NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: MAC 211

COURSE TITLE: THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

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COURSE TEAM

COURSE DEVELOPER
Chidinma H. Onwubere (PhD) **(NOUN)**

COURSE WRITERS

Chidinma H. Onwubere (PhD)
School of Arts and Social Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria,
Victoria Island, Lagos
Chidi56@yahoo.co.uk

Adile Iroajugh Okuwa
Global Scan systems Ltd
Victoria Island, Lagos.

EDITOR
Dr Josef Bel-Molokwu
School of Media and Communication
Pan African University

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE GUIDE

National Open University of Nigeria
Headquarters
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way
Victoria Island
Lagos

Abuja Office
National Open University of Nigeria
5, Dar Es Salaam Street, Off
Aminu Kano Crescent Wuse II,
Abuja
Nigeria

e-mail: centralinfo@nou.edu.ng
URL: www.nou.edu.ng

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INTRODUCTION

The Course code and title of this course is MAC 211: THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION. This course will introduce you to the various theories of mass communication and gives you appreciable understanding of the conceptual perspectives, relevance and approaches for the application of the mass communication theories.

Every attempt is made to introduce and review relevant theories of mass communication studies. The course content is arranged in the best possible way to ensure balance and to guide the students to both the main and sub topics of different theories of mass communication.

Because this is a course about communication, you will be expected to network yourselves into groups (taking advantage of advancement in social media), spend a lot of your time among your group members either face-to-face or through convenient social media network talking to one another and working with one another to explain and understand application of each theory.

This Course Guide familiarizes you with basic information about this course; including the course structure and objectives; assessment/examinations structure and schedule for assignment and other activities.

COURSE AIMS

The course aims at broadening the students' knowledge of fundamental theories of mass communication; conceptualization, functions, effects and contributions to media and social development. By the end of this course, you will:

- Explain the basic mass communication theories that guide our understanding of the effects and roles of mass media.

- Be able to analyze media messages from many perspectives, all through the use of mass communication theories.

- Demonstrate a much deeper understanding of the personal and cultural role of the mass media industries.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course is intended:

1. To introduce you to a broad range of theories of mass communication so that you can develop a personal understanding of conceptualization and functionality.

2. To increase your analytical ability and broaden your understanding of intended and eventual effects of mass communication messages.

3. To increase your understanding of mass media communication, the operational environment, and audience.

Working through this Course

To get the best out of this course, it is necessary you study the course material and recommended texts. The recommended texts will broaden your perspective and understanding of the course. The self assessment exercises spread for you in the units are compulsory to ensure personal evaluation of your understanding of the course.

The assignments listed under the Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA) section is for the facilitator's assessment of your understanding and progress in the course. The TMA is part of your Continuous Assessment. You will be told which of them to be submitted at a particular time.

At the end of the course, you will be required to write a final examination. The course should take about 15 weeks in total to complete.

COURSE MATERIALS

Materials you will need for this course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units (broken into 20 units of four modules)
3. Text books – At the end of each Unit and Module is a list relevant text books and reference to complement your study.
4. Assignment File
5. Group and inter-group interactions are very important

STUDY UNITS

MAC 211 (Theories of Mass Communication) is a three – credit unit course. The curse is divided into four modules of 20 units. These modules and units listed below:

MODULE 1:   **The Nature of Communication**

Unit 1	Overview of Communication
Unit 2	Characteristics of Communication
Unit 3	Elements of Communication Process
Unit 4	Forms and Context of Communication
Unit 5	Concept of Mass Communication
Unit 6	Functions of Mass Communication

MODULE 2:   **Theoretical Foundation of Mass Communication**

Unit 1	Perspective on Theory
Unit 2	Nature and Uses of Theories
Unit 3	Critical Perspective of Mass Communication Theories
Unit 4	Basic Paradigms of Mass Communication Theories
Unit 5	Different Eras of Mass Communication Theories

MODULE 3:   **Different Theories of Mass Communication**

Unit 1	Normative Theories
Unit 2	Media and Culture Theories
Unit 3	Audience Theories
Unit 4	Common Sense Theories
Unit 5	Behavioural Theories of Mass Communication

MODULE 4:   **Effect Theories of Mass Communication**

Unit 1	Limited Effects Theory
Unit 2	Powerful Media Effects Theories
Unit 3	Cumulative Effects Theories
Unit 4	Media Violence Theories

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS/REFERENCES

Most of the books referenced in the course material are available for purchase on the Internet.

Baran, S.J. (2002). Introduction to Mass Communication. New York: McGraw Hill.

Defleur, M.L. & Dennis E. (1994). Understanding Mass Communication. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Sambe, J.A. (2005). Introduction to Mass Communication Practice in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Folarin B. (1998/2002). Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Text. Ibadan: Stirling Horden.

Okunna, Chinyere Stella (1994). Introduction to Mass Communication. Enugu, New Generation Books.

Okenwa Nnamdi S. (2002). The Mass Media: Theories and Realities. Enugu, Bismark Publications.

ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

This volume has many self-assessment exercises which are not meant to be submitted. But I must advise at this point that these questions are instrumental to a thorough understanding of the course. You should endeavor to practise them. Any time you want to practise any of them, read the contents, close the book and then attempt the questions. Another way you can help yourself is to always try and summarize what you have read in a very few sentences and then compare your summary to the summary in the book. If there is a marked difference, you may not need to worry, as there are many ways by which a summary can be written. But just ensure that your summary contains the substance of what you have read.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

There is Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA) at the end of every unit in this Course Text. You have to carry out the assignment as instructed as they are supposed to be graded. The only exemption to this is this Course Guide which does not have one. TMA is supposed to carry some 30 % of your total marks

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

Any examination that borders on graphics is never written for less than three hours which is what is recommended here. The examination questions will always touch on the critical aspects of the course. However, it is such that if you diligently do the self assessment exercises and your tutor-marked assignments, you should not exercise any worry over your exams. 70% of the marks are for exams.

Course Marking Scheme

The following table sets out how the actual course marking is broken down.

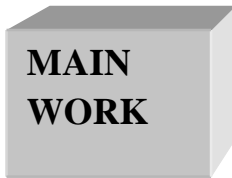| Assessment	Marks
Four assignments (the best four of all the assignments submitted for marking).	Four assignments, each marked out of 10%, but highest scoring three selected, thus totaling 30%
Final Examination	70% of overall course score.
Total	**100% of course score.**

NOTE

There is really no end to the dynamism of study of theories of mass communication as new approaches and applications are being discovered or remodeled everyday to cater to the needs of the increasingly sophisticated audience. Therefore, personal research and diligent attempts on practical application of the theories are key to understanding it

CONCLUSION

Study of theories of mass communication is best in interactive form; thus the need for group interactions during the study. At the beginning of the course, please familiarize yourself with the modules and units and then draw your own schedule of study. Do not rely solely on the schedule of the university. Your own study schedule should complement that of the institution. Try and read ahead of the next unit to be taught. The preliminary knowledge you gain from your reading and further research will help in understanding of what you will be taught.

SUMMARY
.
This course guide has provided overview of the course material. If you diligently follow the instructions given to you in this guide, you sure will be successful.

MAIN WORK

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Headquarters
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way
Victoria Island
Lagos

Abuja Office
National Open University of Nigeria
5, Dar Es Salaam Street, Off
Aminu Kano Crescent Wuse II,
Abuja
Nigeria

e-mail: centralinfo@nou.edu.ng
URL: www.nou.edu.ng

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MODULE 1:   THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION

Unit 1   Overview of Communication
Unit 2   Characteristics of Communication
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Unit 4   Forms and Context of Communication
Unit 5   Concept of Mass Communication
Unit 6   Functions of Mass Communication

UNIT 1   OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION

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        3.3   Functions of Communication
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1.0   INTRODUCTION

To be able to understand theories of Mass Communication very well, one needs to how communication works. This unit therefore is packed to help you better understand the basics of communication.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

➢ Define communication from a diverse viewpoint.
➢ Identify and describe the various functions of communication.
➢ Relate the importance of communication to everyday human activities.

3.0   MAIN CONTENTS

3.1   What is Communication?

Communication is difficult to define.

Different scholars have defined communication severally but relying seriously upon their different fields of study. Hence, in communication we have scholars of sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, engineering, mathematics etc defining communication to suit their various purposes. Some of these scholars are:

Stevens (1950), who defines communication as:"The discriminatory response of an organism to stimuli From the use of the words – 'discriminatory', 'response' and 'stimuli', it becomes obvious that this scholar is a psychologist.

Hovland (1948), defines it as: "The process whereby an individual transmits stimuli, usually verbal, to influence the behaviour of another individual". He, however, prefaces this definition by saying that "communication is the sharing of meaning ..." Hovland has given an anthropocentric perspective to this definition. Hence, the definition is "Human Centred" Hovland is said to be the father of modern "Rhetorics". This is because he has done a lot of works and researches on PERSUASION. That *is,* how to use persuasion to change people's attitudes.

Schacter (1951) - as:"The mechanism by which power is exercised". This scholar is a political scientist. How does his definition affect communication? When two people communicate, power is at play. This definition is relevant to the significance and importance of communication. In the political context, power is a very important weapon. The government often wants to monopolise power and of course, muffle the press". Communication, they say, is power; hence, if you can catch people's wind by manipulating them through communication, then you are fully in control. America for instance has tried to colonies the world through their media.

Cooley (1909): "The mechanisms through which human relations exist and develop all the symbols of the mind together, with the means of conveying them through space and presenting them in time". This scholar is a sociologist. He has brought in the 'symbolic - interactionist perspective of sociology into communication. This perspective has a lot of implications for communication as this theme of 'interactionism' is a very important tool for determining the role of communication in a society.

Steinfatt (1977): "The process of exchanging mutually understood symbols".

Sarbaugh (1988): "The process of using signs and symbols which elicit meaning in another person or persons".

Both Steinfatt's and Sarbaugh's definitions are based on the context of symbols. Sarbaugh's definition is more inclusive than Steinfatt's because he brought in the use of signs. Also the concept of 'meaning' is more explicit in his definition than in Steinfatt's definition where the concept is only implicit. However, both of them have approached communication from the linguistic or psycho-linguistic points of view.
Furthermore many Nigerian communication scholars have different views as what to constitute communication.

Nwankwo (1973): "An interaction between a minimum of two symbolic systems…"

Ugboajah (2001): The process which involves all acts of transmitting messages to channels which link people to the languages and symbolic codes which are used to transmit such messages. It is also the means by which such messages are received and stored. It includes the rules, customs and conventions which define and regulate human relationships and events

Folarin (2003): Any means by which a thought is transferred from one person to another.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Communication is the mechanism by which power is exercised. Discuss.

3.2   Communication Cycle

Communication is a fundamental part of all our lives. The range of methods we can use to communicate with each other is growing all the time. We can communicate using everything from a note stuck on the fridge door to video-conferencing.

But no matter which medium we choose, the underlying structure or **communication cycle** remains the same. If we are unsure of what we wish to communicate, or transmit it badly, we run the risk of not being understood by other people. Every communication therefore involve the following cycle;

Aiming: We need to think about just what want to communicate and to whom. It suggests that we *'Aim'* what we want to say, how we'll say it, what we want the other person to do with the information. This is the stage in which we think particularly about how we will communicate the information and to who we wish to communicate with.

Encoding: Once we have organised our thought, we begin to choose words or image to express them. Our choices in terms of language and images are influenced by our sets of assumptions, experiences, status, education, gender, mood etc. this is very important to ensure clear communication and understanding. We therefore, have to consider what language to say it in, what we assume of the receiver and are these assumptions correct? We also have to consider what the Receiver may be assuming about US. Their assumptions may hinder and change what we say

Transmitting: it is vital to transmit what you wish to say clearly and at the right time. We need to be able to transmit the message that we wish to communicate in right format and at the correct time. We need to consider if there will be any distractions to hinder our communication attempt, if we need to summarize and if we can add anything to increase the clarity of what we are trying to say.

Receiving: Depending on whether you receive information from other people in spoken or written format, you will have to use different means of interpreting and storing that information. When we receive the information from someone, if they are speaking, we must take into account that we think three times faster than we speak, and therefore, it is much easier for a speaker's words to get muddled up with other thoughts and distractions.

Decoding: This is the opposite of encoding. If the Sender has transmitted the information correctly and has given enough attention to what they are saying, including their body language and tone of voice, then you should be able to decode their message effectively. We may sometimes feel that some Senders are not approachable in certain circumstances, but we must remember, the meaning of the message is the responsibility of the Sender and not the Receiver

Responding: This is the last stage in the communication cycle. At this stage, the receiver has the chance to ask any questions and this also gives the Sender the chance to realize if they have missed out any stages in the Communication Cycle

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Communication is a fundamental part of all our lives. Describe a personal communication experience using the six steps Communication Cycle?

3.3   Functions of Communication

Why do we communicate? By nature, we are social beings who need others to survive and thrive in our community. Communication therefore, allows us to form communities, assert and differentiate our personalities, and accomplish a variety of tasks. We also use communication to bridge the gap between people and to form common ground. In this study, we will look at communication functions in five specific ways.

- **Communication helps us assert and differentiate our personality**

From the moment we were born, we were engaged in the communication process. Our parents talked to us, read books to us, and played games with us. It is through communication that we learned our name and gender; we learned about love, frustration, and fear; and we learned how to be part of a family. Specifically, communicating with others helped us to create who we are. For example, what does it mean to be a girl in our society? Well, that all depends on whom you ask. In some families, it means to take care of all the household chores like cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Although social expectations are changing and some families share all the household responsibilities, in many homes, gender stereotypes dictate who does what.

- **Communication helps us create communities**

We all live and interact in a community of some kind just by virtue of living in a house, apartment, or dorm. But communities are more than geographic locations. Communities are also created by shared meanings for symbols. These shared meanings bind people together in support or work networks. So, someone who lives hundreds or thousands of miles from you could be part of your social community because you both share a similar language or symbol system.

- **Communication forms and strengthens relationships**

Through communication, we form human bonds that, in turn, form our friendships, families, and work relationships. We fall in love using communication. We solve problems at work by communicating with our co-workers, and we create lasting friendships by sharing stories,

experiencing new things, and being supportive of one another. It is through communication that we share our emotions and feelings.

- **Communications helps us to influence others**

Communication allows us to sell products, campaign for an issue or candidate, debate a topic in class, and get the other person to think like us. Persuasion is an integral part of our lives because it allows us to influence people and sell our views to them.

- **Communication conveys and creates information**

Communication helps us create information and knowledge. We learn from one another and use that information to develop new ideas and concepts. Communication allows us to find information that will help us fulfill our needs. In our knowledge base world today, the information you are distinguish by the level of information communicated to you, through several media of communication, e.g. Internet, Radio, Television, Print Media etc.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Communication is simply who you are? Explain this in relations to the functions of communication.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Communication is what gives life a meaning. Remove communication and the world is grounded. Communication is the foundation for effective and meaningful living. It is the cycle that binds all human processes together. It is the reason you are who you are; it the reason that relationship is working for you; it the reason why people respect and adore you. Communication is simply who you are.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have been able to establish that communication controls every human activity. It broadly gives attempted an overview of communication. Communication as the wheel that drives human life cycle therefore revolve around six steps cycle namely; aiming, encoding, transmitting, receiving, decoding and responding. We further highlighted several ways in which communication adds meaning to our lives - from us asserting and differentiating our personality, creating communities and strengthening relationships, helping us to influence others, to conveying and creating information.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Define communication.
- Explain the difference between encoding and decoding.
- Write a two page essay on how communication helped you create a sense of self in your organization.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Stevens, S. S. (1950): 'A Definition of Communication' *The Journal the Acoustical Society of America*, 22

Hovland, C. (1948): November 12), "Social communication," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society

Schacter, S.(1951): 'Deviation, Rejection, and Communication' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 46: p. 191.

Cooley, Charles H. *(1909): Social Organization.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p.10

Thomas M. Steinfatt (1977): Human communication: An Interpersonal Introduction. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Sarbaugh, Larry E. (1987): Intercultural Communication (rev. ed.). New Brunswick, NJ.

Nwankwo, R. L. (1973) Communication as Symbolic Interaction: A Synthesis. *The Journal of Communication*, 23 (3), pp 195-215

Folarin B. (1998/2002). Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Text. Ibadan: Stirling- Horden.

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UNIT 2   CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Communication drives every form of human activities. It has some specific nature that can best be described by it characteristics. It is dynamic; this is because it is not static. It is ongoing. It is behavioural interaction, receivers' phenomenon, and elicits responses. Communication is complex. In this unit, we will be highlighting some special characteristics and attributes of communication. We will also look at specific barriers for effective communication.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

➢ identify major characteristics of communication
➢ Identify key attributes of communication.
➢ Explain Related barriers to effective communication

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Characteristics of Communication

The nature of communication is basically the exchange of information between people. It therefore required a sender and a receiver for communication to take place. Or simply put, communication is reciprocal. So at any time the sender is sending a message, the receiver is also sending messages. Effective communication thus, entails the sender encoding a message and transmitting it to the receiver and the receiver successfully decoding the message.

The nature of communication, therefore, can be explained by the following characteristics of communication:

- **Two or more persons:**

Communication involves at least two people.
- Sender: Who has a message to communicate?
- Receiver: Who gets the message and converts the message into thoughts?

- **Message:**

Message is information, ideas, opinions or emotions that are transmitted to the receiver. It drives communication and without it there will be no communication. The message must have substance to be effective. In other words, the sender of message must have something really worthwhile for the receiver. For example, botanical names of plant will be of less interest to a student learning commerce, likewise marketing principles to a biology student. For communication to be successful, the receiver should first of all understand the message. For this, the sender must speak in a language that is known to the receiver.

- **Two-way process:**

Communication is a two way process. At least two people are needed for successful communication. Sender sends message and receiver receives the message and thereafter makes feedback. Communication can take place only when there are at least two persons. One person has to convey some message and another has to receive it. The receiver, however, need not necessarily be an individual. Information may be conveyed to a group of persons at a time. For example, in classroom, the teacher conveys information to a group of students. If the receiver needs any clarification, he can ask the sender of message immediately in the case of face to face of telephonic conversation. Communication may also be sent by means of letters, circulars etc. If a letter is sent, the receiver may respond to it either by way of a reply letter or as per the mode desired by him or by the sender.

- **Verbal or non-verbal:**

Communication can be verbal or non verbal. Verbal communication means written or spoken language or words. Non-verbal communication means facial expression, gestural expression etc. The two can occur jointly or separately depending on the situation or environment.

- **Formal or informal:**

Formal communication follows established channels, while informal communication does not follow the official channel. For instance, while formal communication respects and follows established hierarchy, informal communication allows any individual to convey information to anybody else freely without having to bother about the hierarchy. For example, in formal communication a worker who wants to convey any information to the managing director can only do so on the secretary's permission. He cannot bypass the secretary and have direct contact with the managing Director. On the other hand, informal communication involves conversation with friends, peers, gossiping etc.

