

Mass media and its influence assignment

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Mass Media and Its Influence Spoken, written, or broadcast communication whose medium may include television, radio, advertising, movies, newspapers, magazines, books, cell phones and the Internet becomes a mass media that affects our society's perception of ourselves and others and influences the structures of our society as well as the reactions of the individual. Americans perceive the political, economic, class, educational, and other structures of American society because of, by, and through the media.

The American understanding of these structures within its society as well as those structures outside of the United States are manipulated and directed by the media. Similarly, the media influences the perceptions of individuals within American society by what and how the media is communicating. The media communicates and influences through the key motivators of our society today: sexual, monetary, and violent images. The most widespread form of this communication media is television, followed by the Internet.

With the increased use of computers and multi-media cell phones, the Internet is on the road to exceeding the television as a communication media. How these media venues affect the world in which they operate shows how far and how deep the communications can reach, the speed in which the messages are delivered and accepted, the cultural impact that is experienced. Media has converted individual communication into group communication and has allowed for wonderful advances in civilization.

Through mass communication, people groups, organizations, governments, and nations have found the media for the spread of information in business

and industry, education, politics, technology and science, medicine and healthcare, weather and climate, and all levels of culture. It is in technology that the media's most obvious advancements are visible. In addition, the widespread distribution of information has allowed the world to respond to natural disasters, political oppression and exploitation, and in mass multi-national cultural events.

In the area of culture, sex is not only a physical motivation in individuals, both male and female; it is also psychological motivation of people.

Although, people express it in different cultures differently, the basic human need for sexual expression is one of basics of marketing and advertisement. It motivates sales and sales are best motivated in mass fashion for mass return on investment in massive profits via mass media. All forms of media use the basic instinct to identify a product for sale and manipulate the individual's perception to cause him or her to identify their individual sexuality with the product.

Everyone wants to be sexy, attractive, wanted, desirable, in demand, and therefore, powerful. People will buy whatever they believe or perceive will provide this to them. Similarly, another motivator of power is violence. Whether the perpetrator-the inflictor, or the violated-the victim, there is no doubt about how powerful violence is. It also motivates sales indirectly through the marketing and advertisement of products supporting violent venues such as horror and R-rated films and television shows, sporting events such as boxing, wrestling, and football, war coverage, and the 11 o'clock news shows.

The mass media clearly shows that violence motivates power and power motivates violence. The most vulnerable segment of society to the images and messages of mass media are America's youth. Young people are in a stage of life where they want acceptance by their peers, they want to be desired and loved, and they hope to be successful and powerful. They also seek to explore and express some of the same human motivations as the mature citizen: sex, violence, and power. The children and teenagers of America find all of these elements on the TV.

In fact, as Arthur Asa Berger states, "the amount of time young people spend "media multi-tasking" has increased from 16% to 26% of media time, the actual amount of time devoted to media use has remained steady, at under just 6 1/2 hours per day (going from 6: 19 to 6: 21) Or 44 1/2 hours per week (<http://kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030509nr.cfm>) (Berger, 12).

Television and its self-directed version, cable, allow for the mass influence of these elements in both positive and negative ways.

The positive aspects of violence and competition within the socially accepted structures of competitive youth sports and athletics promoted on TV and in video games and equally, in the fashion, dance, and young love seen in sitcoms, movies, and MTV music videos. Conversely, the use of junk foods, cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol combined with irresponsible, casual sex, excessive and explicit violence dominate much of the negative influence of media on America's youth.

Joseph Dominic concludes, "that youngsters that are heavy TV viewers would display a pattern of beliefs and perceptions consistent with media

portrayals (Dominick, 446). Regarding violence in mass media, again the young are exposed to a culture of violence reflected in the media. How the media sells or promotes those perceptions is the “ reality” of the media. From a war somewhere in the world to the wars in someone’s home, the media directs the interpretation of what is necessary, correct, moral, and immoral.

From what is happening, is not happening, should happen, might and will happen, and what is and is not the cost the media influences our realities and reactions. This has resulted in Saturday morning cartoons that are as full of shootings, stabbings, explosions, and other forms of violence as is CSI or the nightly news; it has resulted in video games like Grand Theft Auto that allow children to be pretend drug lords, gang members, and pimps; it has promoted murder and abuse as entertainment for the masses.

