

Impacts of the mass media on enculturation



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Popular America Culture

Introduction

Mass media and popular culture are quite interconnected. Mass media has a great influence on culture construction. This term paper discusses the impacts of mass media on enculturation. It will look at the relationships among media and the normative cultural values formation. Finally the paper will discuss the influence of the internet on culture and communication means. Real world examples are given to substantiate the paper.

Part I

Impact of the mass media on enculturation

Enculturation can be viewed as the process through which persons learn the contents of a culture and assimilates them to their lives. Mass media has grown in popularity and has formed part of our daily enculturation. This is due to the huge impact of mass media on enculturation. The Random House Unabridged Dictionary (1997) defines enculturation as a process whereby persons learn group culture by experience, observation, and instruction.

The society is accessing technology more easily with time. The mass media communication devices are quickly flooding every corner of the society making dissemination of information quite easily to all the ages of people. Media has been able to make some of the topics which were never discussed freely to be so discussed. This has impacted both negatively and positively on the people receiving the information. Age groups which were not in a position to access some information in the past can access it freely and to whatever level they desire. A lot of research has been conducted on the antisocial and prosocial impact of the media.

According to Motion Picture Research Council movies have a potential of causing antisocial behaviors in children. It is claimed that many of the things which are learnt from movies have antisocial overtones. In the 1950s the comic books were also added to the list of the contributors to the antisocial behaviors (Wertham, 1954). The 1950s saw many experiments conducted on the TV shows. These included the Bandura experiments which implicated violent media with aggressive behaviors among children. The Media has also been associated with sex. Some media houses have got programs which exclusively talk about sex. Some TV shows have taught the teenagers and the public in general how to dress sexily and live what is commonly called a sex lifestyle. Walking around in any city it is very easy to meet sexual sentiments. Broadcasts have shaped sex to be a popular way of self expression (Bandura, 1977).

The Sesame street program is an example of TV series which has shown much [positive impact among its views. According to Minton (1975) the program was able to prepare children in readiness for school (Minton 1975). According to CBS Broadcast Group (1974) Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids was quite helpful in teaching prosocial lessons to children (CBS Broadcast Group 1974). Most action movies for instance Prison break shows how authorities can be successful fooled and any evidence of crime committed erased. This can possibly have a bad impact on some third world countries whose security system are still shaky and people criminals can easily imitate what they see in movies with much success.

MTV is a good example of a modern influencer on popular culture. This is especially pronounced for the case of the youths who from the major part of <https://assignbuster.com/impacts-of-the-mass-media-on-enculturation/>

viewers of MTV. Take for instance the Saturday Night Show. The program is designed with adverts cutting in every other minute. Due to the popularity of the show the adverts made surely have the eyes and ears millions of listeners. The teenagers who form the majority of the views of this show are prone to be influenced by the adverts. Everyday millions of impressionable teenagers watch a show called Saturday Night Live.

Part II

The relationship among the media, advertising and formation of normative cultural values

In explaining how the media can influence the formation of normative cultural values, Van Evra (1990) proposes the script theory. He argues that since most views have little experience on life matters the media brings these matters to the views frequently. For instance if a person has never experience violence in life, the experience can be felt virtual when one is exposed to the violence in media frequently given pattern of violence is created. This pattern is dictated only by the media being the major source of knowledge of violence to the person watching (Van Evra, 1990).

The media, being a major source of information on many issues in life, the views are inclined to adopt the culture portrayed by the media concerning the topic in question. Comstock and Paik (1991) try to shed some light on how the media can help in shaping up a culture among the fans. They argue that in most cases the media portrays life issues in unique, compelling and unusual manner which is likely to attract and arouse the attention of the fans. This makes the way life issues are handled in the media to be the most attractive way of adoption. They quote the social cognition theory which

claims that patterns which are portrayed repetitively and redundantly are likely to prompt the fans to adopt the patterns unconsciously (Comstock & Paik, 1991).

Comstock and Paik (1991) also claims that the way characters are framed in the media makes their way of handling issues the only way of handling a real life issue in which some one has no experience on. It should also be noted that media stars like musicians are popularized by the media. Fans of such stars tend to imitate what these stars do. A good example is the popularity of soap operas especially among the youth. These are mostly based around love issues. Most youth have resolved to adapt to the way love issues are handled in the soaps. Another good example is how music is spreading dressing code among the youth. It is very conspicuous among the black American musicians to dress in a unique way. This is especially for the case rap and hip hop music which is very popular among the youth all over the world. Most youth have adapted to these musicians way of dress codes and way of life especially in the African countries (Comstock & Paik, 1991).

Part III

The social impact of the internet

The internet connection has contributed much to globalization. Globalization has much impact on blending different cultures and homogenizing them. Through the internet information flow is possible to all the corners of the earth. Research has shown the usage of internet is quickly replacing the other media especially TV watching. This is because the time traditional dedicated to watching TV is being used for internet surfing (Weaver, 1998).

Basically the net is used for information, communication, entertainment and affiliation.

The internet is so broad that it covers almost every part and issues of life aspects. The internet is likely to have a great influence than all the other forms of media because of its unique. The internet can actual substitute all the other forms of communication. Through the internet one to one communication is possible almost everywhere. Through the use of blackberry, one is able to get in touch with other people at any time. The internet has all the attractive features of all the media and thus easily influences its users very easily (Weaver, 1998).

The internet is also quite addictive due to its unlimited potential of accessing information. A good example of how the internet has influenced its user is through the facebook. Facebook is able connect people who are any distance apart. Their easy to use make them popular and as a result make the dissemination of information faster. Through this features various cultural aspects are exchanges among the users of such sites. Through such sites cultural values are transferable to different parts of the world.

Conclusion

Media is quite influential in the formation and dissemination of cultural values. This is because media has taken the center stage of information source of any kind. Through the depiction of life issues in a unique way, the users of media are tempted to adapt the media way of doing things and as a result end up adapting a way of life which is depicted by the media probably from a different part of the globe. Through such culture values are spread to

different parts of the earth. The internet has of late become the most popular way that information is passed around.

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