- **Upward, Downward or Horizontal**

Communication may flow up and down and also from side to side. While upward communication starts from lower level and is transmitted to upper level of an organization, downward communication is just opposite to upward communication. Horizontal communication occurs within the same level.

- **Continuous process**

Communication is dynamic, a continuous process. The aim of communication is regularly to create mutual understanding, trust, credibility and implementation of decisions quickly. So it is an unending process. Sharing or exchanging information is an ongoing activity. As long as there are human there will be communication. James Price Dillard and Michael Burgoon (1995) state, "Communication processes are a fundamental part of virtually every part of human social life".

- **Process of Exchange**

Message or information is exchange and follows some sequential steps: Sender => Medium => Receiver. For instance, the sender sends a message using medium to the receiver and receiver receives the message and makes feedback to the sender.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Communication processes are a fundamental part of virtually every part of human social life. Justify this statement in view of characteristics of communication.

3.2   Attributes of Communication

The characteristics of communication can further be explained with understanding of some specific attributes of communication. In general, an attribute is a feature or characteristic of something. Colour, for example, is an attribute of your hair. (Rouse, 2005). Several communication experts including Folarin (2002) highlighted some specific attributes of communication in their works. These attributes are:

- **Intentional and Unintentional**

Communication can be intentional or unintentional. Intentional communication occurs when we communicate with a specific goal in mind. It can be verbal or non verbal. Unintentional on another occurs with the sender unaware of it.

- **Systematic**

Communication follows a specific process starting from the source, through the Channel to the receiver and then the feedback.

- **Dynamic Process**

Communication is evolving. It improves with time and experience and age.

- **Interaction and transaction**

Communication is both an interaction and transactional process involving a source and receiver that impacts one another in the process of communication.

- **Personal**

Communication strives on making meaning. The source and receiver must have a personal understanding of meaning of signs and symbols they share for communication to be effective.

- **Continuous**

Communication gives life meaning, it comes and end with a person's life.

- **Irrevocable**

Once a message is sent, it cannot be withdrawn. Only the intended meaning can be changed or modified.

- **Complex**

Communication occurs in many forms and at different levels.

- **Consummatory**

Communication provides satisfaction to the communicator.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Communication occurs in many forms and at different levels. Highlight four forms and levels of communication and describe the common features of each.

3.3   Barrier to Effective Communication

We will conclude this unit with a review of barriers to effective communication. Note that your understanding of these barriers to effective communication is a first step in improving your communication skills. Brian G. Wilson in his business communication lecture notes divided these barriers into four major parts: encoding, transmitting, decoding and response barriers.

Encoding Barriers

The process of selecting and organizing symbols to represent a message requires skill and knowledge. The under listed are basic encoding barriers:

- **Insensitivity to Receiver**

A breakdown in communication may result when a message is not adapted to its receiver. Recognizing the receiver's needs, status, knowledge of the subject, and language skills assists the sender in preparing a successful message. If a customer is angry, for example, an effective response may be just to listen to the person vent for awhile.

- **Lack of Basic Communication Skills**

The receiver is less likely to understand the message if the sender has trouble choosing the precise words needed and arranging those words in a grammatically-correct sentence.

- **Insufficient Knowledge of the Subject**

If the sender lacks specific information about something, the receiver will likely receive an unclear or mixed message. Have you shopped for an item such as a computer, and experienced how some salespeople can explain complicated terms and ideas in a simple way? Others cannot.

- **Information Overload**

If you receive a message with too much information, you may tend to put up a barrier because the amount of information is coming so fast that you may have difficulty comfortably interpreting that information. If you are selling an item with twenty-five terrific features, pick two or three important features to emphasize instead of overwhelming your receiver with an information avalanche.

- **Emotional Interference**

An emotional individual may not be able to communicate well. If someone is angry, hostile, resentful, joyful, or fearful, that person may be too preoccupied with emotions to receive the intended message. If you don't like someone, for example, you may have trouble "hearing" them.

Transmitting Barriers

Things that get in the way of message transmission are sometimes called "noise." Communication may be difficult because of noise and some of these problems include:

- **Physical Distractions**

A bad cellular phone line or a noisy restaurant can destroy communication. If an E-mail message or letter is not formatted properly, or if it contains grammatical and spelling errors, the receiver may not be able to concentrate on the message because the physical appearance of the letter or E-mail is sloppy and unprofessional.

- **Conflicting Messages**

Messages that cause a conflict in perception for the receiver may result in incomplete communication. For example, if a person constantly uses jargon or slang to communicate with someone from another country who has never heard such expressions, mixed messages are sure to result. Another example of conflicting messages might be if a supervisor requests a report immediately without giving the report writer enough time to gather the proper information. Does the report writer emphasize speed in writing the report, or accuracy in gathering the data?

- **Channel Barriers**

If the sender chooses an inappropriate channel of communication, communication may cease. Detailed instructions presented over the telephone, for example, may be frustrating for both communicators. If you are on a computer technical support help line discussing a problem, it would be helpful for you to be sitting in front of a computer, as opposed to taking notes from the support staff and then returning to your computer station.

- **Long Communication Chain**

The longer the communication chain, the greater the chance for error. If a message is passed through too many receivers, the message often becomes distorted. If a person starts a message at one end of a communication chain of ten people, for example, the message that eventually returns is usually liberally altered.

Decoding Barriers

The communication cycle may break down at the receiving end for some of these reasons:

- **Lack of Interest**

If a message reaches a reader who is not interested in the message, the reader may read the message hurriedly or listen to the message carelessly. Miscommunication may result in both cases.

- **Lack of Knowledge**

If a receiver is unable to understand a message filled with technical information, communication will break down. Unless a computer user knows something about the Windows environment, for example, the user may have difficulty organizing files if given technical instructions.

- **Lack of Communication Skills**

Those who have weak reading and listening skills make ineffective receivers. On the other hand, those who have a good professional vocabulary and who concentrate on listening, have less trouble hearing and interpreting good communication. Many people tune out who is talking and mentally rehearse what they are going to say in return.

- **Emotional Distractions**

If emotions interfere with the creation and transmission of a message, they can also disrupt reception. If you receive a report from your supervisor regarding proposed changes in work procedures and you do not particularly like your supervisor, you may have trouble even reading the report objectively. You may read, not objectively, but to find fault. You may misinterpret words and read negative impressions between the lines. Consequently, you are likely to misunderstand part or all of the report.

- **Physical Distractions**

If a receiver of a communication works in an area with bright lights, glare on computer screens, loud noises, excessively hot or cold work spaces, or physical ailments, that receiver will probably experience communication breakdowns on a regular basis.

Responding Barriers

The communication cycle may be broken if feedback is unsuccessful.

- **No Provision for Feedback**

Since communication is a two-way process, the sender must search for a means of getting a response from the receiver. If a team leader does not permit any interruptions nor questions while discussing projects, he may find that team members may not completely understand what they are to do. Face-to-face oral communication is considered the best type of communication since feedback can be both verbal and nonverbal. When two communicators are separated, care must be taken to ask for meaningful feedback.

- **Inadequate Feedback**

Delayed or judgmental feedback can interfere with good communication. If your supervisor gives you instructions in long, compound-complex sentences without giving you a chance to speak, you may pretend to understand the instructions just so you can leave the stress of the conversation. Because you may have not fully understood the intended instructions, your performance may suffer.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Focusing on Information Overload as a barrier to effective communication. Justify the impact of the many and varied promotional messages through Radio, Television, SMS and Newspapers by Telecommunication Companies.

4.0   CONCLUSION

The nature of communication is basically the exchange of information between people. It is best described by understanding of some specific characteristics of communication. And a better understanding of these characteristics requires good knowledge of some attributes and barriers to effective communication.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have been able to describe communication as a key driver of every form of human activities. We highlighted specific characteristics of communication including involvement of two or more person, message, a two-way process, verbal or non verbal, formal or informal, upward, downward or horizontal, a continuous process, and a process of exchange.

Furthermore, we highlighted some scholarly views of some specific attributes of communication which among others are intentional and unintentional, systematic and dynamic process, personal, interaction and transactional process etc. we end the unit with a highlight of some established barriers to effective communication.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Communication may be difficult because of 'noise'. In view of the peculiar nature of the National Open University of Nigeria, highlight and describe some barriers that may hinder effective communication between the university and the student.

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UNIT 3   ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

To be able to understand theories of Mass Communication very well, you need to be very conversant with the basics element of communication. This unit provides the student the basic element of communication process, specific activities of communications and a highlight of contemporary effect of communication.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this unit, you should be able to:

➢ Describe the communication process
➢ Explain the activities of communication.
➢ Highlight the effect of communication.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Communication Process

Communication is the interdependent process of sending, receiving, and understanding messages. As you will discover, communication is a dynamic process, a process that changes from one communication setting to the next. Although it is difficult to predict the ways your ideas will be interpreted by others, certain components are always present in the communication process: people, a message, encoding, decoding, the channel, feedback, the context, and noise (Figure 1. 1). Understanding these components will give you both an awareness of the communication process and a working vocabulary to help you formulate and dissect messages.

Activities/ Elements	Purposing	Encoding	Transmitting	Receiving	Responding
Source	X	X			
Message			X		
Channel/ Medium					
Receiver				X	
Noise		X	X	X	
Feedback					X
Meaning					X

(Figure 1.1)

Mass Communication research involves any of these elements of the communication process. The researches tend to find out what goes on in the process before information is brought to us as news.

Lasswell's paradigm sums up these elements that are at work in the communication process thus:

Who say what in Which Channel to Whom with What Effect?

This model also sums up the activities that go on in communication. Here, someone, (who) says something (what) through (which) medium/channel to someone else (whom) which brings about some response (effect).

So, in mass communication, one can analyse any of the elements of communication and such research will be categorised according to the element being researched. Hence, when we carry out research on the:

i.   **Source**: We are doing Control Analysis

The source invariably controls communication, so it *is* a very important element of communication. For instance, how will a media organisation handle an advertisement that carries unfavourable news about the organisation? Is the organisation likely to produce/ present the unfavourable advert as it is to the audience? Is it going to use its control as the source of information to adjust certain things on the advertisement or drop the advertisement completely? In doing a control analysis, one could research - the Editors, Columnists reporters etc analysing their: qualifications, work-orientations, ideologies, training, dispositions etc. Control analysis can

also be done on the ideological set-up of the media organisation itself.

(ii)   **Message:** Content Analysis

When we do a content analysis, the researcher may want to analyse the message of communication. What is message? How is it presented to the audience by the different media organisations?

Berlo has a good piece on message.

He looks at message from the point of view of its Elements and Structure. That is, what are the components of message? (codes presented in form of signs and symbols), what is the structure of a message - is the message inferential or substantial? Berlo *sees* message in terms of CODES. Codes: are signs and symbols that give expression to content. The content of different newspapers and TV/Radio can be the same but the codes used by each of these media organisations/ must definitely be different.

This is because different media organisations *use* different codes. For instance, if one is producing for a TV house, he *has* to know the codes used for video tapes, unlike a journalist who reports for a newspaper. Each media organisation has its own codes. Berlo sees *message* in terms of: the codes used to package the information, the content and the treatment of such information.

(iii)   **Channel/Medium:** Media Analysis

What one can research under Media Analysis include: the kinds of media of communication that exists, their characteristics, their significance (importance) and the kind of relationship that exists between them. How do these media organisations operate? Will a particular message sent through the mass medium affect people the same way it will, if sent, through the interpersonal medium? What are the powers of the various media? What makes a particular medium (e.g. the radio) more potent than another (e.g. film)?

(iv)   **Receiver:** Audience Analysis

The receiver is the target audience of media organisations. So researches can be conducted to find out their - nature, aspirations, needs, beliefs, motifs, social status, and how they can be satisfied. All these contribute to their reactions and responses towards media message. One can also research on what makes the audience yield to some messages and reject others. The reason for their choice and preference of one medium to another and of course what makes some audiences "Obstinate" to the messages of communication, as observed by Wilbur Schramm (1954).

The Audience Analysis of a researcher can fall under the categories of:

- Demographics: Here we study the age, sex, educational background, economic and social status of the audience. What effects do these have on an audience's behaviours towards

mass media messages?

- Psychographics: This is the study of needs, dispositions, aspirations, inclinations, individual differences and the relationship of the mass audience.

(v)   **Meaning:**

This is not often mentioned in mass communication research studies because it is abstract and we cannot see it; but then it is one of the elements of communication.

Meaning: Is the set of responses we have to any stimulus or message. It is "…a person's inner response to a message - the internal experiences the message evoke" (Silo, 2007).

(vi)   **Noise:**

Noise is not an element of communication process per *se,* but it can come in at any point in the process of communication. If this happens, there is disruption in the process and hence, its interference with the meaning *of* the messages being sent across. Consequently communication becomes ineffective because there is no "sharing of meaning" which is what communication is all about. So, NOISE is anything that interferes with the process of communication.

(vii)   Feedback:

This is the response of the receiver to the original message sent by the source. It is reactions of the receiver which could be exhibited cognitively (through thinking), affectively (through emotional responses) or behaviourally (through physical actions). It is this feedback that the source gets which he now uses to re-structure his subsequent messages, if need be.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

The communication process is incomplete without feedback. Using a personal experience story, justify the importance of feedback in the communication process.

3.2   Activities of Communication

Every element of the communication process engages in an activity. Communication theorists try to explain what happens in the communication process. In any communication process, the elements involved perform certain activities in order to ensure an effective communication. These activities are:

A C T I V I T I E S

Activities/ Elements	Purposing	Encoding	Sending Transmitting	Receiving	Decoding	Responding
Source						
Message						
Channel/ Medium						
Receiver						

1. Purposing:

The purpose of any communication, more often than not, is in the mind of the source. This is the intension of the source which he has in mind. He gives substance to this purpose when he codes them into messages.

Hence, when we communicate, we are "purposing". Both source and receiver are purposive communicators because both of them have some intensions. The source and the receiver are not actually different in the activities they carry out except that they are reverse in action. According to Osgood's Model of Communication,
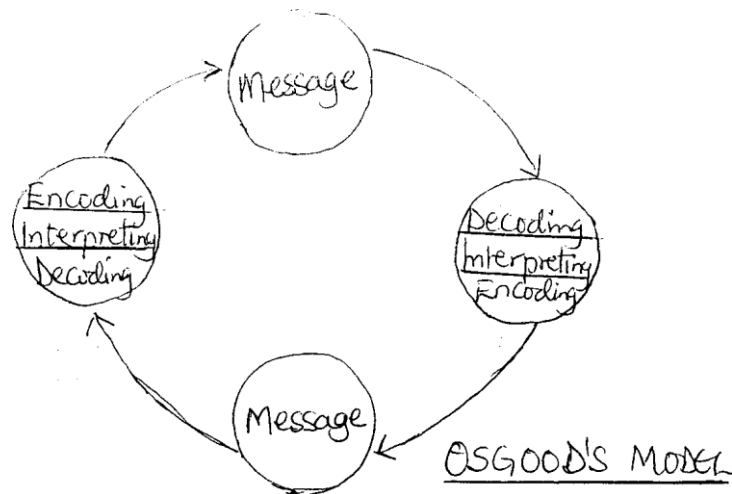
both the source and the receiver are doing the same thing simultaneously. They both function as the encoder, interpreter and decoder. Much as the purpose of communication is in the mind of the source, the initial response is also in the reaction of the receiver.

2. Encoding

This simply means translating our purpose into symbols that can be understood by the receiver. Steinfatt defines communication as "the . . . sharing of mutually understood symbols". According to him, the source can also be the message. For instance, in a 'kidnap case' where the person kidnapped needs to be seen physically before the ransom being demanded is paid, if the person passes before his relations so as to confirm that he is still alive; then the person becomes the message. Message is the central element of communication around which every other thing revolves.

3. Sending

This involves a lot of channels. The message of communication needs to be transmitted through any of the various channels of communication. Sending is a very important activity in the process of communication because if a message is conceived, coded but not sent to the receiver, then no communication takes place. It means the message is still within the scope of the source, yet to get to the receiver.

4. Receiving

Without receiving the message, there cannot be any decoding and, hence, no communication. If Edward writes a note or sends a message to Cyril and Georgette forgets this letter in her handbag, it means Cyril has not received the message. The meaning which Edward wants Cyril to get becomes pending and therefore no sharing takes place and of course no communication occurs.

5. Decoding

This depends on the type of communication; whether it is interpersonal non-mediated or personal mediated etc.

- For the "interpersonal non-mediated", decoding is done directly by the human elements involved (i.e. the source and receiver). Decoding is the translation of the symbols into understandable meaning by the receiver. This is done when the message gets to its destination.

- For the interpersonal mediated type of communication, decoding does not occur immediately. Example: in electronic communication, say, the telephone, the handset first receives the message, transmits it to the receiver (person) who now decodes the message at its destination.

6. Responding

This is usually shown through feedback from some overt behaviour in the receiver. Responding to the message takes place when the receiver has hot the message, decoded it and yielded to it. Responding is therefore about the last lap of the communication process in which the receiver reacts to the message of communication.

The communication process is an ADDITIVE process because one thing leads to the other. It is a chain of events that sums up to achieve the purpose of communication. Any break in this chain affects communication e.g. if one writes a letter without posting it, the communication process stops only at the encoding stage. If one receives the letter without decoding it, the communication stops at the receiving stage, hence, no sharing of meaning and thus no effective communication. Note, however, that decoding or and comprehending are not synonymous with YIELDING. One may comprehend a message but refuse to yield to it.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

The communication process is an ADDITIVE process. Write a two page essay to justify the statement.

3.3   Effects of Communication

This is, perhaps, the most controversial aspect of communication. No other aspect of communication has provoked much controversy, generated much interest and aroused much feeling as the "Effects" of communication. Effects bother on: What communication does to those who engage in it, what it brings about in them and of course what those who engage in communication do with it. Effects can be looked at also from various angles. It can be seen from the point of view of affecting:

1.   An Object:

Knowledge is one such object that communication can have effect on. This is because through communication the body of knowledge one has within him increases. This increase in knowledge store subsequently affects the individual's attitudes, beliefs, dispositions and behaviours (these are all objects). The effect of communication on these objects leads to change in behaviour. This change in behaviour could be positive (as in an enhanced personality) or negative (as in the case of cultural alienation).

2.   Level:

The level at which communication takes places determines the kind or scope of effect that communication will have. Hence the effect of communication routed through my students who are reputable pressmen to the head of state will be more significant and plausible than that effect of some communication I engaged in with the Chairman of my Local Government Area. Effects of communication can therefore be on local, communal, state, regional, national and global levels. The concert Steve Wonders and other notable musicians performed some years ago (to improve the conditions of the less - privileged in the world) had a very global effect. Many people came from various parts of the world to attend the show and by so doing, contributed a lot to the course of that programme.

