the media can make or break a personality. The manipulation of text and graphics can paint an overall picture that essentially communicates more than merely what is written. This is what is referred to as subtext. That means that there is the conferred meaning and the inferred meaning. Conferred meaning is the information presented in the text or picture which on face value is the information generated from the reporting expedition while inferred meaning is the indirect and covert meaning that represents the general reporter's views concerning the event or situation that was being reported. Once again the general audience will probably accept what is presented to them without question or second thought.

There are of course those who seek to know more about issues or presented information in order to understand better or benefit from the said piece of communication by doing research, questioning motives or personally attending to the information. Classification and Ranking Through poll results, analysis and tagging of media products, political personalities, and commercial outfits among other things the media can popularize items in order of importance necessarily seeming to do so. This is achieved through giving more airtime to those items the media feel are importance or of a bigger value without a systematic merit system for grading. Again by emphasizing on an item's positive attributes more than its negatives can place it a tad higher than items of similar characteristics where the media has a particular vested interest in the performance of the subject item. The media has been known to influence poll results and outcomes of events. For <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-the-media/>

example during the political campaign of 2008 in America, the media is thought to have been a key component in realizing then candidate Obama's victory.

According to Daren even before the election results were announced Obama had already won due to the way the media gave him exposure. Daren points out that the preferred candidates would be put in the center during debates and the poll results that would favor them would be constantly played on the screens (Daren, 2007). The election bid can also be largely influenced by exit polls. When a trend begins to emerge in terms of voting from those who participate in exit polls, then it is possible to predict the likelihood of a particular candidate winning the election as opposed to nother. That can even increase the leverage for the seemingly winning candidate to actually win in the final official poll results.

(Bishop, 1995) Another way the media affects the outcome of political polls is when it leans on one side of the political campaign. Some newsgroups tend to lean on and accept the views of a certain political group over others. Once again due to vested interest politicians have come to realize the power in the media to influence poll results and effectively elective decisions. As a result they buy shares in such companies and legislatively support the media groups that in turn will likely give them a run for their money. The grading of quality of education from one level institution to another can also be largely influenced by the media Artistic Creativity The human mind is attracted to creativity and the emotions are captivated by aesthetic compositions of things.

Therefore by using these two components the media largely depends on the works of art to deliver information and achieve appeal to massive audience. The instruments of the media are found in creating interest, generating excitement, giving some form of control and power to the audience but really its object is in achieving its agenda in the long run. The media uses theatrical creativity in passing messages. The tools of trade include pictures, both still and motion, text, audiovisual and animation components of information dissemination. In an advertorial the media creates and manipulates a situation to show how a certain product can work for the consumer. The actors and beauty pageants who are part of an advertorial manipulate their sound faculties and non-verbal cues in order to achieve certain responses from the audience.

Their tone of voice exhibits a whole range of emotions meant to relate with the everyday customer who interacts with products from the company in question. For example, when a pharmaceutical company is advertising a painkiller, it is likely to show an actor suffering from a serious headache and then the actor displays pain by a creased forehead or speaking in a low weak voice but then moments after taking the painkiller from the said pharmaceutical, the actor is shown as a vibrant, all smiles and satisfied customer. In the end the dramatic effectiveness of that painkiller will cause customers to consider the medicine as an alternative to other non advertised medicines. The media also engages in variety and spontaneity to sustain interest among its audience. The media clientele is composed of individuals who are different in age, class, level of education, cultural backgrounds and different interest groups. Even within a group there are sub-categorizations

in terms of tastes and preferences in what forms part of their entertainment or points of information.

The media therefore prepares for all these cadre of expectations through programs that address the varied needs of its clientele. Creating Social Realities We live in a society that relies on constructs of the social reality. This is how we see and experience the world around us. Our shared experiences bring us together through the platform of communication. As seen earlier, since media is a critical component of communication it has a significant role to play in the construction of social reality.

Matteo & Karin hold that as we communicate in society we develop a consensus in how we see the world and that in turn this forms part of the realities that we experience on a daily basis. (Matteo & Karin, 2010)The interaction between individuals makes an event a social one and the sharing of ideas and building of consensus becomes a constructive affair which in turn creates a world view through which reality is seen and expressed; hence the notion social construction of reality. Media has enlarged the scope of experience in the sense that we have more access to information about events, places, situations, individuals etc without necessarily establishing real-time physical contact. We relate with these individuals or events by interacting through information provided by the media. We agree on some issues and disagree on others, sympathize with hurting individuals on TV, laugh about amusing situations, criticize unconventional occurrences, enjoy sceneries shown in pictures and interact with cultures from across the globe through the information provided without ever getting to meet these individuals.