In the case of American youth, the effects of media violence on the developing mind and values of children and the personalities and beliefs of those children are increasingly negative. Aggressive behavior, lawlessness, and distorted views of reality are becoming commonplace among the children of today and mass media is one of the greatest influences. As these children mature into teenagers and young adults, the media blurs the realities of war in their minds and makes entertainment out of both virtual war games and actual wars on this earth. “ More speci? ally, research provides strong evidence that in the short term, exposure to media violence causes increases in children’s, adolescents’, and young adults’ physically and verbally aggressive behavior, as well as in aggression-related variables (such as aggressive thoughts and emotions) that are theoretically linked to <https://assignbuster.com/mass-media-and-its-influence-assignment/>

aggressive and violent behavior (Anderson et al, 104). The young people of the United States are an identified and targeted demographic of the advertisement industry due to their large discretionary income from family and employment and due to their lack of experience and knowledge combined with an almost insatiable need to experiment and acquire. The use of sex and violence to market to America's youth, epitomized in the overwhelming success of the book and television series about teenage vampires, *Twilight*, has become a multi-billion dollar, multi-media industry. The media creates and promotes the ideal image of what is beautiful, desirable and sexy and what are the characteristics of a successful and power person, usually psychological and/or physical violence. Because these two instincts are so universal, primal, and strong, they are almost irresistible advertising vehicles.

However, if sex and violence are the vehicles, money is the fuel. Consequently, the purpose of marketing and advertisement is to sell and make money. Mass media sells the belief to a person, young or old, that he or she can attain the characteristics of power, if they can buy the products that the powerful and violent own. It sells them on the belief that they can attain the characteristics of the sexy, if they can buy the products that makes one attractive and desirable—all as they are presented in the movies, TV, Internet or other media. The estimated revenue of all forms of mass media is in the 100's of billions of dollars.

The cost of reality in relation to these perceptions is often much more expensive. An example of some of the more costly areas of influence is in the area of politics. In this area, political offices and careers both are

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promoted and destroyed. The media has a great influence over public opinion. The media has a huge influence over public opinion as can be seen by the use of opinion polls that it controls and manipulates. The use of polls and news coverage by the media can affect, positively or negatively, candidates and their ideas that, in turn, can change the political control of the nation.

In addition, media control shapes the way people see their realities and it has a tremendous impact on our society. The War on Terrorism is a clear example of media influence on American society that resulted in the war in Iraq to stop weapons of mass destruction that did not exist in reality. This example shows how media can use information that is not real to create another reality it chooses. Because media is so powerful, it is owned by the powerful. In the United States, six corporations own 95% of all media and the money they make are proof of their power: 2009 revenues of General Electric, \$157 billion; Walt Disney, \$36.1 billion; News Corp., \$30.4 billion; Time Warner, \$25.8 billion; Viacom, \$13.6 billion; and CBS, \$13 billion (Freepress.net). "We find that media firms nearly universally have ownership structures with large controlling shareholders and that these shareholders are either families or governments. This evidence is broadly consistent with the ideas that there is large amenity potential (control benefits) associated with owning media—be it political influence or fame" (Djankov et al, 373).

What this control costs American citizens in their freedoms and democracy cannot be calculated. In conclusion, the control of the media and its impact on American society, both positively and negatively, is important to the <https://assignbuster.com/mass-media-and-its-influence-assignment/>

quality of our lives and to the freedoms we believe in. The media appears to be some huge, uncontrollable monster, but in reality, it is made of people just like our government is made of people and our country is made of people. Corporations, companies, governments, media are all people.

Therefore, if the negative impacts and influences of media are to be controlled and limited, these people need to be challenged. In order to challenge these people's influence and control through the media, we must challenge what the media is selling, be it sexual, violent, moneymaking or otherwise. We must begin with ourselves and exercise our control over what we are buying. References Anderson, Craig A. , Leonard Berkowitz, Edward Donnerstein, L. Rowell Huesmann, James D. Johnson, Daniel Linz, Neil M. Malamuth, and Ellen Wartella. " The Influence of Media Violence on Youth".

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