3. Duration

The effect of communication can be:

i.   Transient

This type of effect is short-lived or can be said to be consumatory. A good example of this is the type of effect the advert messages, sales-bonanzas; promotional strategies have on the buyers. This type of effect is very ephemeral and often fizzles out as soon as these promotional tools (strategies) are withdrawn. It is the kind of effects we get from information for immediate use.

ii.   Permanent

This is the long-time effect of communication on people. It is instrumental effect of communication which culminates in attitudinal and behavioural changes. This in turn creates permanent change in the individual. The lectures given to students, for instance, inculcate in them, stills that will make them professionals in their different fields of study. This is long time effect of the messages of communication on the totality of their persons.

iii.   Immediate, Delayed or Intermittent

The immediate effect of communication is that which shows the audience or receiver of a message of communication responding instantly to the stimulus received. A good example is the reaction of the "Area boys" in Lagos immediately the death of Late Bashorun Abiola was confirmed on the Network news.

The effect of communication is said to be delayed when the message of communication does not spur an immediate reaction on the receivers of the message. If a person is suddenly and tactlessly informed that he has lost a deal' one through a fatal motor accident. the person may not show any serious abnormal behaviour. If five days later the person starts behaving abnormally and talking out of tune, then it means the person is exhibiting a delayed effect of the communication message passed on to him five days earlier on.

Some media messages can have intermittent effects on the individuals. The issue of June 12 elections and the post-June 12 election crises which come up intermittently (anytime those who feel aggrieved about that issue remember it) is a good illustration of the intermittent effect of communication on the audience.

As earlier mentioned, the effect of communication has generated a lot of controversies among scholars say media messages have direct effects on the audiences others say the effects are indirect and yet another group contend that media messages do not have any effect on the individuals at all. The climax being the fact that Defleur in (…) believes that the effect of mass communication is very powerful and dangerous on the society, hence, the notion of:

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

The effect of communication is said to be delayed when the message of communication does not spur an immediate reaction on the receivers of the message.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Everyone communicates, some better than others. Understanding the communication process can help you improve communication with relations, course mate, colleagues or friends. In both the communication process and activities of communication; the communicator develops an exact idea about concepts, beliefs or data that he wants to convey. Then he translates the idea into words, symbols or some other form of message which he expects the receiver to understand. The communicator picks out an appropriate medium for transmitting the message. The message is then received by the communicatee. The communicatee acts upon the message as he has understood it. Finally, the effectualness of communication is assessed through response or feedback. If the communication brings in the desired changes in the actions, it is said to be successful communication.

Furthermore, successful communication is expected to have certain effect on both the sender and the receiver. These effect has been categories as transient, permanent, immediate, delay or intermittent.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we identify and describe communication as an ongoing, dynamic process that changes from one communication setting to the next. We discuss the various components that are always present in the communication process: people, a message, encoding, decoding, the channel, feedback, the context, and noise. We also used the activities of communication: purposing, encoding, sending, receiving. Decoding and receiving to explain the process. We conclude the unit with insight on the effect of communication which can be transient, permanent, immediate, delayed or intermittent.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Communication process is a chain of events that sums up to achieve the purpose of communication. Draw a prototype of the NOUN Communication activities cycle and explain how effective these activities are in imparting knowledge on the students.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4   FORMS AND CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATION
CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Most animals communicate with each other in some way. However, it is only in humans that communication breaks off into different types: verbal and non-verbal, formal and informal, oral or written, intrapersonal and interpersonal and so on. This unit examines the different forms and contexts of communication.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this unit, you should be able to:

➢ Explain the different types of communication
➢ Describe various context of communication.
➢ Identify the significance of communication.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.0   Types of Communication

There are many types of communication. The three general categories are:

• Human communication
• Animal communication
• Machine communication.

These ¯major categories can be further sub-divided into classes:

1. Human Communication

This is communication among human beings. Man can communicate with himself well as with other people. Hence, we have: intra-personal, interpersonal, group, organizational, institutional public and mass communication.

i.   Intra-personal

In intrapersonal communication, one communicates with himself especially as it relates to activities occurring within the body systems. Intrapersonal communication is the basis of human communication Okunna (1994). According to her type of communication involves the exchange of messages between the brain and the sense organs of the body. E.g. someone may be considering various factors within himself before he takes a decision on a particular issue. At times one's body mechanisms may communicate some information to the person, e.g. some sins in a female can communicate the onset of her monthly period. Also some physiological changes in a young man can communicate the onset of puberty to him e.g. the growing of beards and deepening of voice.

ii.   Interpersonal

Interpersonal Communication is that between two or more individuals. According to Okunna (1994), it is communication that goes on between people, mostly in a face-to-face situation. Such a situation makes it possible for feedback to be immediate. Feedback is given in the form of both verbal and non-verbal cues because the person participating in the face to face communication can utilize word as well as gesture and other non-verbal cues to indicate that messages are being clearly received and understood.

iii.   Group communication

Group communication has to do with communication between different groups of people. It is a form interpersonal communication because it is mostly in a face-to-face situation and feedback is most time immediate. A good example group communication are lecture, round table discussion, a political rally, evangelical crusade etc.

iv.   Organizational communication

Organizational communication is communication between different set-ups, e.g. department; units⁻ or segments of an organization, e.g., when the Vice-Chancellor of a university is holding talks with deans in the various faculties or the heads of the various departments. Also the management of an establishment may hold discussions with the heads of units of the different segments of the organization.

Organizational communication is the heart of all these forms of communication, the reason being that most of the life activities are carried out in one organization or the other. Besides, communication flow is very important in any organizational set-up otherwise there will be a severe dearth of information. This situation could cripple the organization, a fact that could further affect productivity and subsequently affect the welfare of the society. The problems that

lack of communication in an organization can cause are many and endless, hence the importance of organizational communication.

v.   Institutional communication

Institutional communication refers to communications between different institutions in the society. Institutions here refer to organisations or social structures that have something similar. Examples are the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON), Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN), National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and Nigerian Medical Association (NMA). There can be communication between any of these institutions whenever the need arises.

vi.   Public and Mass Communications

Public and mass communications are somewhat problematic because people tend to use them interchangeably. This is very wrong and, thus, has created some confusion in the past. Public communication is the communication among people of common interest and, perhaps, of same social background, e.g. communication between members attending political parties, social clubs, village meetings etc.

Mass communication, on the other hand, is communication between a source or few sources and a larger and heterogeneous audience. In this case, the target audience does not have same interests or social backgrounds. They can only be reached through a mechanical device, hence, it is a mediated form of communication to a larger audience who are all reacting or responding to the stimuli of that communication.

Social communication is the combinations of all these forms of communication discussed above. Human communication encompasses much more than mere written and oral speech but also includes: music, pictorial arts, theatre etc, and in fact, all forms of human behaviours. Hence, we have verbal and non-verbal communication.

vii.   Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is the specific ways of transmitting messages, using words and symbols to represent real objects and ideas. The counterpart of verbal is non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is the mode (form) of communication that includes all forms of transmission of messages not represented by words and symbols. So, it comprises sign language, action or movement language and pictorial language.

Examples of non-verbal communication are:

- Chronemics   -   Communication through use of time.
- Kinesis   -   Communication through body movements (up to700, 000 body signs abound)
- Proxemics   -   Communication through use of space e.g. a white man who chooses to stand up in a bus rather than sit near a black man communicates racism or racial segregation.

- Occulesics   -   Use of *eye* contact in discussions.
- Haptics   -   Use of touch to communicate feelings
-                     Objectics   -   Choice and use of objects. For
  instance, one's choice of

          clothes tells a lot about the individual.

- Voclics   -   Communication through changes in human voice e.g. a
                               sudden change in one's voice tone during a communication
                               process can communicate annoyance.

- Paralinguistics   -   Communication through tone, pitch, e.g., sighing.
- Metacommunication -   Communication that is beyond just what the person is
                               saying. One needs to listen well or read in between the lines
                               to understand it. E.g., speaking in biblical tongues, reading
                               some philosophical works

2. Animal communication

Animal communication is communication between animals. Typical examples are when animals pursue one another away from each others' domain. Also when a dog, fowl, goat, lizard gives its opposite gender a hot chase for amorous purposes. At times animals communicate to their owners e.g. the wagging of tails by dogs when welcoming their 'masters'.

3. Machine communication

Machine communication is the kind of communication we get through machines. A typical example today is the use of computers to gather, process, store and retrieve information and transmit it to the appropriate quarters whenever the need arises. Other information technology includes the fax machines, Emails, Voice-Mails, M-NET, Satellites, Cable networks, Internet etc and their various decoders. Recently improvement and sophistication in technology have elevated the importance and application of this form of communication.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Intrapersonal communication is the basis of human communication. Discuss

3.2   Context of Communication:

Every communication process takes place in a given context. Communication does not occur in a vacuum. The context determines other things that will happen in the communication process.

What therefore is context?

This is the situation, circumstance or the background in which communication takes place.

Etymology:

The word is of a Latin origin meaning - 'Con'   'with', and 'Testerel' 'text'. Inferentially, this means the text (message) and-with the other variables. In communication, we look at the source, the receiver and the other variables (elements). So, what binds all of them is the particular context in which they operate at any given time. Hence, in communication we can look at the: economic, technological, physical, sociological, cultural and other educational contexts⁻ in which communication occurs. In a lecture hall, for instance, the social context of communication will be:

- The students in the class, their number, social status, relationships, dispositions, educational levels etc.
- The teacher - the kind of lectures he or she delivers, the way he or she delivers lectures, the way he or she relates to the students etc.

Other determinants of the context of communication are: Time and place of communication and the size (number) of the participants in the communication process.

➢ **Time**

Time can be looked at from various angles. For instance, if get a phone call at 12 mid-day and another at 12 mid-night, the communication of these two separate calls will not have occurred in the same context. That of 12 mid-day may be under a normal circumstance, while that of 12 midnight has a note of urgency and emergency about it. In the villages, if one whistles at night, it is believed that the person is communicating with spirits. This would be a cultural context, whereas whistling in the day time would be communication in the normal social context.

➢ **Number of Participants**

The number of the participants in a given communication can determine the context. For instance, the kind of lecture a teacher delivers in a 20 man class is definitely going to be different from that delivered in a 250 man class. This is because the time spent to teach a particular concept would differ in both classes. The level of understanding the level and scope of attentiveness and the level of interest generated would also differ. Hence the smaller class can operate under a less formal, relatively friendly and of course a more sociable context than the large class which is very likely to occur under a more formal and oppressive class situation.

➢ **The Place**

The venue of communication can also give an insight into the context of that communication. If a teacher moves his or her 'religious studies' lecture to a church pulpit and presents it beautifully well, then the context of that communication changes from that of a lecture to a "church sermon". Also, if we move our lectures from this lecture site to the "Alpha Beach" as part of our Easter Jamboree, the lecture would not have been given in the normal, strict, academic educational context. It changes to a social context.

How does the context of communication affect effective communication?

If communication takes place in a wrong context, the communication is not likely to be effective because the other variables in the communication process will not fall in place, so, there will be a break in the chain of communication and this will interfere with the sharing of meaning. In this way, the essence of that communication is lost.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Every communication process takes place in a given context. Highlight and discuss the various communication contexts.

3.3   Significance of Communication

What is the importance of communication, what roles does it perform in the social circles; communities, organisations and the entire nation? What can we do with communication; what roles does communication perform or play both in human and non-human systems?

Communication is inexplicably inter-twined with human existence. We can hardly separate communication from anything we do. Regarding the human linguistic experience, two scholars – Sapir and Whorf (quoted in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) hypothesised about the influence of language (communication) on our perception. This hypothesis posits that:

- Without language, we cannot think;
- Language influences perception, and
- Perception is influenced by our thinking patterns.

By this hypothesis, language is seen as a critical aspect of culture. To a great extent, language determines how we perceive the world around us. We can hardly think about anything we do not have words for in our language.

The significance of communication can also be appreciated when we look at the key-roles communication performs for us. Some of these roles include:

1. Self Actualization

This is a very important role as it ranks highest on at Abraham Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'. It is the greatest need man wants to achieve. Through communication, man gets information on health issues, education, occupation and other novelties. He uses the information he or she gets to improve his or her lot and thus meaningfully integrates himself or herself into his or her social milieu. Conversely, he also gets information on the threats that abound in the society and so prepares himself or herself to reach to them socially and reasonably.

2. Liberation

Communication liberates an individual and so makes him to know the truth; the truth that he has some social and political rights in the society, and also the truth which helps him to appreciate the fact that he is free to express himself. This "freedom", however, is not the freedom to trample on other people's freedom; but the "freedom to be civil and show respect for other people's own freedom". By being free, the individual then overcomes fear and consequently feels protected in his society.

3. Socio-Politico-Economic Mobilisation

Communication is very significant and important for the level of mobilisation required to develop a country. Without communication either on an interpersonal or mass levels, it may not be possible to gather and educate the citizenry towards appreciating and accepting some developmental programmes for their society/communities. This is the simple reason why most programmes (which do not involve their beneficiaries in the planning phases) fail,

The fact that communication is ubiquitous shows how important it is and its significance to human nature. This issue can, therefore, not be overemphasized

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Highlight and discuss the importance of communication in your journey for self actualization.

8.0   CONCLUSION

We shall conclude this discussion of the significance, types and contexts of communication in the words of Opubor, quoted in Okunna (1994); … Communication is the sharing of experience. It may involve two people interacting in a face-to-face situation; it may involve one person telling folktales in the presence of a participating group; it may involve many people reading the thought of one person, or hearing his voice over the radio. All of these are instances of sharing of experience.

9.0   SUMMARY

In this unit we highlighted and discussed the significance of communication, as well as the different types and contexts of communication. On the significance of communication we highlighted the importance communication in self actualization, socio-political-economic mobilization and liberation. We also look at the impact of timing, audience size and place on successful communication. Recognizing every type of communication as a sharing of experience, we highlighted the various types of communication: Human, animal and machine communication. Further describing human communication as the most complex, we highlighted the various types of human communication: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, institutional, public and mass communication.

10.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How does communication create our sense of self?
2. Describe the different types of communication and their significance in nation building.

11.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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Unit 5   CONCEPT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Interest in mass communications as an area of academic study of the ways people and groups relay messages to a large audience has grown steadily over the years. In this unit, we will look at the concept of mass communication, since a good understanding of the concept is very significance to effective application of mass communication theory. To achieve this, we will review some scholarly definition of the concept, identify the nature, characteristics, different media and those unique attributes of mass communication.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

> ➢ Define the concept of mass communication
> ➢ Identify the nature, characteristics and unique attributes of mass communication
> ➢ Explain the different media of mass communication

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   What is Mass Communication?

The term "mass communication" is used in a variety of ways, which, despite the potential for confusion, are usually clear from the context. These include: (a) Reference to the various activities of the mass media as a group, (b) The use of criteria of a concept, "massiveness", to differentiate among media and their activities and (c) The construction of questions about communication as applied to the activities of the mass media. Significantly, only the third definition does not take the actual process of communication for granted. (Debanjan, 2010)

In the Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, Mass Communication is the term used to describe the academic study of the various means by which individuals and entities relay information through mass media to large segments of the population at the same time. It is usually understood to relate to newspaper and magazine publishing, radio, television and film, as these are used both for disseminating news and for advertising.

Mass communication is a very complex process, much more complicated than interpersonal communication. This is because every single message sent through mass medium is transmitted through an elaborate system of machines and individuals. (Okunna, 1994)

Sydney Head (1976) suggests that the term mass communication must imply at least five things: (a) Relatively large audience (b) Fairly undifferentiated audience composition (c) Some form of message reproduction (d) Rapid distribution and delivery (e) Low unit cost to the customers.

Barker (1981) defines Mass communication as the spreading of a message to an extended mass audience through rapid means of reproduction and distribution at a relatively inexpensive cost to the consumer. In each case, a message is transported from its original source to a widespread audience through an intermediary channel such as radio, television or news paper.

In the opinion of Mehta (1979) mass communication is concerned with transmitting information, thoughts and opinions, entertainment, etc. at a time to a large number of audiences of different characteristics.

Agee, Ault and Emery (1979) define mass communication as a process of sending a message, thought and attitude through some media to a large number of heterogeneous audiences.

So far, you have an idea about mass communication. We can now define mass communication as a process in which professional communicators design and use intermediary channels (radio, television or newspaper) to disseminate messages quickly at a time to a large number of heterogeneous but widespread and fairly undifferentiated audiences separated from a source by a great distance.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Ordinarily, transmitting information to many persons is known as mass communication. Identify key difference between mass communication, group and public communication.

3.2   Characteristics of Mass Communication

The following characteristics of mass communication distinguish it from other form of communication;

- **Communication is Mostly One Way**

Mass communication is mostly a one way communication, unlike other forms of communication, it does allow for immediate feedback. But the trend is fast changing in this era of 'let the people be carried' along and technological advancement there is increasing audience participation in mass communication.

- **Audience Has Great Deal of Choice**

Audience of mass communication message has a great deal of choice of media programmes or channels to view or listen to. The many increasing number mass media of communication has increase the choice of the audience.

- **Reach Large and Vast Audiences**

The audience of mass communication is heterogeneous and lives far apart yet they receive the message at the same time.

1. **Aim Messages to Attract Largest Audience Possible**

Mass communication message is intended for a largest audience possible. That is why the scope of mass media coverage area equates to its effectiveness.

- **Influence Society and Are, In Turn, Influenced by Society**

Mass communication message is intended to influence society and the media are in turn expected to be influence by the society.

Professor John B. Thompson of Cambridge University, quoted in the Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, highlighted five characteristics:

- Mass communication comprises "both technical and institutional methods of production and distribution" This is evident throughout the history of the media, from print to the Internet, each suitable for commercial utility.

- It involves the "commodification of symbolic forms", as the production of materials relies on its ability to manufacture and sell large quantities of the work. Just as radio

stations rely on time sold to advertisers, newspapers rely for the same reasons on their space.

- It separates contexts between the production and reception of information"

- Its "reach to those 'far removed' in time and space, in comparison to the producers".

- Information distribution" - a "one to many" form of communication, whereby products are mass produced and disseminated to a great quantity of audiences.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

An audience of mass communication message has a great deal of choice. Discuss this in view of increasing media seeking audience attention in Lagos.

3.3   Importance of Mass Communication

With the advancement in information and communication technology, mass communication has become inseparable part of the human life. Though the history of mass communication is comparatively recent, it has become indispensable in today's society, which has become dependent on mass communication.

a. National Development

Radio and Television have invaded almost every corner of the country. People sit glued to watch television. Research has also proved the effectiveness of these media in informing and educating people. Hence mass communication is one of the important inputs for the development of the nation.

They become more aware of the country's problems and issues as well as help people develop understanding of the social problems. They also contribute to increased understanding of culture, politics, and economy etc.

b. Information Dissemination

Radio, television, newspaper, movies are used widely as means of mass communication for information. Today, mass communication brings people closer by developing common understanding of event or issue. We are dependent on mass communication not only for information, entertainment and politics but also education, science, religion, charities, agriculture and transportation.