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This experience is not direct but a mediated experience in that we interact with a wide range of information without directly engaging the object of experience. Therefore when events and people are presented to us through the media we have a common bond that we share. The media can manipulate this by using our common framework of reference to guide our thoughts to particular themes or objectives. A media campaign can succeed in getting people to be involved in an activity much more easily than any other direct persuasive means. For example, a hunger campaign led by media houses is flanked with pictures of hungry and malnourished people and children who live in pitiful squalor conditions.

The picture can be accompanied with an emotive soundtrack and a somber voiceover vividly describing the state of hunger. The combination of these aspects of media whips anybody's emotions. The media can even decide to take a poll to run concurrently as people pledge donations and tabulate the numbers of increasing participants on the screen just to motivate and create an impetus for the undecided audience to join the cause. This power to influence people is based on a shared framework of reference such as sympathy for the downtrodden and the need to help the society that we are all a part of. The media has succeeded in harnessing the construct of social reality it helped build by constantly bringing updates on the suffrage of the people. Language used in the media Media uses language in very creative ways in order to actualize communication.

In media, it's not just the choice of words that matter but also how those words are used in context to create certain emotions or achieve some other effects on the audience. The media employs the use of direct active verbs to

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create a sense of urgency and prompt action on the part of the audience. Phrases like 'do it', 'Hurry! While stocks last!' create an impression that whatever is to be purchased is important and limited in supply at the same time. The media uses language in varied ways in order to achieve a certain goal depending on the aim of the product whether it is a news item, a documentary, a commercial, an advertorial or a talk show. Edgar & Camille purport that clarity and precision in choice of words is absolutely non negotiable when it comes to the news segment. (Edgar & Camille, 1993) News reporting relies on descriptive approach where events and occurrences are narrated to the audience in vivid words.

This is especially so when dealing with the radio or newsprint since the audience do not get to see the event as they happen therefore they must rely heavily on the reporters ability to dexterously use language and paint a mental picture for the audience. Language used in advertising is also unique. Advertisers use a persuasive language that takes different shapes. This could be through a testimonial of a satisfied customer, a vivid description or demonstration of the product's competitive advantage (usually over and above other similar products in the market) or generally the way the products works to the advantage of the consumer. Whatever the intention of the advertiser, the overriding objective determines the kind of language to be employed through the choice of words in the advertorial.

Words can be used to create concepts and with concepts come understanding of phenomena around us. Generally all human beings are the same, but we find differences in cultures, physical anatomy, lifestyles, different levels of education and economic empowerment. As a result we use

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words to express these differences and therefore create our understanding of who we are and how other people view us. (Matteo & Karin, 2010) The media advances these concepts in the way it presents and describes people of different races, diverse cultures, varied origins and different geographical placements. The use of the word 'International Student' for example is very common in radio and television commercials advertising academic intakes to students who are not American in origin. (Benson, 2006) The usage of the phrase 'international student' brings with it certain connotations that are particular to the foreign student.

In a search compilation that was done between the year 2000 and 2005 leading newspaper, magazines and radio stations, Benson says that search words that were used ranged from 'foreign fee paying students, distance learning, exchange programs', and in some cases very offensively as 'cash cows, profits, and investments' (Benson, 2006, p. 98-99) This association of particular individuals with certain concepts is meant to achieve comprehension and also as a framework of reference. By so doing a perception is created about the individuals in question. The way people are seen or accepted or even treated varies according to the information received about them. Since Americans may not travel east to meet Asians or go south to meet Africans, they can only relate with them on the face value of the information given to them from the media.

Unfortunately the media may not present the foreign students in accurate terms or may have a bias in reporting the kind of individuals that the different nationalities are. The growing social media The new media which includes the internet has revolutionized the media industry. The mainstream <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-the-media/>

media is controls what the audience receives in terms of content, time of airing, amount aired and probably the target audience. This leverage has made the mainstream media a revered institution that is powerful and influential. With the coming of the new media things are set to turn around on very many levels.

As the world moves towards globalization access to information has become more liberal and personalized. This is one of the ways the new media is clipping power from the mainstream media. And internet user can log on the internet and access the very information the mainstream media has at their convenience. Issues of timing and content have also been overridden by the new media. Anyone can access the information they wish to get whenever they want and how much they need. The ability to retrieve information and upload information on the internet is in itself creating a powerful establishment of the new media.

It has the capabilities of the mainstream media in the sense that it can combine the audiovisual, textual and graphical components. It allows for the online manipulation of information while interacting with data. All this abilities have created a new sense of experience in the medium that is the internet. The chat rooms available that allow for direct online communication enable users to interact in a virtual world created by this new media. The ramifications of this development has shaped the media and if anything advanced the capabilities of the media than ever before. This means that individuals can access information and interact with each other directly without the interface provided by news reporters or selected programs.

