

# How the media affects perception



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The Influence of the Media Order No: 192231 No: of pages: 2 Premium – 6530 Introduction: “ The medium is the message” (Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media) is what he speaks about in his very interesting book on the appraisal of the media and its consequences. According to McLuhan, it is the medium that not only controls but moulds and shapes the thought processes and lives of a human being and has a very great impact both socially and culturally on our actions because of its influence. These influences could be justified in one sense but could be disastrous in others depending on its widespread circumstances. In this essay we are going to give a bird’s eye view of the influence of the media in our lives today.

Television:

Television is one of the strongest media that has impacted our lives and the way we think. We cannot get away from the fact that most of our tastes, dressing and most importantly our lifestyle have been deeply influenced by the television through their commercials, soaps, dramas, music, dance and cultural programs.

On the flip side, television helps to educate and keep us informed and abreast with all that is taking place in the world through its news channels and its many other educative channels. But yet, besides all its good facets, it has been able to influence our lives in such a way that is difficult to even fathom.

One ironic notion is how T. V commercials portray the majority of women as housewives when actually more that 35 to 55 percent of women make up the regular workforce. (Journal of the University Film Association, 1981, pg. 6)

Violence portrayed on T. V has had an exceptionally great influence especially on the youth of today who consider it to be the most natural thing.

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Good examples of this are the Hungerford massacre and the Columbine Killings.

Another major factor that has taken its toll on the women of today is dieting. Through their flashy commercials depicting pencil thin figures of women has had a bad influence over the normal woman who thinks she has to become like the models in the commercial and hence goes through a lot of stress and trauma in doing so. As a result she becomes anorexic or bulimic and undergoes a lot of psychological problems.

Radio:

The radio may be a much cheaper way of advertising or getting various ideas or information across but it is rather an effective way to reach a target audience. The radio influences us in many different ways, in that it helps to change our opinion or tastes on things such as music, the buying and using of different products, gauging or forming opinions of different politicians, celebrities etc. This change is brought about by its constant advertising or airing of definitive programs time and again. It may not have a visual display like the television but still it has the power to hold sway over people and their choices.

Newspapers and magazines:

Newspapers and magazines give us a world of information both ancient and current and help people to keep up with the latest news and technology that are currently available. Reputed companies take great trouble to give authentic news to the public, but there are others who just need to fill their pages and hence go to any lengths to do so. These tend to give a very wrong picture to the consumer who is left in a dilemma if the news they read is authentic enough to believe. Most women are a target where magazines are

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concerned because they constantly advertise fake diets and cosmetics which do more harm than good. Gossip and slandering can be mostly found in newspapers and magazines often giving a very wrong picture to the consumer.

Conclusion:

Therefore from the consumer point of view, I would say that the media plays a 50 - 50 percent role in a constructive as well as destructive way. Freedom of press is good but that is unless all the rules are rightly adhered to without making a scapegoat of the consumer. The ethics of advertising of any sort or printing of any matter should be strictly followed in order that the general public would put more confidence in them.

References:

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Year of publishing: 2001

Publisher: Routledge

Journal of the University Film Association (pg. 6)

By University of Film Association

Year of publishing: 1981