As people become more literate, individualistic and cosmopolitan, the use of mass communication channels becomes more and more important as there are many areas of common concern and interest to people about which people want to know. Today's society has become far

too complex to function only through interpersonal or group communication. There are many important messages of common concern which have to reach effectively to masses at a time.

c. Entertainment

Mass communication is woven into our day-to-day existence. We use mass media to satisfy our need for entertainment or enlightenment. In more developed nations, people depend more on mass communication channels for knowledge, entertainment and decision making.

d. Education

In a multicultural country like Nigeria, mass communication media is effectively becoming a popular medium for mass education. Thus, mass communication has an important role to play in enlightening the masses to raise the standards of their living and improve quality of life.

Communication with rural people is difficult and challenging, as many of them live in inaccessible and isolated villages. In this situation, mass communication is the only alternative for reaching them breaking all the barriers of physical distances and illiteracy.

e. Socialization

In one way or another, almost every major social activity in modern life depends on the use of mass communication media to greater or lesser extent.

Mass communication is important for socialization of people because changes in subtle areas such as the socialization of the individual in regard to knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, can be brought about through mass communication by using media like television and cinema.

f. Behaviour Change

Mass communication becomes very important while communicating ideas intended to change behaviour of people right from developing awareness to adoption of an innovation. When people are exposed to an increasing flow of information, they find themselves in a position which necessitates a change in their aspiration, attitude and effort.

g. Better Standard of Living

Frequent exposure to mass media can create the urge for a higher standard of living. There is adequate research evidence throwing light upon the potentialities of individual medium of mass communication as well as a total effect of mass media exposure in changing cognitive and affective behaviour of rural people for a better standard of living.

h. Transmission of Attitudes

Mass communication plays an important role in the transmission of attitudes, perceptions and beliefs. Mass media like television and radio are influential force when the same ideas, people, or behaviours, occur consistently from program to program and presented in a stereotype manner.

i. Job Creation

Mass communication has developed into an industry and has provided jobs to millions of people, enabling them to earn their living.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Write a two-page essay on how mass media has help shape your life.

3.4   Media of Mass Communication

Mass media is simply classified into two broad groups – the print and electronic media. The print media comprise books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, etc. The electronic media comprise radio, television, and other mass media that rely on electric power to reach their audience.

The Print Media

The print media are the oldest of all media of mass communication, (Okunna, 1994), Starting from ancient times, the print media have proliferated all over the world. They have also remained popular channels of mass communication, in spite of the phenomenal development of the electronic media in the modern world.

Explaining the advantage of the print media over the electronic media, Merrill and Lowenstein (1979), quoted in Okunna (1994), stated that the print media have innate advantage over the radio and television. These advantages accrue despite the overwhelming popularity of the electronic media and their ability to attract the mass-mass audience. The outstanding advantage of print media is reviewability. ... The print media do not exist in 'time' in the same manner as sound and motion media. They may be previewed, scanned, or reviewed at the convenience of the reader. One word, one chapter, one picture, or one advertisement can be examined and analyzed at the reader's leisure. The permanence and accessibility of words written on paper offer advantages that sound and motion media are so far unable to equal, even with the arrival of the age of electronic video recording.

However, a major disadvantage of the print media is illiteracy and poverty. The inability of many people to read constitutes a great barrier to communication through the print media. Another great barrier is the inability of several people to afford the cost of buying print media materials. For instance, with increasing demand on the meager incomes of most Nigerians, majority people no longer afford the cost of newspapers and magazines.

The Electronic Media

All media that depend on electric power to transmit their message to the audience are classified under electronic media. Examples are cinema, radio, television, internet, and telephone. Although the telephone is a two-way communication device, unlike mass media which refers to media that can communicate a message to a large group often simultaneously, modern cell phones are no longer a single-use device. Most cell phones are equipped with internet access and capable of connecting to the web which itself is a mass medium.

Today, marketers and advertisers are able to tap into satellite, and broadcast commercials and advertisements directly to cell phones, unsolicited by the phone's user. This transmission of mass advertising to millions of people is a form of mass communication.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Write a two-page essay on the history of Television in Nigeria.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Mass communication involves communication with mass audiences. It is a very complex process. One major challenge with mass communication is the complex nature or characteristics of the Sender (far away from the receiver), the Channel (divers and competitive), Message (mostly one way), the receiver (heterogeneous, have choice), and Feedback (not immediate). Despite these complexities, mass communication plays a major role in information dissemination, education, nation building, transmission of attitude, job creation and so on. Further advancement in information and communication technology has increased our reliance on media of mass communication in directing affairs of our society.

5.0   SUMMARY

The unit has been able to briefly explain the concept of mass communication, and also show the characteristics of the concept which include the mostly one way nature of the message, large and vast audience, media choice and source influence. The unit further explored the importance of mass communication, information dissemination, education, nation building. Others are transmission of attitude, behaviour change, socialization, better standard of living, and job creation. The unit ends with a highlight of the various media of mass communication, television, radio, magazine, newspaper and Internet.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Differentiate mass communication from other forms of communication, highlight characteristics of mass communication and describe the role of mass communication in national development.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 6   FUNCTIONS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Mass communication plays enormous roles in the society. Today people are so much attached to mass communication media that it is difficult to identify the functions they have for each person. In order to understand how media function in society, we must observe carefully how and why people read newspapers, watch television, listen to radio, use the web or go to the movies. In analyzing the functions of mass communication, our study should not be limited to what people do with media, but what media do to the people: how they affect opinions, attitudes, culture, and habits etc.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

➢ Identify and explain the various functions of mass communication in the society
➢ Highlight and discuss the impact of mass communication in shaping opinions, attitudes, culture, and habits.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

Understanding the various functions of mass communication is very important for effective application of theories of mass communication. Wright (1960), quoted in Wikibooks, identifies some key functions of mass communication.

3.1   Surveillance

The first function of mass communication is to serve as the eyes and ears for those of us seeking information about our world. In every society, the mass media carefully watch what goes on and report this in the news. In this way, the members of the society become aware of what is happening around them. They also know the threats and opportunities that abound in their societies and avail themselves of this. This is called the "Watchman" function of communication.

Media serve as watchman. Some use the word 'informer'. Mass media serve as the ears, eyes and voice of the audience. We accept their reports and use them as a basis for shaping our thoughts, attitudes and actions. For instance, the advertisements make known to us the new products. They help the customer to make purchasing decisions

When we want to find out the latest news about what's happening, we can turn on the television, surf the Internet, or read a newspaper or magazine. We rely on mass communication for news and information about our daily lives such as the weather, stock reports, or the start time for a game.

3.2   Correlation

The second function mass communication serves for the society, according to Lasswell, is correlating the response of the whole society to the environment – that is, developing public opinion. Communication helps to create consensus in a society on key issues. An informed or enlightened opinion is essential for a healthy democracy.

Correlation addresses how the media present facts that we use to move through our society. Various groups of people abound in every society. Some of these groups have their own different views about life. Their aspirations are also quite different. If all these people are working separately in isolation, then the society will not be conducive for them to live in. So what communication does is to bring together all the different views of these groups of people in the society so that they can work hand in hand with one another. This is achieved through discussions or the mass media.

3.3   Entertainment

Mass media provide us with an escape from daily routines and problems by entertaining us (Zillmann and Bryant, 1986). Media like soft sale magazines and entertainment-TV keep us up to date on the doings of our favorite celebrities. We watch sports on television, go to the movies, play video games, and listen to our ipods and radios. Most mass communication simultaneously entertains and informs. We often turn to media in our leisure time to provide an escape from our boredom and relief from the predictability of our everyday lives. We rely on media to take us

places we could not afford to go or imagine, acquaint us with bits of culture, and make us laugh or cry. Entertainment can have the secondary effect of providing companionship and/or catharsis through the media we consume.

3.4   Transmission of Culture

Mass communication media is a vehicle to transmit cultural norms, values, rules and habits. Consider how you learned about what is fashionable to wear or what music to listen to. Mass media plays a significant role in the socialization process. Mass Communication tries to transmit the past culture of a society, from one generation to the other. Through verbal/non-verbal, formal or informal communication, the child in a society gets to know the norms and values of his/her society and thus keeps to them. This is a social process.

3.5   Social Mobilization

Mobilization is another critical function of the mass communication media. It functions to mobilize people during times of crisis (McQuail, 1994). With instant access to media and information, we can collectively witness the same events taking place in real time somewhere else, thus mobilizing a large population of people around a particular event

3.6   Validation/Status Conferral

The mass communication media function to confer social status and prestige on individuals, culture, causes or events. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1971) observed that mass communication functions to validate the status and norms of particular individuals, movements, organizations, or products. The validation of particular people or groups serves to enforce social norms.

The media validate particular cultural norms while diminishing differences and variations from those norms. A great deal of criticism focuses on how certain groups are promoted, and others marginalized by how they are portrayed in mass media.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Highlight and discuss key functions of the mass communication media in Nigeria.

3.2 Criticisms of the Media of Mass Communication

Mass communication media influence societies in a number of ways. They exert enormous impact in shaping up society. In performing their functions the media attract severe criticism from the public, especially among people who resist change in lifestyle and social norms. We

will review some key areas of general criticism of the Media mass communication as highlighted in (ZeePedia.com)

- **Conceal more than they reveals**

A major criticism against mass communication media is that they only tell people half-truths. It is believed that a better part of a story falls victim to media gate-keepers. For instance, at crisis times like wars or political chaos, media only tell facts which the interest groups want to appear before masses.

- **Exaggerate**

It has become a habit of media to blow up out of proportion some issues of sensitive nature which creates so much panic among the people (authorities) who then instead finding a lasting solution of those issues just try to hush up the issues.

- **Sensationalize**

Perhaps the most commonly leveled charge against media is their chronic approach to sensationalize matters of routine life. In a murder story the media would go to find some juicy thing out of nothing. A small tip from any person around may make a media person to build a spicy story which may attract common people. More than often, the facts on which media build a story prove wrong by later investigations.

- **Damage cultural and family traditions**

The way certain things appear in the mass media is seen a direct attack on peoples' lifestyle, belief and normal social life. For instance, behaviour of characters in a radio or TV drama, dancing in films and smoking and drinking actions all have invited severe disapproval of common people who strongly argue that such an attitude of media is hurting the cultural norms and the family set up. As a result, people do not allow certain TV channels be tuned, or some magazines to be dropped at their homes.

- **Bias**

Media bias at times is too clear to be ignored. Siding with political parties, or showing despise to certain government functionaries, at times persons like ministers, is a common sight. But it works both sides; the government controlled media in all the countries show a visible tilt towards the government while giving a bashing to the opposition, and on the other hand private sector newspapers and TV channels remain occupied to lash out at the government actions and allow the opposition to drag matters in the public which should have been talked about in the parliament. Media bias is some times visible on regional, ethnic and linguistic grounds, only damaging a society rather than bringing people closer.

- **Commercialism: Trend is to mislead people**

Although it is a slightly modern phenomenon, media are largely considering their commercial interest more than what common people expect from them on pure professional grounds. Advertisements are one way of wooing the media in the favour of rich, or influential.

- **Pictures of killings unethical**

Photos revealing a true fact in an ugly manner leave a bad taste in the mouth of many. Large portions of the media blatantly refuse to follow ethics, which may cause intense pain to common

people. For instance, photo of a slain person dipped in a pool of blood, or headlines which describe a crime in most horrible details upset the consumer public.

- **Private life, obscenity**

All people, including acclaimed celebrities have a private life. Media for their personal interest, keep peeping into the private life and affairs of famous people and report matters to the public which may ruin the lives of the stars.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Identify and discuss major criticism of the media in Nigeria

4.0   CONCLUSION

The mass media are the vehicle through which we inform, explain, and win support for a cause, program or event. We get information about our world, nation and local affairs from the mass media. This fact gives both print and electronic media important functions that include surveillance of the environment, correlation of our society, transmission of culture, social mobilization, and entertainment and status conferral. Apart from these functions, the media are seriously under criticism for failing in their assumed duties. The major criticisms against the media include concealing more than it reveals, exaggeration, sensationalization, bias, unethical representation and promoting cultural imperialism.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have been able to identify key functions of the media and some major criticisms against the media. The functions highlighted above include surveillance of the environment, correlation of our society, Transmission of culture, social mobilization, entertainment and status conferral. Criticisms on the media discussed include concealing more than their reveal, exaggeration, sensationalization, bias, unethical representation, promoting cultural imperialism and non respect of one's private life.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

In every society, the mass communication media carefully watch what goes on and report this in the news. Discuss the effectiveness of the Nigerian media in the discharge of their surveillance function in last thirteen years of democratic rule and highlight major criticism of the media in Nigeria.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 2:   THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Unit 1   Perspective on Theory
Unit 2   Understanding Theory in Mass Communication Study
Unit 3   Research, Model, Paradigm and Theory in Mass Communication
Unit 4   Mass Communication Audience Effects
Unit 5   Mass Communication and Social Development

Unit 1   PERSPECTIVES ON THEORY

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
            3.1   The Concept of Theory
            3.2   Attribute of Theory
            3.3   Uses of Theory
            3.4   Communication Theory
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Before now you may have viewed the term 'theory' in relation to the concept of 'scientific knowledge'. However, the etymological background of the term ('to observe') reminds us that theory is, in fact, a way of viewing objects and of relating them to one another within a particular kind of discourse. This unit will excite your mind on how theory relates to every aspect of our lives.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this unit, you should be able to:

➢ Define theory
➢ Identify key attributes of theory.
➢ Explain uses of theory.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   What is Theory

Generally speaking, the term theory is a multifaceted term. It means a number of different things, depending on the context. In mathematics and the sciences, for example, a theory is a tested and testable concept which is used to explain an occurrence. For students of the arts, "theory" refers to the non-practical aspect of their work, while lay people refer to unproven ideas and speculation as theories. The multitude of meanings for this word can get confusing, but the intent is usually clear from the context; a mathematical paper talking about a theory, for example, is probably referring to a theory in the scientific sense. (www.wiseGEEK.com)

There are as many definitions to the term as there are many theories of communication. However, only a few of these definitions would be looked at so as to present the basic components of a "theory". There is no exact definition of "theory". So here are some notable definitions:

1. A theory is a general law that states the relationship between two or more variables.

2. A theory is a proposition that explains what happens between variables.

3. "A theory is a statement that purports to account for or characterize some phenomena" (Barnum, 1990).

4. "A theory is a provisional explanatory proposition, or set of propositions, concerning some natural phenomena and consisting of symbolic representations of
   a. the observed relationships among (measured) events,
   b. the mechanisms or structures presumed to underlie such relationships, or
   c. (any) observed data in the absence of any direct empirical manifestation of the relationships".(Marx, 1976).

5. "A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena"(Kerlinger, 1986)

6. "Not until one has (concepts), and propositions stating the relations between them, and the propositions form a deductive system not until one has all three does one have theory." (Homans, 1964).

7. A set of constructs linked together by relational statements that are internally consistent with each other (Berger and Chaffee)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

A theory is built upon one or more hypotheses, and upon evidence. Discuss

3.3   Attributes of a Theory

Communication scientists try to evaluate theories to see how sound they are before

adopting them. The following list of attribute$_s$ is what communication scholars look out for, in good theories.

- **Explanatory Power**

The theory should be able to give plausible explanation for the phenomena it was constructed to explain. Also a good theory should be able to explain a good range of phenomena. The greater the number of phenomena a theory explains, the more powerful the theory.

- **Predictive Power**

A good theory should be able to predict events. It is however, possible that a theory may predict an event but may not be able to provide plausible explanations to that event.

- **Parsimony**

Simple theories are usually preferred to complex ones. Assuming that both simple and complex theories predict events and explain them equally well, it should be realized that "the complexity of a theory is directly related to the complexity of the reality it seeks to explain".

- **Internal Consistence**

The internal logic of a theory should be easily *assessed* without carrying out any test. For instance, a theory states that "students who work hard excel in their exams and subsequently in life". This theory and the variables therein should be easily assessed even without having to carry out empirical/scientific tests.

- **Heuristic Provocativeness**

A good theory should be able to generate new hypotheses which will expand the horizons of Knowledge. For instance, if a theory states that "those who drive while drunk die of motor accidents, this very theory should be able to generate the hypothesis that "if those who get drunk are chauffeur-driven, they will live very long lives".
- **Durability**

A good theory should be able to stand the test of time. It should be a statement or proposition that can stand for a long time without being flawed. On the other hand, some scholars contend that good theories are those that can be proved false. For instance, Popper (1963) "suggests that theoretical propositions should be attacked from a variety of angles to see whether they can withstand efforts to disprove them".

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Using the six attributes of theory, evaluate the agenda-setting and gate-keeping theory of mass communication

3.3   Uses and Functions of Theories

Fawcett and Downs (1992) say that theories allow us to impose order on naturally unordered experiences. They provide a systematic way of viewing random or chaotic experiences. Theories also give us a structure with which to look at the experiences, or at the data derived from the measurement of the experiences and order and analyse the data in a coherent manner. "The function of a theory then is to describe, explain or predict limited properties of reality"

Bernard Cohen in 1994, drawing from the work of Larry Lauden in 1982 in Zeepedia, proposes that the central function of theory is to solve problems. According to Lauden:

"The first and essential acid test for any theory is whether it provides acceptable answers to interesting questions."

Theories can be used to address a number of type's problems. According to Lauden it can begin with three types of problems:

   Empirical problems
   Conceptual problems
   Practical problems

- **Empirical problems**

An empirical problem is "anything about the world which strikes us as odd or otherwise in need of explanation".

- **Conceptual problems**

Conceptual problem exists when a particular theory exhibits inconsistencies that need to be clarified

- **Practical problems**

The utility in solving practical problems has historically played a major role in both assessing and promoting theory construction. Within the field of communication, the role of theory in dealing with practical or applied problems is particularly important. Communication scholars often confront applied issues such as how to improve the provisions of health care how to enhance the effectiveness of problem solving organizational groups.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Theory provides a systematic way of viewing random or chaotic experiences. Describe the various uses and functions of theory.

3.2   Specific Definition of Communication Theory

The specific definition is as it affects communication as a discipline. In other words, what do we regard as theory in the communication field?

> Communication theory is a set of constructs linked together, relational statements consistent with each other and that explain what happens in communication. A set of propositions that show the relationship between the various variables that are at work in the communication process.

Theories are very important in communication because they are the foundation stones on which the practice of communication operates. Communication requires very sound theories for there to be an effective communication process. Hence, Kurt Lewin's assertion that "there is nothing so practical as a sound theory". Good theories make for practicability of the phenomena (events/activities) in communication.

Another way one can look at communication theory is by seeing it as propositions concerning the various things we do in communication. In communication theory, we try to explain the various phenomena that constitute communication. Communication is a universal phenomenon, hence all other fields of study/disciplines use it. As scholars from these other fields borrow from communication they also, in some ways, influence communication, by introducing some of their own ideologies into the field of communication. Some of these ideas borrowed from other fields are

- The term 'feedback' which is borrowed from the field of Engineering, from 'Cybernetics'
- The 'diffusion of information' is borrowed from Chemistry from the diffusion of gases.
- Information metabolism is borrowed from biology from the metabolic processes of the human body (biology).

So the communicator looks beyond the field of Sociology and the Arts and borrows from other fields. He or she has to be broad-minded, rather than narrow-minded otherwise, he or she will not be able to practice his or her profession effectively.