Social media is predicated upon this background, that people interact with each other in real-time and without necessarily meeting physically. Brogan describes the social media as “ a new set of communication and collaborative tools that enables many types of interactions that were previously not available to the common person” (Brogan, 2010 p. 11) Information is created and shared without limits in the social media. The exceptions that exist only protect the integrity of the website hosting the chat rooms and the general principles and dynamics of communication but do not limit users from expressing themselves in the most liberal manner possible. Through the social media the existing stereotypes that have been created by the biases of mainstream media are quashed as new information becomes available directly from the sources.

Pew Research Center pulled a survey in which the respondents said that they get most of their news alerts and headlines on the internet The information is then discussed and debated upon through the arising chat room session that accompany a given story. Whenever a juicy story say a political or some other emotive event occurs internet users from all over the world log in to comment on the story. The biases in the story can be iron out as the discussion board becomes a huge debate conference drawing representation from across the globe. Programs Created for the International Students The media has for the most part been at the forefront in shaping the American society's ideals, values and social reality. How the outside world views America is dependent on how the media represents the American people. Anybody therefore wishing to come to American or to come to study in

American already has a viewpoint of the people he or she will interact with, study along, work with and share resources and amenities with.

This perception is largely influenced by the information they have already received through their home media channels. The media therefore registers a considerable impact in the way institutions prepare for the international students. Distance learning programs are created with several things in mind when it comes to accommodating students. The institutions will think about the acculturation of students so that they do not feel left out while familiarizing with their environment. The institution would want to paint itself as an accommodating place that is all inclusive and esteems other people's cultural appreciation, different world views and preferences.

There are programs exclusively designed to make international students as comfortable as possible. The number one concern for any institution hosting foreign students is to examine the kinds of data available to the student that informs their perception of the institution they are to be admitted into. The issue of media imaging cuts both ways and you have domestic students who also have a certain perception about the new international student because of where they come from. The mainstream media has already given the domestic students information about their foreign counterparts and therefore they will judge them and relate with them on the face value of that information. Even when American students study outside of the US they face similar challenges.

American students enrolled in St. Francis Xavier University between 2005 and 2006 showed increased participation in curricular and extracurricular

activities after going through an induction program that prepared them for integration in a foreign nation. (James, 2006) The academic institutions therefore have to worry about that bit of integration while enlisting these new students so that there will be no discrimination based on earlier perceptions. Due to differences in cultural orientation, international students may be considered as uncooperative in the sense that they may not respond to learning or participation the way domestic students might. According to Kay and Izabela “ Demystify effective group work practices related to conversation rules, leadership styles, social relationships, conformity etc considering culture-specific norms the student may bring which regulate their behavior in the group and may be misinterpreted as non-engagement due to unwillingness to participate” (Kay & Izabela, 2007) As a result, tertiary institutions have come to employ a program called Teaching Emphases for English Proficiency Levels (TEEPL) to help international students to adjust in the new environment and reap maximum benefits from the education system. It should be noted that of course embassies of the respective international students’ countries of origin have programs that prepare international students by correspondence to adjust to the new environments before and while they are in America but for all practical purposes these are general induction programs that are not specific to the international academic needs of the student in question.

Conclusion In conclusion, the research has shown that the media is a powerful tool that creates images, manages perceptions and helps construct social reality. The media’s power to influence on our world view cannot be ignored and that rather it should be examined and if possible used to

enhance the act of communication. The media has immense power when it comes to relaying information about different aspects of human interaction and therefore it should be given close attention. The media impacts greatly on how we see the society around us and therefore for international students planning to join America to further their studies, they may get information that may not adequately prepare them for their stay in America. The fact that they have seen it on TV, heard it on the radio, or read it in a newspaper doesn't mean that it is the factual true representation of the people of America.

This is due to the uniqueness of the media in the way it informs and creates impressions of situations, places and people as we have seen. That is not to say that the media cannot be trusted but rather it is in a bid to show the complexities that exist in information dissemination and the particular aspects that inform the kinds of biases that exist in broadcasting. The need for this enlightenment is therefore to prepare international students who are in America or are preparing to come to America to come with an open mind and be prepared to question what is presented to them and form their own world views as they experience the world around them. The research has also explored the emerging institutional initiatives to prepare for and integrate the international students by using the information available from the media sources and also as an opportunity to grow new forms of knowledge as a database for future admissions of foreign students. The media can therefore be used as a force for good or can be create images that are counterproductive when it comes to international integration. It behooves international education administrations to therefore come up with

programs and projects that are meant to help not only the international student but also domestic students to adjust to each other and allow for learning to take place without any discrimination or biases.