From the foregoing, the most central concept in the various definitions of theory is the word PHENOMEMA. What therefore is a phenomenon?

Phenomenon

This is anything we can observe directly through our senses or indirectly through our mind. So a

phenomenon, precisely put, is a THING. It can be anything one can think of. Hence, communication is a phenomenon. There are categories of phenomena:

- Consequence   -   Pass/Fail
- Activity   -   Lecture
- Thing/Being   -   Student/Communications/Car
- Condition/State -   Poverty/Wealth/Peace/Joy etc
- Occurrence   -   Rainfall/Earthquake/Flood
- Events   -   Matriculation/Inter-house sports

Variables are properties of phenomena. They are also phenomena in themselves.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe a phenomenon and distinguish between theory and phenomenon.

4.0   CONCLUSION

We end this unit with Okenwa's (2002) summary note on theory. According to him, a theory is a set of propositions, consisting of defined and interrelated constructs. It sets out the interrelations among a set of variables, and is so doing, presents a systematic view of the phenomena described by the variables. A theory explains phenomena. It does so by specifying what variables are related to what variables and how they are related, thus enabling researchers to predict from certain variables to certain other variables (Okenwa, 2002).

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit we have been able to highlight and summaries some scholarly views on the basic components of a theory. We identify theory as are a set of logically interrelated propositions, presented in a systematic way which describe and explain social phenomena. We further highlighted key attributes of good theories to include its Explanatory Power, Predictive Power, Parsimony, Internal Consistence, and Durability. Finally we identify empirical problems, conceptual problems and practical problems as three key problems a theory is meant to solve.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

There are theories in many and varied fields of study, including the arts and sciences. Using the various attributes of theory highlight the importance of theory in mass communication.

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UNIT 2   UNDERSTANDING THEORY IN MASS COMMUNICATION STUDY

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
         3.1   Significance of Theory Mass Communication Study
         3.2   Approaches to Study of Mass Communication Theory
         3.3   Limitations of Mass Communication Theory Effects
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0   INTRODUCTION

This unit we will review the significance and approaches to study of mass communication theory. It also looks at major limitation of mass communication theory effects.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit you will be able to explain:

- The significance of Theory in Mass Communication Study
- Approaches to the study of Mass Communication Theory
- Limitations of Mass Communication Effects

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Significance of Theory in Mass Communication

Basically, human beings have reasons for doing most of the things they engage in. Since communication is a very intricate activity of human beings, we have various reasons for communicating with one another. These reasons have become so significant that conscious efforts have been made by reputable scholars (both from other disciplines and within the field of communication) to understudy the various elements of communication Chief among these are: the 'audience' and the 'effects' of communication.   To achieve this, efforts were also concentrated on the study of the environment in relation to what happens in the communication process. The result is the massive list of theories of mass communication which erupted.
Okenwa (2002) sets out a definitive understanding of theories of mass communication in which some germane statements stand out quite distinctly:

- No theory presents a complete picture of the realities in communication situations.
- No theory is totally independent; there is always a link between and among the various mass communication theories.
- No theory is an end in itself. Theories, especially in mass communication, are a means to an end; that end is the examination and explanation of communication behaviour, encounters and activities.

As earlier on identified in the previous unit, a theory is a set of interrelated constructs . . . which present a systematic view of a phenomenon. Communication is a great phenomenon for human beings, hence the need to study the theories of mass communication as they are expected to present vividly to us the relationship between "communication and reality". According to the social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1958), "there is nothing as practical as a good theory" According to him, good theories help us to put facts in• their basic understandable forms (i.e. their real perspectives) and also to predict events even before they occur.

Okenwa further stated that most mass communication theories examine various aspects of the communication phenomena with the purpose of helping to enhance the understanding of mass communication situations. Such situations include the examination of human attitudes, behaviour and habits, how and why they differ. Other situations like message diffusion and the impact of the media are still some of the issues that are highlighted in some of the theories

Other reasons why we study theory include:

- It helps scholars to hypothesis and eventually discover other unknown and unobserved phenomena.
- Theory is a guide to discovering facts; it stimulates questions on areas which are lagging and thus, initiates research in those fields.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What are your reasons for the study of mass communication theories?

3.2   Approaches to the Study of Mass Communication Theory

 Christopher de la Torre's contribution in *eHow.com* lays a foundation for understanding mass communication, and then describes two approaches to studying it.

1. **Foundation for understanding mass communication**

- **History**

To understand how mass communication is necessary for both individual and society, it's helpful to look at communication in a historical context. It has developed dynamically over time,

increasing in complexity and meaning. Contemporary modes of communication can be understood better by studying the stages of communication that have led up to them. These stages include signs and signals, speech and language, writing, and printing.

- **Different Theories**

The study of mass communication has produced several schools of thought that attempt to explain its origins and predict the future of current practices. For instance, "structural and functional" theories focus on the rules, traditions and institutions of a society, while "interactionist" theories look at the ways different types of people interact within a society. "Interpretive" theories study how people think of their own experiences while "critical" theories look at how and why certain groups of people use communication to control other groups.

2. **Approaches to Study of Mass Communication Theory**

- **Information Distribution**

One approach to studying mass communication is to look at how the information is distributed. Methods include publishing, broadcasting and digital communications, and can utilize media as sophisticated as the Internet or as basic as graffiti on a brick wall. The idea is to make sense of the journey of the message, from sender to receiver. What is the purpose of the message? What is the intended outcome? How and why does the sender choose which medium to use?

- **Media Effects**

Another approach is to look at the effects of communication on the audience -- specifically its ability to persuade or manipulate how people think and what they talk about. Rhetoric (the study of persuasion), philosophy and psychology all intersect with communications studies, in that they explain why particular messages are chosen and who the messages benefit the most. In contemporary society, it is also important to look at commercialism, politics and celebrity culture when studying mass communication because in many cases these elements are now inseparable

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Identify and describe the two approaches for the study of mass communication theory.

3.3   Limitation of Mass Communication Theory Effects

- **Mass Communication as a younger Discipline**

A key limitation of mass communication theories is that mass communication, according to Okenwa (2002), is a much younger discipline than the majority of the other disciplines in the social sciences such as Psychology, Sociology and Political Science. The implication is that majority of mass communication theories are borrowed from these disciplines, which as Okenwa explained, implies that mass communication theories are no more than explication of theories from other disciplines.

- **Impact of Messages**

We will view message impact in two ways. On the one hand, the mass media disseminate a wrong message to the wrong audience. In which case, the message will make little or no impact on the audience, contrary to Okenwa's assertion that messages emanating from the media are designed to have an intended impact on the members of the audience.

On the hand, a mass media message may be ineffective owing to the audience attitude. According to Okenwa, the attitude of the audience member to the message, his or her perception of the media and the media message, his or her personal or previous experiences, the existence of competing stimuli may be some of the major factors that can determine message impact.

He or she, therefore, maintains that this is primarily why it is wrong to overstress the impact the media can have as highlighted by many mass communication theories.

- **Concept of Media World**

Most theories of mass communication portray the mass communication media as capable of powerful effects. For instance, the Cultural Norms Theory ascribes to the media the capacity to create new norms in society, reinforce existing norms and also modify existing norms (Okenwa, 2002)

According to Okenwa, such fundamental portrayal of the media easily presents the media as not only capable of powerful effects, but it equally plays down on the capacity of the audience members to possess characteristics that would enable them to resist or even reject media stimuli… such as audience perception of the media: selective exposure, selective perception, selective attention. We will look at these in detail in subsequent units.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

The degree of mass communication media success in influencing society depends completely on the media. Discuss.

3.0   CONCLUSION

Communication is a very intricate activity of human beings, we have various reasons for exposing ourselves to mass communication media and the media effect us in different ways. To maximize impact of mass communication media, therefore, we looked at the various approaches

for study of mass communication and a review of limitation maximizing the impact of mass communication theories.

4.0   SUMMARY

In this unit we highlighted the significance and approaches to study of mass communication. We noted that theory helps scholars to hypothesise and eventually discover other unknown and unobserved phenomena. It is also a guide to discovering facts; it stimulates questions on areas which are lagging and, thus, initiates research in those fields. We also identified information distributions and media effects as key approaches for the study of mass communication. We finally looked at the recent formation of mass communication as a field of study, the message impact and the concept of media world as major factors limiting mass communication effects.

5.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

No theory is an end in itself. Theories, especially in mass communication, are a means to an end; that end is the examination and explanation of communication behaviours, encounters and activities. Justify this statement in view of the significance and limitation of mass communication effects.

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UNIT 3   RESEARCH, MODEL, PARADIGM AND THEORY IN MASS COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

0.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will examine the relationship between theory, research, model and a review of the narrative paradigm of mass communication.

1.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you will be able to;

- Describe relationship between theory and research
- Explain the difference between theory and practice
- Differentiate models and theories of mass communication
- Describe the narrative paradigm.

2.0   MAIN CONTENT

2.1   Relationship between Theory and Research

Theory and research are close]y related through the scientific method. Research and theory go hand in hand; theory guides and stimulates research, while research tests and stimulates theory

development. This results in more adequate theories and better/clearer facts. So, just as facts underlie theories, so do theories underlie facts, each bringing the other to precise scientific formulations (Osuala, 1982).

Granted the above submission, therefore, one can conveniently posit that the various theories of mass communication we study help us to appreciate better what happens in the communication process in real life. By so doing, the student of mass communication gets stimulated towards asking further questions in the field of communication. Hence, the need to carry out research which will provide the needed answers to such questions.

Mass communication theories enable us to understand the behaviour of the mass audience. These theories also help to develop hypotheses on other aspects of mass communication, e.g. a study of the "Media (newspaper) ownership patterns and the public" can be traced to some hypotheses on the "Agenda-setting" and "Gate-Keeping" functions which eventually became theories. Such is the kind of symbiotic relationships that exist between theories and hypotheses, and by extension research.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Theory and research are close]y related through the scientific method. Discuss

2.2   Difference between Theory and Practice

It is, however, pertinent to mention that often, some of the variables of a theory can influence or impinge on the practice of a particular theory. Hence, if a theory becomes impracticable it may be due to the influence of these intervening variables beyond the communicators' control. For instance, if in a lecture class some students are sleeping, others are eating and some others chatting away their time, then a theory which states that a teacher who delivers his or her lectures diligently will produce successful students is not likely to work out. This is because the performance of the students in this class where the majority is inattentive to the lecture is bound to be poor and unsuccessful, unlike students in a controlled class situation where most of the students are likely to excel.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

A general law that can stand the test of time is a theory while those that cannot be put to practice is not a theory. Justify

3.3   Theory Formulation

Theory formulation follows established scientific Process.

   a. Conceptualization: This the inquiry stage, terms are identified and defined

b. Operationalization: At this stage a specific meaning is giving for the term previously identified and defined.
c. Observation: This is the research stage; in-depth study is carried on the terms.
d. Analysis: At this stage an objective evaluation identified data is done
e. Testing: This is the hypothesis testing stage; outcomes of previous analyses are tested.
f. Generalization: This is the general application stage; the outcome of the test is further generalized.
g. Theory: Theory is formulated.
h. Law: Theory over time becomes a law through years of continuous testing.

3.4   Models of Mass Communication

Anything that shares differences in its features also must share similarities in the features. Thus, Okunna (1999) explained that a model is very closely related to a theory. According to her, the two concepts are so closely related that there is little or no consensus among scholars and theorists on the difference between a theory and a model. In relating efforts to distinguish a theory from model, Okunna citing Littlejohn (1978) in Udofia (1991), says that a theory is "explanation" while a model is "a representation".

The Powerful Effects Model

This model finds relevance in a general believe that the mass media have the capacity to influence people's thoughts, behaviour and action. People fear that the mass media can induce violent behaviour on youths, particularly when they expose themselves to violent programmes or cultures over time on television.

Okunna (1999) says that the mass media are believed to have powerful and direct effects on people. This is the view of the 'Powerful Effects' Model of mass communication. According to her, this model of mass communication effects believes that persuasion is the main effect of mass media. This model, she said, dominated thinking and research about the mass media in the 1930s and 1940s.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

A theory is an explanation while a model is a representation: Identify and describe the meeting points of the two concepts.

3.5 Paradigm of Mass Communication

Paradigm simply is a pattern, model or an example of something. Kuhn (1996) describes paradigm as the model that scientists hold about a particular area of knowledge. Different scholars have developed different models for communication and by extension mass communication as an area of knowledge. For our study, we consider the narrative paradigm.

Narrative Paradigms

In narrative paradigms, communications is essentially seen as stories. The Narrative Paradigm was proposed by Walter Fisher. According to Fisher (1987) and highlighted in Wikipedia free encyclopedia, all meaningful communication is a form of storytelling or giving a report of events and so human beings experience and comprehend life as a series of ongoing narratives, each with their own conflicts, characters, beginnings, middles, and ends.

Individuals are able to distinguish what makes a story legitimate by using what Fisher refers to as narrative rationality. Rationality consists of two factors: coherence and fidelity.

Coherence

Fisher defined Coherence as the degree to which a story makes sense structurally. Is the story consistent, with sufficient detail, reliable characters, and free of any major surprises? The ability to judge coherence is learned, and improves with experience.

Fidelity

Narrative Fidelity is concerned with whether or not the story is true. Fisher establishes five criteria that affect a story's narrative fidelity

- questions of fact that examine the values embedded in the story, either explicitly or implicitly
- questions of relevance that consider the connection between the story that is told and the values being espoused
- questions of consequences that consider the possible outcomes that would accrue to people adhering to the espoused values
- questions of consistency between the values of the narrative and the held values of the audience
- questions of transcendence that consider the extent to which the story's values represent the highest values possible in human experience

Evaluation of Narrative Paradigms

Fisher offers a humanistic model of communication in that individuals take sometimes complex information and transform it into narratives. This characterizes humans as "storytelling animals" exchanging messages with each other, and that each message is judged as credible in terms of its consistency and by reference to the values and beliefs of the audience. But, not all human discourse follows the story form and his reference to the subtext of the speaker's or writer's own narratives is less than compelling.

More over, he fails to specify how critics are to make their choices between narrative probability or fidelity, and provides no criteria for testing narrative probability. It seems that the critic becomes "a standard unto himself", disposing of more traditional rationality without anything convincing to replace it, e.g. it is not acceptable in most formal contexts that a storyteller would be judged superior in credibility to an expert witness. Finally, the logic of good reasons is inadequately developed, as it fails to consider how values can be presented in argument and, once presented, how the "relative worth" of one value can be evaluated against that of another.

Criticisms

Some major critics on Fisher's Narrative Paradigm include:

I.   Rowland (1989), who believes that narrative theory should be applied strictly to communication that fits classic narrative patterns, because the generality with which Fisher applies narrative theory undermines its credibility.

II.   William Kirkwood (1992), who observes that Fisher's logic of good reasons focuses on prevailing values and fails to account for the ways in which stories can promote social change. In some ways, both Kirkwood and Fisher agree that this observation is more of an extension to the theory than a punishing critique.

III. Turner (2007), who argued that some forms of communication are not narrative in the way that Fisher maintains. Science fiction and fantasy novels or movies do to conform to most people values, they often challenge values (Turner 2007)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Communication is a form of storytelling. Discuss this in relation to the narrative paradigm of communication.

4. CONCLUSION

On the one hand, research and theory go hand in hand; theory guides and stimulates research while research tests and stimulates theory development. On another hand, a theory is an explanation while a model is a representation. While paradigm is described as a pattern model or an example that scientists hold about a particular area of knowledge; narrative paradigm is describes communication as a story telling process. Generally, therefore, Mass communication theories enable us to understand behaviours of the mass audience

5. SUMMARY

This unit has described the relationship between theory and research, emphasizing that research and theory go hand in hand and further the eight steps of theory formulation. We also highlighted

the difference between theory and practice: model and theory, explaining that a theory is an explanation while a model is a representation. We also examined the Narrative Paradigm, which holds that communication is a story telling process.

6. TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Highlight and discuss the eight steps of theory formulation?

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UNIT 4   MASS COMMUNICATION AUDIENCE AND EFFECTS
CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will take a closer look at mass communication media audience, which is the primary target of all mass media massages. We will review peculiar characteristics of the audience to determine impact on media effectiveness. We will also examine factors that influence audience selective process and mass communication message effects.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit you will be able to:

- Describe the Mass Communication Audience and its characteristics
- Identify factors that determines audience selective processes, and
- Explain the effects of mass communication on the audience

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Mass Communication Audience

A good knowledge of the characteristics of mass communication audience is crucial to understanding of how mass communication theories work. According to Okenwa (2002), mass communication is simply the transmission of information and ideas to a largely dispersed, heterogeneous audience simultaneously.

Flower (2008) explained that all audiences have their own opinions and these are based on cultural backgrounds and the ability of humans to select, compare and discuss opinions with

others. She also held that the communication we are receiving is mediated, but the audience now chooses which media they want to use. Media are basically a product. No product will sell if there is not a willing buyer. The media may be a powerful tool, but it is the audience demand and audiences feedback that shapes the message and presentation of mediated content. Flower argued that audiences are not passive receivers of mediated mass communication, and are capable of influencing popular culture through active participation.

The producers of media contents therefore should work with an image of the audience and what it wants. A focus on audience is advantageous, as the mass communication media must work to satisfy the audience.

3.1.1   Characteristics of Mass Communication Audience

- **Anonymous Audience**

The mass media communicators communicate to unspecified audience. These audiences are anonymous. In Okunna (1994), anonymity is taken to mean that members of the mass communication audience generally are not known to one another, in addition to their being unknown to the communicator who sends all of them message. The communicator knows she has a large audience out there, but who they and who make up the audience is largely a matter guess work and intuition on the part of the mass communicator.

The anonymity status of the mass communication audience therefore makes it very difficult to measure the overall effectiveness of mass media effect on the audience.

- **Heterogeneous Audience**

The audience of mass communication message has diverse backgrounds. Okenwa stated that mass communication is simply the transmission of information and ideas to a largely dispersed heterogeneous audience simultaneously

Okunna (1999) explained that members of the audience belong to different educational levels, tribes, races or even nationalities; they have different religions and cultures; they are of different ages and genders. According to her, these demographic differences make the mass communication audience truly heterogeneous.

The heterogeneous nature of mass communication audiences poses great challenge in formulating uniform audience effect theories for the study mass communication media effect

- **Large Audience**

One of the criteria for mass communication media rating is its capacity to reach a large audience. Okunna affirmed that one characteristic of the mass communication audience is that it is very large, and a mass media message is able to reach members of this audience simultaneously (at the same time).

For instance, the NTA prides itself as Africa's largest television network because of it capacity to reach the largest number of viewers simultaneously. The NTA's large network of audience is therefore regarded as its key competitive advantage.

- **Scattered Audience**

Another important characteristic of mass communication audience is that the audience is physically separated in space and time from one another. Okunna stated that apart from being separated from the mass communicator in space the audience is also separated from the communicator in time.

Football and sporting championship broadcasts currently attract the highest audience across the globe. Global attention was focused on the London Olympic Games which have been estimated to attract the highest audience in the history of the Olympics. The audience was scattered all over the world and watched the various sporting activities at different times.

- **Active Audience**

The mass communication audience is very active in individual choice of mass communication medium and programmes. Okunna stated that different members of the audience for different reasons are active in choosing which of mass communication to expose them to; to listen to radio, for instance, rather than read a magazine.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

The effectiveness of mass communication derives mainly from the ability of the mass media to reach a large audience. Discuss.

3.2   Understanding Mass Media Audience Effects

A good understanding of how and why an individual audience reacts (selective processes) differently to the same mass communication media message or information is significance to understanding of the importance of audience in mass communication process. Though the mass media have been adjudged to have limited effect on the audience, the truth remains that people seldom want to be changed, either by mass media or any other factor. The attitudes which people already hold are strong barriers to change. In fact, the mass media are more likely to reinforce the existing attitudes and lifestyles of members of the media audience, than to change them. This reinforcement itself is an important effect of mass communication. Effects should not be understood solely as a complete change of attitude and behaviour (Okunna, 1999).

To understand the make-up of mass communication, we will take a close look at two important theories of media effects that has been popularly described as Limited Effects Theories the Dissonance and Individual Differences Theory - to buttress the Selective Process

3.2.1 **Dissonance Theory**

The Dissonance Theory is an example of Limited Effects Theories of mass communication. It explains why the mass media do not often have persuasive or conversion effects on their audience (Okunna, 1999). It takes the focus away from the mass society, confirming that the mass media after all is not all powerful in effecting the audience beliefs and interests. The Dissonance Theory therefore view individual as capable of either to accept or reject mass media messages or information owing to degree of consistency to already-held beliefs, interest or values. Any inconsistency in beliefs or interest is also viewed as capable of causing psychological discomfort. However individual audience adopts different strategic processes managing the inconsistency that have become known as the selective processes.

In Klapper's (1960) view, the selective process helps media content consumers to cope with media impact. Ordinarily, people tend to expose themselves to those mass communications that are in accord with their existing attitudes and interests; while consciously and unconsciously avoiding information of opposing interest or beliefs. But when faced with such information, people will interpret it to fit their interest or belief.

3.2 Individual Differences Theory

The Individual Differences Theory is premised on the assumption that no two individuals are exactly the same. Bittner (1989) in Okunna (1999) explain that one reason why mass media messages cannot have the same (uniform) effect on all members of mass media audience is because there are individual differences in personality characteristics among such members. Thus Okunna affirmed that the Individual Difference Theory provides another useful way to look at the reaction of audience members to mass communication messages.

Okenwa (2002) explains that the Individual Difference Theory implies that mass media messages contain stimulus attributes that interact with specific personality characteristics of the audience, which in turn, create differing responses to the communication message. Rather than being uniform among the mass audience, the effects of mass communication messages will vary from person to person because of individual differences in their psychological structures. The popular notion of 'different strokes for different folks' is clearly supported here

Both theories identify psychological disposition as a major determinant in individual perception and response pattern. The difference in the individual audience perceptions and response pattern is determined through the following selective processes.

- **Selective Exposure**

Selective exposure expresses individual preference for certain medium or media messages base on his felt needs, interest or beliefs. Okunna explains that because the mass media audience is active, people can choose what they want to expose themselves to: what to read, hear, or see in

the media. For instance, most young people will prefer watching or reading football highlight than watching or reading interview of a state governor

- **Selective Perception**

No two individuals share same meaning for the same message. Okunna explains that people selectively perceive the media content the way they want to see it. Each individual reserves the right to determine what meaning particular information will make on him or her. Most times our previous experience and current disposition (needs, interests, moods etc) determine what meaning we make out of a mass media message. For instance, a man whose legs were amputated as a result of an accident will feel less concern for latest designer shoes in a mass media advertisement.

- **Selective Attention**

We are exposed to too many mass media messages or information daily from both the prints and electronic media, but our choice on which message or information to receive, is known as selective attention. And most times selective attention is as a result of already held interest or attitude.

- **Selective Retention**

Selective retention is rooted in the capacity of members of mass media audience to retain or discard mass media messages or information. Okenwa explains that no individual possesses the capacity to retain all the stimuli from the media that will amount to so much. The choice open to the individual will be to select those stimuli that reinforce his ego or those that are not at variance with his or her purpose for living.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Choose a popular programme on radio or television. Using the selective process, justify why you should spend time on this programme against others calling for your attention.

4.0   CONCLUSION

We will conclude with Sandman et al. (1976) explanations, quoted in Okunna (1999). The persuasive power of the mass media is neither as great as the alarmists warn us nor as little as the optimists assure us. The media are rarely able to convert their audience to an opposing viewpoint overnight but they can reinforce old attitudes, create brand new ones, and in time even achieve some change. Readers and viewers are active participant in this process, using the media for their own purposes and needs. This may protect us from specific influence attempts, but does not keep the media from creating the reality in which we live and to which we respond.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we took an overview of mass communication media audience; who they are and their specific characteristics as the primary target of all mass media massages. We further   review the dissonance theory to arrive at the selective process that describes peculiar edge of the audience over the mass media messages.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Mass media can never have a total conversion effect on the audience. Justify this statement with a review of the dissonance and individual difference theories.

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UNIT 5   DIFFERENT ERAS OF MASS COMMUNICATION THEORIES

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will take a vivid look at the different era of mass communication theories; as a guide to appreciating the effects of mass communication theories we will consider different eras of development of mass communication theories. That is the different stages of development of mass communication theories, and the impact of the media on social development of those eras.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to highlight and describe the different eras of mass communication theories.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Era of Mass Society Theory

The focus was based on the idea that mass media are corrupting influences that undermine the social order and that 'average' people are defenseless against influence by the media. Mass society was characterized by a group of powerful elites who manipulate the masses in spite of prevailing democratic structures.

Mass society theory was based on several key assumptions:

- Media are dangerous and powerful. In the 1920s and 1930s there was concern that media had to be controlled or eliminated to protect the existing way of life.
- Average people can be powerfully influenced by media. Ordinary people were not capable of defending themselves well against it.
- Significant negative consequences for individuals and for society could predictably occur once people were corrupted by media messages.
- Modern mass societies isolated ordinary people from the strong social, cultural, and religious institutions which would offer defense against powerful media messages.
- Social chaos will result from lack of social unity and order will ultimately be restored by totalitarian or autocratic leadership.
- Because mass media messages are designed for broad audiences, easy production and quick understanding, they by their nature exclude that which is complex, sophisticated or requires time, thought or concentration to understand. The culture is debased and civilization is "dumbed down.

While we can look at this list and see how it reflects the time and social conditions of the 1930s and 1940s, some of those assumptions ring pretty true today.

A good example of Mass Society theory is the Hypodermic Needle Theory or Magic Bullet Theory. Before World War I, there was no separate field of study on Communication, but knowledge about mass communication was accumulating. An outcome of World War I propaganda efforts, the Magic Bullet or Hypodermic Needle Theory, came into existence. It propounded the view that the mass media had a powerful influence on the mass audience and could deliberately alter or control peoples' behaviour. (Read more on Hypodermic Needle Theory in preceding units).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Media are dangerous and powerful. Discuss.

3.2   The Era of Scientific Perspective

Lazarsfeld (1941) explains that the Era of the Scientific Perspective was promoted by Halloween Eve – 1938 Docudrama – "War of the Worlds". Social scientists studied the W-O-W happening and, using sophisticated surveys, polling and other methods, said scientific studies were better than guessing.

The focus of this era was on limited effect on the audience. The Limited Effects Theory Media influence is affected by individual differences that include educational levels, religious affiliations, political affiliations, personal relationships. For example, the Two-step Slow Theory – Opinion leaders get media and translate for followers Timeframe – during and after World War II or 1945 to 1968. (Read more on Two-step flow theory in preceding units)

In the early 40"s, before the invention of television, **Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Goudet** conducted an American survey on mass campaigns. The study revealed that informal social relationships had played a part in modifying the manner in which individuals selected content from the media campaign. The study also indicated that ideas often flowed from the radio and newspapers to opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of society. Thus, informal social groups have some degree of influence on people and mould the way they select media content and act on it.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What prompted the scientific perspective theory?

3.3   The Era of Limited Effects Theory

The Era of the Limited Effects Theory and Attitude Change Theory related ideas of dissonance and selective processes.

- **Dissonance Theory**

The Dissonance Theory argues that when confronted by new or conflicting information, people experience a kind of mental discomfort, a dissonance. As a result, we reduce this dissonance through selective processes

- **Attitude Change Theory (Selective Processes)**

Selective Exposure (Attention): – the process by which people expose themselves to messages that are only consistent with their existing attitudes and beliefs.

Selective Retention – assumes that people remember best and longest those messages that are consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs.

 Selective Perception – predicts that people will interpret messages in a manner consistent with their preexisting attitudes and beliefs.

- **Reinforcement Theory**

The Reinforcement Theory argues that, instead of persuading or converting members of the audience, mass communication merely reinforces or strengthens existing attitudes and behaviour.

- **The Uses and Gratification Approach**

The Uses and Gratification Approach claimed that media do not do things to people, but that rather people do things with media

- **Agenda Setting**

The Agenda Setting Theory argues that media may not tell us what to think, but the media certainly tells us what to think about

- **Dependency Theory**

The Dependency Theory argues that:
  I.   the basis of media influence resides in the relationship between the larger social system, the media's role in that system and audience relationships to the media
  II. The degree of our dependence on media and their content is the 'key variable in understanding when and why media messages alter audience beliefs, feelings or behaviour.
  III. In our modern industrial society, we are increasingly dependent on media to understand the social world, to act meaningfully and effectively in society and to find fantasy and escape or diversion.
  IV. Our level of dependency is related to the number and centrality of the specific information delivery served by a medium and the degree of change and conflict present in our environment.

- **Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social Cognitive Theory argues that people learn through observation (imitation and identification)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

What is the most significant impact of the Limited Effects Theory?

3.4   The Era of Cultural Theory

- Symbolic Interactionism –

Symbolic Interactionism thinking argues that people give things meaning, and that meaning controls their behaviour

- **Social Construction**

Social Construction of Reality argues that people who share a culture also share 'an ongoing correspondence' of meaning. Things generally mean the same to me as they do to you.

- **Cultivation Analysis**

Cultivation Analysis argues that

1. TV cultivates or constructs a reality of the world that, although possibly inaccurate, becomes accepted simply because we as a culture believe it to be true.

2. TV is essentially and fundamentally different from other mass media. TV is the "central cultural arm" of US society. It is the culture's primary story teller.

3. The realities cultivated by TV are not necessarily specific attitudes and opinions but rather more basic assumptions about the 'facts of life'.

4. The major cultural function of television is to stabilize social patterns.

5. The observable, measurable contributions of television to the culture are relatively small.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Highlight and discuss achievements of the Cultivation Theory?

4.0   CONCLUSION

The study of communication and mass media has led to the formulation of many theories: structural and functional theories believe that social structures are real and function in ways that can be observed objectively; cognitive and behavioral theories tend to focus on psychology of individuals; interactionist theories view social life as a process of interaction; interpretive theories uncover the ways people actually understand their own experience; and critical theories are concerned with the conflict of interests in society and the way communication perpetuates domination of one group over another through different eras.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit review the different eras of mass communication theories; the era of mass society with it the mass media exerting powerful influence on the mass audience; The Era of the Scientific Perspective focuses on the media limited effect on the audience, because of the individual differences of the audience. During the Era of Limited Effects Theory the audience had choice of what they want and some prominent theories of this era include the Dissonance Theory, Attitude Change Theory, Reinforcement Theory, the Uses and Gratification Approach, Agenda Setting Theory, Dependency Theory and Social Cognitive Theory. The Era of Cultural Theory further promoted such views as symbolic interactionism, social construction and cultivation analysis.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What was Paul Lazarsfeld's view?
2. Which era of mass communication followed the scientific perspective? Describe.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lazarsfeld, Paul (1941). "Some Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research." Studies in Philosophy and Social Science

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MODULE 3:   Different Theories of Mass Communication

Unit 1   Normative Theories
Unit 2   Media and Culture Theories
Unit 3   Active Audience Theories
Unit 4   Common Sense Theories
Unit 5   Behavioural Theories of Mass Communication.

UNIT 1   NORMATIVE THEORIES (THEORIES OF THE PRESS)

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
        3.1 Authoritarian Media Theory
        3.2 Libertarian Media Theory
        3.3 Soviet Communist Media theory
        3.4 Social Responsibility Media Theory
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Normative theories describe the way an ideal media system should be controlled and operated by the government, authority, leader and public. These theories are basically different from other communication theories because normative theories of press are not providing any scientific explanations or predictions. These theories, otherwise known as the "Four Theories of the Press", came from many sources rather than a single source. In other words, both media practitioners, social critics and academics were involved the development of the normative theories.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this unit, you should be able to:

➤ Explain the origin and importance of the Normative Theories in mass communication study
➤ Describe the four basic Normative Theories
        1. Authoritarian Media Theory
        2. Libertarian Media Theory

    3. Soviet Communist Media theory
    4. Social Responsibility Media Theory
➢ Describe the contributions of these theories in mass media growth.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Overview of Normative Theory

These are theories that express how the mass media "ought to or can be expected to operate under a prevailing set of conditions and values". Each of these normative theories is linked to a particular form of political theory or some set of politico - economic situations. It seems as if every political system or a particular society has its own separate press theory which may eventually be close to the general press theories. Although the above mentioned link has been long established, these theories are most times more implicit (implied) than explicit and are not much coded.

The first major attempt at stating these theories of the press was the work done by three communication scholars - Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1955. This still remains the main source and point of reference for this kind of work. However, two other types of normative theories have been added to the original four divisions preferred by Siebert et al. This is in recognition of more recent developments in thought patterns. Even though the former four divisions (Authoritarian, Libertarian, Soviet-Communist and Social Responsibility Theories) are adequate for classifying media systems of any nation, the actual media systems are naturally characterized by alternative or even inconsistent philosophical principles.

Hence, the need to add two more theories (Democratic-Participant Media and Development Media Theories) to the original set, even if they do not correspond to complete media systems. This is also necessary because they have become part of the discussion of press theory and have also provided some of the principles for current media policy and practice.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the basic assumptions of the Normative Theories is that "the press 'always takes on the form and colouration of the social and political structures within which it operates".[2]

This is the postulation of Siebert et al. Their typology (refer pg145 & 46) - the Four Theories Typology - illustrates the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Soviet Communist and social Responsibility concepts of the press. It should be noted that "several generations of aspiring journalists and educators were influences by the approach of Siebert et al to media philosophies. The latest addition to the press theories are the: Democratic Participant Media Theory and the Development Media Theory adapted by Dennis McQuail in 1987. These bring to six, the total number of the Normative Theories of the media.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Why are the six theories of the press called Normative?
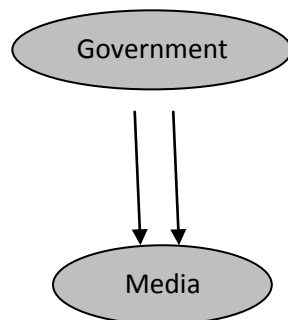
3.2   The Authoritarian Media Theory

This theory which was developed in the 16th and 17th century Europe (England) stemmed from the absolute power of the monarch. Here the state is actually the master. Those who control the government have the monopoly of the truth and of information approach. The mass media, in this set-up, private or public (government), work to protect the interest of the government in power.   The media are not to publish anything that, according to McQuail, is under censorship and those who do not obey the rules and regulations are subject to punishment.

The theory promotes a "top-down-flow" approach. The mass media, in this set-up, act as the servant of the government and are highly censored and dare not publish unfavourable reports against the government. The theory "justifies advance censorship and punishment from eternally set guidelines which . . . apply to political subject matter. This theory operates in pre-democratic societies, and dictatorial or repressor societies.

The "authoritarian" system controls the media through repressive press laws and decrees proscriptions, heavy taxation, subtle influence on the form and content of media organizations etc; The main principles of this theory can be summarized thus:

o   Media should avoid committing any offence against major or dominant, moral or political values.

o   Unacceptable attacks on authority, deviations from official policy or offences against moral codes should be criminal offences.

o   Journalists or other media professionals have no independence within their media organisation.

The exponents of this theory are **Hegel, Hobbes, and Machiavelli.** It is practised in Iran, Paraguay and to some extent Nigeria. Here the relationship between the media and government is the top-down approach.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

In the Authoritarian Theory, truth was any statement that benefited or supported the government. Discuss.

3.3   The Libertarian Media Theory

This theory originated in England in the 17th century and spread to America. It stemmed from "Enlightenment thought and natural rights". This theory was also informed by Milton's idea of the "Self-right process of the free market Place of ideas" This means that good ideas would outwit and outlive bad ones if all ideas were guaranteed free expression.

This is a simple theory which basically prescribes that an individual should be free to publish what he or she likes. This, thus, makes it an extension of other rights - the right to hold opinions and assemblies with other people freely. The underlying principles are very similar to those of the liberal democratic states. Here there is the supremacy of the individual who is free to search for the truth. The mass media are the servant of the people, regulates what the government does and ensures the sovereignty of the "popular will". A free press is, thus, seen "as an essential component of a free and rational society."[7] The ownership of the press is private and in the hands of the individuals. This theory popularized the press as "The Fourth Estate of the Realm".

The underlying principles are:

- "Attacks "on government, official party or political party should not be punishable.
- No media organisation should be compelled to publish anything.
- No restriction should be placed on any legal means of getting information for publication.
- There should be no restrictions on export (sending) or import (receiving) messages across national frontiers.

The exponents of this theory are: Milton, Adam Smith, Locke and Mill. It is currently practised in the United States, Japan and Germany. Here there is no defined relationship between the media and government.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

The Libertarian Theory advocates that people should be left free and given access to all types of ideas from which they should freely choose. Relate this statement to the present day demand for freedom of the press.
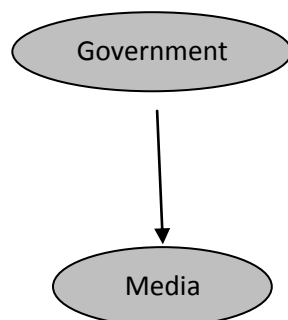
3.4   The Soviet Communist Media theory

The theory originated in the 20th century USSR and stemmed from the basic postulates of Marx and Lenin of Russia. It is a modification of the Authoritarian Theory. The purpose of the press under this system is to support the Marxist (socialist) system and ensure the sovereignty of the Proletariat (working class) through the Communist Party. The essence is to serve the people. The media, theoretically, is owned by the people (public) but then these media are controlled by the Communist Party. The media cannot criticize party objectives. Rather, they propagate them. Hence, the party is the strongman and the media function under it as an arm of the government.

The basic difference between the two theories however, is that the Soviet media are not subject to arbitrary and unnecessary interference; they were supposed to serve and are responsible to their publics (not the government). They express a diversity of interests rather than being monolithic (one-sided).

The principles of the theory can be summed as:

- Media should serve the interest of, and be in control of the working class.
- Media should not be privately owned.
- Media should perform the functions of: socialization, education, information, motivation and mobilization.
- Media should respond to the wishes and needs of their audiences.
- Society can use censorship and/or other legal means to present or punish, (after the event) anti-social publications.
- Media should present a complete and objective view of the society and the world according to Marxist Leninist principles.
- Media should support progressive movements at home and abroad.

The developers of the theory are: Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro and Gorbachev. It is practiced today in China, Cuba, North Korea. The relationship between the media and the government is top-down, but the media is responsible for regulating contents of their messages and to meet the wishes of the audience.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

What are the differences between the Authoritarian Theory and the Soviet Communist Media Theory?

3.5   Social Responsibility Media Theory

This theory arose in the mid 20th century in United States of America. It is an out-growth of the Libertarian tradition.   This media theory stemmed from the American commission on the "freedom of the press". This theory reconciles independence with obligation to the societies. It assumes that the media perform certain essential functions in the society especially in democratic policies hence; they should be under an obligation to fulfill these functions. Besides, they should provide a forum for diverse views. The media should follow the accepted standard for their work. Ownership and control of the media should be seen as a kind of stewardship, that is they should serve and promote the interest of the public. Hence, the press should be open to anyone who has something to say. The social responsibility of the press is more important than its freedom.

In this case, the control of the press is done by community opinions, some social bodies (through their code of ethics) and the media/press councils.

Ownership of the media here is private but there is threat of government interference to ensure public service. The main principles are:

- Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society.
- These obligations should be met by setting high professional standards in formativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
- Media should be self-regulating in carrying out their duties.
- Media should not publish anything that might cause violence or civil disorders or disparage any ethnic or religious minorities.
- The media should be pluralistic, that is, reflect the diversity of other societies, give access to various points of view and to the rights of reply.
- The society and public have a right to expect high standards of performance and hence, can intervene whenever there is need to secure the public good.

This theory is not known to be practised anywhere in the world today. America, however, tends towards it.

The above four Normative Theories preferred by Siebert et al. in 1956 present to us the development of the media as well as the contemporary state of the media.   The last two theories

(the Soviet Communist and Social Responsibility Theories) were derivations of the first two - (The Authoritarian and Libertarians Theories) respectively. So, these four theories are sometimes referred to as the 'Four-in-Two Press Theories".

However, another communication scholar has added two more press theories to the existing ones. His reasoning was a positive move towards the formation of new media institutions. These last two entries have not been fully legitimized and incorporated into media institutions, but then some of their submissions are found in some of the other theories mentioned. Here both the media and the government have defined roles expected of them, thus the relationship is horizontal.
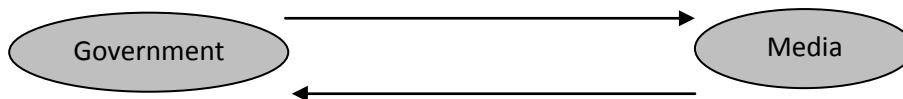
SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Self control entails that journalists should put in place certain measures that are designed to make them responsible in the discharge of their professional duties. Discuss?

3.6   The Democratic - Participant Media Theory

This theory insists that the bureaucratic bottlenecks as well as emphasis on professional control in the media system should be de-emphasized. It is associated with more liberal democracies. It is a reaction against the commercialization and monopolization of privately owned media. The theory shows disappointment with democratic political structures and politicians who have become alienated from their origins". The media institutions created according to this theory should be more closely related to social life and should be under control of the audiences. This will afford them (the audience) opportunity to have access to the media and participate in information dissemination according to their own needs, rather than, the interest of the controllers of the media. Hence, the basic principles of this theory are summarized as:

- Individuals and 'Minorities have right of access to the media (to communicate) and be served by the media according to their own needs.
- The organisation or content⁻4f media should not be subject to centralized political or state bureaucratic control.
- Media should exist primarily for their audiences, and not for professionals or the clients of media.
- Groups, local organisations and local communities should have their own media.
- Small scale, interactive, and participative forms are better than large scale, one-way, professionalized media.
- Media should support progressive movements home and abroad.
- Media has become socially too important to be left only in the hands of professionals.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Compare the Democratic - Participant Media Theory with the Four Theories of the Press.

3.7   The Development Media Theory

This theory tries to explain the normative behaviour of the press in the so-called "developing countries" or Third World Countries". This theory is not easy to identify in any particular country because it show levels of inconsistencies in economic and political conditions. This is because, even though the third world countries have all been lumped together as developing countries, some are a lot more developed than the others. For instance, countries like India, Brazil and Korea cannot be compared to places like Nigeria, Togo, and Cameroons etc. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that there are certain factors or characteristics of developing countries which are common to a host of them. These include:

- Insufficient or total absence of communication technology.
- Inadequate professional skills.
- Relative lack of traditional/cultural resource materials.
- Dependence on the developed countries for information technology, skills and cultural products for information dissemination.

Even though there is a great disparity among the conditions of these lopsided countries, their common principle still invariably bothers on development. Hence, the writers' insistence that commercial media should positively stimulate development and economic change to fall in line with the industrialized society. We also emphasize collective interests rather than individual or press freedoms. So, there should be democratic grassroots involvement in the media business.

The under-lying principles of this theory are:

- Media should accept and carry out developmental tasks in line with nationally established policy.
- Freedom of the media should be restricted according to economic priorities and developmental needs.
- Media should give priority in their content to the national culture and language.
- Media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries which are
- Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
- In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene, or restrict, media operations 5 and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

The Development Media Theory emerged as a reaction against the perceived inadequacies of earlier theories. Discuss.

4.0   CONCLUSION

The Normative Media Theory simply refer to the complex of social, political and philosophical principles about the relationship between media and society. The theory is concerned with what the media ought to be doing in society rather than what they actually do. In general, the dominant ideas about the obligations of mass media will be consistent with other values and arrangements in a given society. The press and other media reflect the "basic beliefs and assumptions that the society holds". In the western liberal tradition, this refers to matters such as freedom, equality before the law, social solidarity and cohesion, cultural diversity, active participation, and social responsibility.

5.0   SUMMARY

It may be necessary at this point to mention that both the terms press and media have been interchangeably used here. The press, however, refers to all the media of mass communication, particularly, the print media.

This unit has been able to provide answers to some questions regarding the operations of the world press. Some of these include: Why is the press the way it is? Why does it take on different forms and serve different purposes in different countries? Why do different societies or cultures have different principles and priorities? The answers lies in the assumptions of the four theories reviewed and summarized below.

SIEBERT – PETERSON – SCHRAMM TYPOLOGY: FOUR THOURIES TYPOLOGY
FOUR RATIONALES FOR THE MASS MEDIA

S/N	DIFFERENTIAL FACTORS	AUTHORITARIAN	LIBERTARIAN	SOVIET-COMMUNIST	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
1	When developed	In 16th & 17th C. Europe, widely adapted and still practiced in many places.	Adapted in England in late 16th C. and spread to America and the European continent	Early 20th C. in USSR, although some of the things were done by the Nazis and Italians	Mid 20th c. in US out of the Libertarian tradition.
2	Stemmed from	The philosophy of absolute power of the monarchy, his govt. or both	The enlightenment, thought and natural rights and the general philosophy of rationalism	The enlightenment, thought and natural rights and the general philosophy of rationalism	The writing of the commission of "freedom of the press" and other critics of the libertarian press
3	Chief purpose	To support and advance the policies of the govt. in power, & to service the state. Also, licensing, censorship & autocratic power laws.	To help find the truth, inform, interpret, entertain and to check the govt.; editorial self-determinism	To ensure the continuance of the Soviet socialist (Marxist) system, to serve the people but then support the dictatorship of the party.	To inform, entertain, educate, to help social progress, mainly to raise conflict to the plane of discussion
4	Who has the right to use the media	Whoever gets a royal patent or similar permission	Anyone who has the economic power to do so	Loyal and orthodox party members.	Everyone who has something to say.
5	How the media are controlled	Govt. patents, guilds, licensing, sometimes censorship	Media controlled by "self-righting process of truth" and by courts.	Media controlled by the communist party govt. apparatus	Community opinion consumer action, professional ethics.

6	What is forbidden	Criticizing of political machinery and officials in power	Defamation, Obscenity, Indecency, war-time seditions but nothing is forbidden prior to publications	Criticism of party objectives.	Various invasions of organized private rights and vital social interests.
7	Ownership	Private or public state of party.	Ownership is private	Owned by the people (public)	Private, unless the govt. has to take over to ensure public service.
8	Essential difference from others	Instrument for effecting govt. policy, though not necessarily or always government-owned.	Instrument of checking on the govt. and meeting other needs of the society.	Closely controlled media existing solely as an arm of state even though it is public owned.	Media must assume ligation of social responsibility; and they do not, someone must see that they do.
9	Exponents	Hobbes, Hegel, Machiavelli	Locke, Milton, Mill, Adam Smith	Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Gorbachev, Mao, Castro	From the Hutchins Commission
10	Countries where practised today.	Iran, Paraguay, Nigeria	United States, Japan, Germany	China, Cuba North Korea	One not known to be practiced anywhere in the world. Several countries tend towards it especially the U.S.

N.B: This typology is culled from both the Siebert et al and Edmund Lambeth works.

6.**0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Which of the six theories came into existence to conceptualize the relationship between the media and the political system in Third World Countries? Justify your claim.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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Publications

UNIT 2   MEDIA, CULTURE SOCIETY THEORIES

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
        3.1 Spiral of Silence Theory
        3.2 The Knowledge Gap Theory
        3.3 Media Dependency Theory
        3.4 Modernization Theory
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Mass media plays important role in social and cultural development of any society. The
collective impact of mass media contents on individual members of the society together defines
the development of society. However, understanding of mass media theories and their specific
impact on the societies and cultures will ensure optimal utilization of mass media for social and
cultural benefits of members of the society.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit exposes students to how mass communication media theories can be seen as crucial in
understanding contemporary societies and cultures. At the end of the study, students should be
able to identify theories that impact specifically on societies and cultures.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Spiral of Silence Theory

The focus of the spiral of silence theory is on how public opinion is formed. The theory explains why people often feel the need to conceal their opinions, preference or views etc, especially when they fall within the minority of a group.

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, German political scientist, proposed the theory as an attempt to explain in part how public opinion is formed. She wondered why the Germans supported wrong political positions that led to national defeat, humiliation and ruin in the 1930s-1940s.

The mass media plays an important role in the spiral effect process (Okenwa, 2002). The mass media play a powerful role here, in that they define the dominant views and add importance to it. The tendency of one to speak up and the other to be silent starts off a spiral process which increasingly establishes one opinion as the prevailing one. Because of the power of the media, the media can wield and canvass popular views so that individual views in opposition of the media become unpopular.

The spiral process may activate a downward spiral effect, thus building fears on minority opinion holder. The theory identifies two reasons why people remain silence;

- Fear of isolation when the group or public realizes that the individual has a divergent opinion from the status quo.
- Fear of reprisal or more extreme isolation, in the sense that voicing said opinion might lead to a negative consequence beyond that of mere isolation (loss of a job, relationship or status, etc.)

The theory has some weaknesses or at least points of contention. Okenwa observed that the problem of this theory is that it can as well canvass unpopular views through the use of specialized channels. Secondly the media can only silence those who have access to the media. Those who are independence of the media hold their views.

➢ **Conceptual Model**
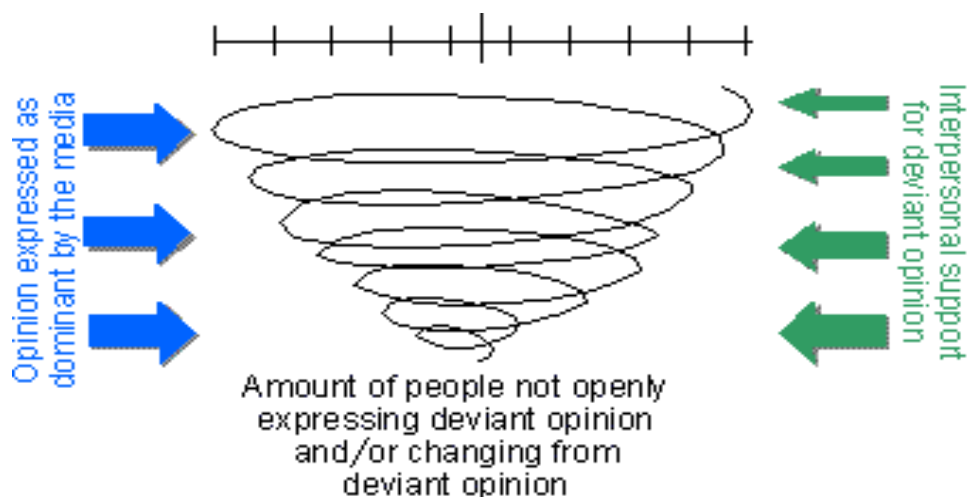
Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence

Source: Noelle-Neumann (1991).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Briefly describe Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann′s view of Spiral of Silence concept?

3.2   The Knowledge Gap Theory

The Knowledge Gap Theory focuses on how knowledge is distributed in the society and the mass media role in the distribution. The theory posits that as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, higher socioeconomic status segments tend to acquire this information faster than lower socioeconomic-status population segments so that the gap in knowledge between the two tends to increase rather than decrease.

Okenwa observed that, the understanding of this theory takes another angle. It assumes that the press and later, broadcasting, have added so greatly to the flow of public information that they will have helped to modify differences of knowledge resulting in inequalities of education and social position.

For instance, there is a great divide, even within a country, on the adoption and application of modern technologies. Some people may be more digitally aware of what is going on. The digital divide is presently the largest form of knowledge gap in our world today. This refers to how different nations have different limits to technology, so the more developed nations are going to have more access and knowledge to the latest information than the less developed.

Summary of basic principles of the theory are;

- People in a society exhibit great psychological diversity due to their psychological makeup, learned experiences, social relationships, and social category memberships.
- Despite these differences, people with more education tend to have better developed cognitive and communication skills, broader social spheres with more and more diverse social contacts, and a greater amount of stored information than their counterparts with less education.
- People with greater education also tend express interest in, and expose themselves to, a broader range of topics, including serious topics like public affairs, science, and health news.
- Therefore, as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease.

Okenwa further observed that the implication of this theory's assertion is that the media is only sources and custodians of knowledge. But there are other sources of knowledge apart from the media such as gathered from research works, interactions, travels, intuition and other personal experiences. Thus, it implies that one who is not proximal to the media will only be ignorant of media knowledge.

Phillip J. Tichenor, then Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, George A. Donohue, Professor of Sociology, and Clarice, N. Olien, Instructor in Sociology – three University of Minnesota researchers – first proposed the knowledge gap hypothesis in 1970.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe the basic principles of Knowledge Gap Theory?

3.3   Media Dependency Theory

The Media Dependency Theory posits that the more a person depends on the mass media for self fulfillment, the more important the media will be to that person, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person. According to Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976), three media needs determine how important media is to a person at any given moment:

- The need to understand one's social world (surveillance)
- The need to act meaningfully and effectively in that world (social utility)
- The need to escape from that world when tensions are high (fantasy-escape)

In fact, the Media Dependency Theory states two specific conditions under which people's media needs, and consequently people's dependency on media and the potential for media effects, are heightened.

- When the number of media and centrality of media functions in a society are high, e.g., as a tool for information dissemination, entertainment and escape etc.

- When a society is undergoing social change and conflict. When there is a war or large-scale public protests like the January, 2012 Nigeria Labour Congress protest, a national emergency like the Dana plane crash of June 2012 or terrorist attacks.

However, Baran and Davis identify four primary criticisms of dependency theory:

- Variability in micro level and macro level measurement makes between-study comparability problematic.
- The theory is often difficult to empirically verify.
- The meaning and power of dependency is sometimes unclear.
- The Dependency Theory lacks power in explaining long-term effects.

The Dependency Theory was originally proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976).
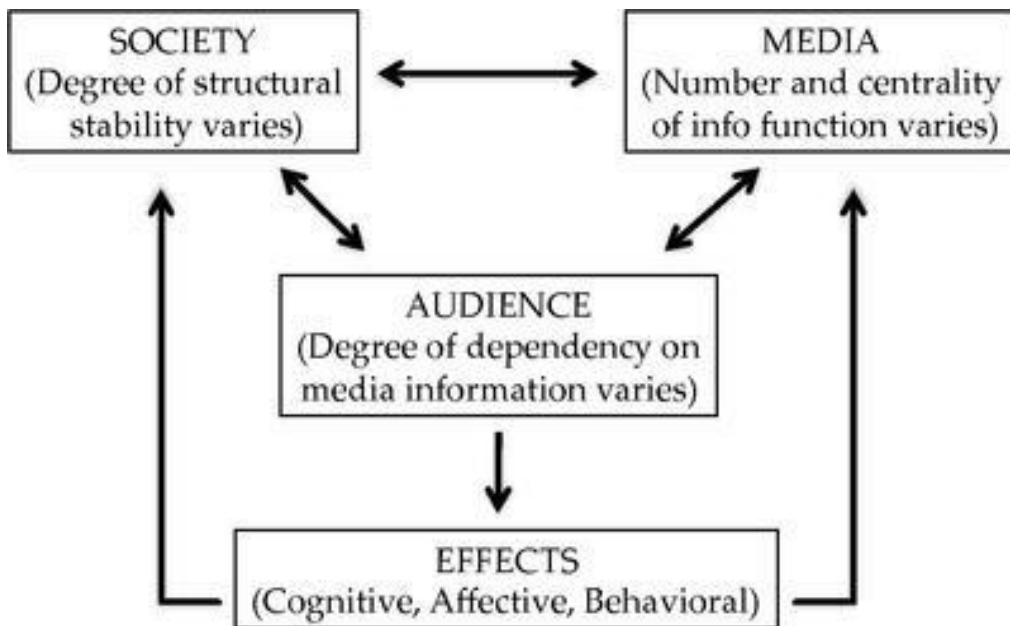
Ball-Rokeach & Defleur's (1976) MSDT Conceptual Model.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Highlight and discuss the three media needs determine how important media is to a person at any given moment?

3.4   Modernization Theory

The Modernization Theory focuses on the effects of the modernization process on the societies or human communication. The theory explains the changing ways of communication and media use in traditional and (post)modern societies. It is an attempt to identify the social variables which contribute to social progress and development of societies, and seeks to explain the process of social evolution.

The Modernization Theory has evolved in three waves:

According to McQuail (2000), the first wave of modernization theory (1950s to 1960s) produced three variants:

1. Economic development: mass media promote the global diffusion of many technical and social innovations that are essential to modernization (Rogers, 1962). See Diffusion of Innovations theory.
2. Literacy and cultural development: mass media can teach literacy and other essential skills and techniques. They encourage a 'state of mind' favourable to modernity, e.g. the imagination of an alternative way of life beyond the traditional way.
3. National identity development: mass media could support national identities in new nations (colonies) and support attention to democratic policies (elections).

Schiller (1976), the second wave of modernization theory is a part of the critical theory that was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. It does not support but criticize the influence of Western cultural and economic imperialism or dominance.

Griddens (1991), the third wave of modernization theory rising in the 1990s is the theory of late-, high- or post modernity. It tries to be more neutral, being not in favour or against Western modernization. It showed that modern society is characterized by time-space distantiation and disembedding mechanisms. Traditional society is based on direct interaction between people living close to each other. Modern societies stretch further and further across space and time using mass media and interactive media.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Highlight and describe the three stages of modernization theory development?

4.0   CONCLUSION

Every society depends on mass media to full certain obligation to its people, while the people also depend on the mass media to fulfill some of her obligation to the society. The attitude of the people to the media and the people's capacity to adequately perceive media stimuli will to a large extent determine the effects and transformation impact of the media at both the individual, societal and cultural levels.

Review of media, culture and society theories therefore is crucial for better understanding of the effect of mass communication media on the societies and cultures. For instance, Okenwa (2002) observes that the Knowledge Gap Theory counts so much on closeness to the media in determining the knowledge level of society members. Here the emphasis is no longer on the power of the media alone but also on the distance between the media and the individual.

According to him, the consequence of mass media output in our society is the change in people's beliefs, and behaviours. Some are positive while some others quite negative. That is to say that the mass media produce social and cultural effects.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit has examined effects of four specific mass communication theories on individuals, societies and cultures. The spiral of silence theory focuses on how public opinion is formed. The Knowledge Gap Theory focuses on how knowledge is distributed in the society and the mass media role in the distribution. On another hand, the Media Dependency Theory posits that the more a person depends on the mass media for self fulfillment, the more important the media will be to that person, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person. Lastly, the Modernization Theory attempts to identify the social variables which contribute to social progress and development of societies, and seeks to explain the process of social evolution.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The mass communication media can wield and canvass popular views so that individual views in opposition of the media become unpopular. Relate this statement to a theory and justify is with example

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UNIT 3   AUDIENCE THEORIES

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
        3.1 Uses and Gratification Theory
        3.2 Diffusion of Innovations Theory
        3.3 Cultivation Theory
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

All mass communication media contents must be target at specific audience to maximize the media effects. Mass media contents must attract an audience to adjudged effective. The media audience cannot be ignored in the communication process. Most media producers work with an established audience profile. TV scheduling is based upon audience and viewing habits (e.g. women at home in daytime, programmes directed at them). Being a successful media producer involves either finding a missing audience that no one else has managed to target or by targeting your media contents to effects behaviours and actions of new audience.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should understand why uses and gratification theory; diffusion of innovation theory; and cultivation theory are classified as audience effects theories.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

The focus of this theory is on media use. Okunna (1999) observed that the functional use of mass communication is what the Uses and Gratification Theory explains. The Uses and Gratification Theory is also called Functional Theory. A good illustration of this theory is the functional use of television for entertainment by television audience members. The needs of viewers to solve or forget problems and reduce tension have always been strong motivation for watching television entertainment (Compesi, 1980; Hotsetter and Buss, 1981).

Thus, the Uses and Gratification Theory validates the assumption that audience members actively seek out the mass media to satisfy individual needs. According to the theory, media consumers have a free will to decide how they will use the media and how it will affect them. Blumler and Katz (1974) believe that there is not merely one way that the populace uses media. Instead, they believe there are as many reasons for using the media, as there are media users. Blumler and Katz values are clearly seen by the fact that they believe that media consumers can choose the influence media has on them as well as the idea that users choose media alternatives merely as a means to an end.

The Uses and Gratification Theory can be seen in cases such as personal music selection. We select music not only to fit a particular mood but also in attempts to show empowerment or other socially conscience motives. There are many different types of music and we choose from them to fulfill a particular need.

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch summaries the theory in 5 component models:

- "The audience is conceived as active."
- "In the mass communication process much initiative in linking gratification and media choice lies with the audience member."
- "The media compete with other sources of satisfaction."
- "Methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves."
- "Value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms."

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch developed the Uses and Gratifications Model to better study how and why people were using media for personal satisfaction

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What are the three basic ideas on which the Uses and Gratification Theory was founded?

3.2 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The Diffusion of Innovation (Multiple Step Flow Theory) explains how ideas are spread. According to Rogers (1996), diffusion refers to "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. An Innovation is an idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. The diffusion of innovations involves both mass media and interpersonal communication channels

Communication channels such as interpersonal communication or mass communication are very active in spreading information on an innovation and also influencing people to adopt the innovation. Greg (2003), in his review of Rogers book 'Diffusion of Innovation', observed that successful efforts to diffuse an innovation depend on characteristics of the situation. To eliminate a deficit of awareness of an innovation, mass media channels are most appropriate. To change prevailing attitudes about an innovation, it is best to persuade opinion leaders.

According to Rogers, opinion leaders also influence the adoption of innovations. Opinion leaders are individuals who provide advice and information about an innovation to members of the social. These individuals tend to support the norms of the social structure and serve as a model for others. Opinion leaders are at the center of the communication network and reach a large number of people via the interconnected flow of information.

He further stated that the mass media's most powerful effect on diffusion is that it spreads knowledge of innovations to a large audience rapidly. It can even lead to changes in weakly held attitudes. But strong interpersonal ties are usually more effective in the formation and change of strongly held attitudes. Research has shown that firm attitudes are developed through communication exchanges about the innovation with peers and opinion leaders. These channels are more trusted and have greater effectiveness in dealing with resistance or apathy on the part of the communicatee.

Rogers further summarises members of the social system innovative decision as a five step process that include;

1. Knowledge – person becomes aware of an innovation and has some idea of how it functions,
2. Persuasion – person forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the innovation,
3. Decision – person engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation,
4. Implementation – person puts an innovation into use,
5. Confirmation – person evaluates the results of an innovation-decision already made

Everett Rogers, a professor of rural sociology, popularized the theory in his 1962 book *Diffusion of Innovations*

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

In the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, when does interpersonal communication play a greater role?

3.3 Cultivation Theory

The Cultivation Theory explains how television shapes concepts of social reality. The assumption here is that television shapes people's view of social reality. The theory posits that the more people are exposed to television, the more their perception of reality influence to conform to that spread by television.

Okenwa (2002) explains this theory as propounded by Gerbner, Gross, Signarelli and Morgan. She asserts that the mass media especially television, exerts a tremendous influence by altering individuals perception of reality. Gerbner et al who hold that television, among modern media, has acquired such a central place in daily life put it classically that 'the television set has become a key member of the family, the one who tells most of the stories most of the time'.

It assumes that the more time people spend watching television, the more their world views will be like those spread by the television. Today television has so altered our world view that most of our cultures and traditional beliefs are being exchange with western culture. For instance, our traditional dressing is almost out-dated for western styles. Families now feel more proud and comfortable communicating in foreign language with little or no interest in their mother tongue language.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

How did the Cultivation Theory get its start? Who is the pioneer in this field?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Audiences will always seek (if not demand) the best possible experience when using the media for information or pleasure. The human brain feeds off 'experience', sight, sound, emotion and a host of intellectual and sensory organs that need to be satisfied And that is ensuring that the right message is delivered to the right audience and the objectives of the message are received and meet with the audience's expectations. Until that science is perfected the media in all its incarnations will continue to experiment with technologies both old and new to satisfy its audience.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit reviews audience theories of mass communication. It offers the students guides to key audience theories. Firstly, Uses and Gratification Theory (or Functional Theory) of mass communication media: the theory assumes that audience members actively seek out the mass media to satisfy individual needs. On another hand, the Diffusion of Innovation (or Multiple Step Flow) Theory explains how ideas are spread; the theorist argues that to change prevailing attitudes about an innovation, it is best to persuade opinion leaders. Lastly, the Cultivation Theory explains how television shapes concepts of social reality. The theory posits that the more people are exposed to television, the more their perception of reality influence to conform to that spread by television.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. From what perspective does the U&G Theory examine media behavior? Is this different from the other theories we have covered? In what way?

2. What does the Cultivation Theory suggest about perceptions of cultural norms?

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UNIT 4   SENSE THEORIES

1.0   INTRODUCTION

A fundamental question about the effectiveness of a medium to impact the audience demand an understanding of why people use a medium and the richness of its contents: That is, what effects a medium serve the audience members? Understanding the effectiveness of a mass communication medium to affect people's behaviour, actions and attitudes demands an understanding of related theories.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you will be able to identify and explain:
- The Play Theory
- The Reflective Projective
- The Medium Theory
- And the Media Richness Theory

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Play Theory

The Play Theory focuses on division of man's activities. The basic assumption of the theory is that people are divided into work and play. Work involves serious activities, (reality and production) while play are not too serious activities like (relation and entertainment).

William Stephenson, a British psychologist, in proposing this theory, explains that people use mass communication more as play than as work, more for pleasure and entertainment than for information and improvement. In 1967, Stephenson published the Play Theory of Mass Communication, in which he suggest that the most significant function of mass communication is to facilitate 'subjective play', to give people pleasure, an interlude from the pressing matters that concern them most of the time. He sees mass communication as serving two functions. The first is to provide play, to influence customs, normalize manners, give people something in common to talk about, so as to foster mutual socialization. The second function is to help shake up society.

The theory, however, observed the high tendency of injecting entertainment into propaganda to sustain audience interest and attention where the objective is mainly propaganda. For instance, increasing numbers of both television viewers and newspaper readers are interested in entertainment programmes like movies, sports, reality shows.

Ever imagine the huge amount of both time and money people spent in watching the Big Brother Africa reality show and other reality shows on Nigeria televisions. The phenomenal increase in the subscription of pay television services in Nigeria buttresses people preference for entertainment and self satisfaction.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

People use the media more for play than for work. Discuss

3.2 Reflective Projective Theory

The Reflective Projective Theory view mass media as of the 'mirror' of the society. Lee Loevinger, a former US Federal Communication Commission (FCC) in head proposing the, theory explains that mass media 'mirror' society but the mirror they present is an ambiguous one. The mass media reflect society as an organized group, while the audience members project their own individual reflections into the images presented.

For instance, People get different satisfactions from the same programme watched on television as a result of their attitude, moods, experience, sex and ethnic difference, thus, people tend to identify more with their idealised TV characters. Thus, most people buy movies because of the movie characters involved. In Nigeria this has led to recycling of same characters over and over.

Loevinger's 'Reflective Projective Theory of mass communication explains the media tendency to portray mainstream values and tradition as all serving and self redeeming. Okenwa (2002) observes that this theory is saying that the media can have ability to form or make somebody into nobody and nobody into somebody. The strength of this theory lies in the ability of the media to show and highlight issues. For the media to be able to accomplish this, the media have to continue pounding or hitting until they achieve their aim. The media raise issues above the market level.

A good example is terrorism. Prior to the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in USA on September 11, 2001, the word 'terrorism and Osama Bin Laden' were only mentioned within top political hierarchies. Today, concentrated media publicity and report on terrorism has made terrorism one of most recurring words in virtually every part of the world.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe Loevinger's 'Reflective Projective Theory of mass communication.

3.3 Medium Theory

The Medium Theory focuses on the characteristics of each medium (or of each type of medium) that make it physically, socially, and psychologically different from other media. The Medium Theory also examines how communications through a particular medium or type of medium compare and contrast with face-to-face interaction. Medium theory analyzes differences among communication environments.

The theory originated from Marshal McLuhan's 'the medium is the message' postulation. McLuhan (1964) challenged conventional definitions when he claimed that the medium is the message. With this claim, he stressed how channels differ, not only in terms of their content, but also in regard to how they awaken and alter thoughts and senses. He distinguished media by the cognitive processes each required. McLuhan popularized the idea that channels are a dominant force that must be understood to know how the media influence society and culture.

He claims that channels of communication are primary causes of cultural change. According to him, Family life, the workplace, schools, health care, friendship, religion, recreation, politics are all touched by communication technology. McLuhan viewed every new form of media *innovation* to be an extension of some human faculty. He argued that the media are not simply channels for transmitting information between two or more environments, but are themselves distinct social-psychological settings or environments that encourage certain types of interaction and discourage others (→ Media) (Ellis, 2009).

Thus, the medium theory examines the relationship between human senses that are required to use a medium and the structure of the medium itself. The emphasis is not on the contents of the media (e.g., sex, violence, entertainment), but on the structure of media and how these alter

thinking and social organization. Here the channel is seen as key in understanding how mass communication influences at both the individual, social, and cultural levels.

For instance, on the individual level, it is a different experience and different senses are activated if an employer fires an employee by sending him or her letter as opposed to speaking to him or her face-to-face, even if the content of each message is the same. Again, a computer-mediated interpersonal relationship has medium influences that affect the relationship and differentiate it from a face-to-face relationship.

On the social level, medium theories note how changing patterns of social interaction attributable to medium differences (e.g., Internet, cell phones, Blackberries) change social structure in general. Thus, the Internet has altered the speed, storage, and availability of information and created an information class including changed patterns of reading. Facebook has influenced social capital, or the resources accumulated through the relationships among people, and allows for the formation of new social networks.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Marshal McLuhan's assertions that 'the medium is the message' led the way for globalization. Discuss.

3.4   Media Richness Theory

The Media Richness Theory is based on the Contingency Theory and Information Processing Theory (Galbraith, 1977). First proponents of the theory were made by Daft and Lengel (1984). The theory posits that the effectiveness of communication message is based on the effectiveness of mass communication media used to convey the message. The richer the media, the nearer the top of the continuum:

The first assumption of this theory is that organizations process information to reduce uncertainty and equivocality (Daft and Lengel, 1986). Uncertainty is defined by Galbraith (1977) as "the difference between the amount of information required to perform the task and the amount of information already possessed by the organization." Equivocality is defined as the ambiguity of the task, caused by conflicting interpretations about a group situation or environment. Therefore, when equivocality is high, an individual does not know what questions to ask and when uncertainty is high the group knows the question but lacks the necessary information. In conclusion, as information increases, uncertainty and equivocality decrease.

The second assumption of this theory is commonly used media in organizations works better for certain tasks than others. Specifically, Daft and Lengel (1984) concluded that written media was preferred for unequivocal messages while face-to-face media were preferred for messages containing equivocality.

Daft, Lengel, and Trevino (1987) therefore, present a media richness hierarchy which incorporates four media classifications; face-to-face, telephone, addressed documents, and unaddressed documents. The richness of each media is based on four criteria; feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus. The richest communication medium is face-to-face meetings followed by telephone, e- mail, and memos and letters (Rice and Shook 1990).

Hierarchy of Media Richness/Source: Daft, Lengel, and Trevino (1987) (http://istheory.byu.edu/wiki/Media_richness_theory)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

In the Media Richness Theory, the richer the media, the nearer the top of the continuum: Justify this statement using the Hierarchy of Media Richness Diagram.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Media use is one feature that affects every audience members who are the consumer of media content. It is not only that people use the media, but why they use it and the effect of the use their individual and collective lives. People can use the media for play or for serious work; as a mirror to project their image or reflect their actions; or relies on the dominant force of the medium in

guiding communication. Still others depend on the effectiveness of the media to communicate effectively.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit review four related theories of mass communication The Play Theory assumes that people use the mass media more for fun (Play) than they use it for serious business (Work). The Reflective Projective Theory view mass media as the 'mirror' of the society. The mass media reflect society as an organized group, while the audience members project their own individual reflections into the images presented.

In Medium Theory, McLuhan challenged conventional definitions when he claimed that the medium is the message. The theory popularized the idea that channels are a dominant force that must be understood to know how the media influence society and culture. The Media Richness theory further, posits that the effectiveness of communication message is based on the effectiveness of mass communication media used to convey the message, thus, the richer the media, the nearer the top of the continuum.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The effectiveness of communication message is based on the effectiveness of mass communication media used to convey the message. Discuss this assertion.

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UNIT 5   BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Objectives
3.0 Main Content
        3.1 Cognitive Dissonance Theory
        3.2 Social Identity theory
        3.3 Social Support Theory
        3.4 Social Presence Theory
4.0 Conclusion
5.0 Summary
6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Mass media communication is something we are all affected by in one way, or another. Directly, or indirectly, information transmitted by today's communication mediums shape and directs a society's expectations and behaviours. The impacts most of mass communication theories exert distinct effect on us as individuals, and as a social group. The behavioural theories of mass communication therefore examines how repeated exposure to the media changes human behaviours and actions.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

• Explain the Cognitive Dissonance Theory
• Describe the Social Identity Theory
• Discuss the Social Support Theory
• Explain Social Presence Theory

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The Cognitive Dissonance Theory explains the inter-relationships among competing cognitions (beliefs, opinion, attitudes, values and ideas). It applies to all situations involving attitude formation or change, but more relevant in decision making and problem solving. The theory states that there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (i.e., beliefs, opinions). Whenever inconsistency occurs between an individual's attitudes or behaviour (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behaviour

The number of dissonant beliefs, and the importance attached to each belief are two factors that affect the strength of the dissonance. And three ways to eliminate dissonance includes;

- Reducing the importance of the dissonant beliefs,
- Adding more consonant beliefs that outweigh the dissonant beliefs,
- Changing the dissonant beliefs so that they are no longer inconsistent.

For example, if I know five bad things and seven good things about my friend Gbenga, I should experience more dissonance than if I know one bad thing and seven good things. In this example much more dissonance would exist when I had all four of the dissonant thoughts than when I only had one of these cognitions. It therefore holds that the more inconsistent thoughts I have, the more dissonance I should experience.

 Thus, dissonance is frequent in situations where an individual must choose between two incompatible beliefs or actions. However, the highest dissonance is created when the two alternatives are equally attractive. Furthermore, attitude change is more likely in the direction of less incentive since this result in lower dissonance. In this respect, the Dissonance Theory is contradictory to most behavioural theories which would predict greater attitude change with increased incentive (i.e., reinforcement).

 The basic principles of this theory are summarized as:

- Dissonance results when an individual must choose between attitudes and behaviour that are contradictory.
- Dissonance can be eliminated by reducing the importance of the conflicting beliefs, acquiring new beliefs that change the balance, or removing the conflicting attitude or behavior.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Highlight and describe the three ways to eliminate dissonance.

3.2   Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Theory focuses on the cognitive and motivational basis of intergroup differentiation. The theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s and 80s. The theory was originally developed to explain the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination.

Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership(s). Tajfel proposed that the groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to were an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world.

Tajfel argued that people build their own identities from their group memberships. For example, think of each of the groups you belong to: say at work, or within your family. Part of who you are is probably defined by these groups. Simply, the nature of your group memberships defines your identity.

As our group membership forms our identity, it is only natural for us to want to be part of groups that are both high status and have a positive image. Crucially though, high status groups only have that high status when compared to other groups. In other words: knowing your group is superior requires having a worse group to look down upon.

Posten (1998) holds that without self esteem and the positive aspects that it brings into a person's life, a person feels alone and this isolation causes deep anxiety. Thus, sports can work to increase self-esteem for a person by association and affiliation. By wearing the teams' colors, attending every game, and knowing all the players' names, positions and stats, a fans begin to feel as if they are an integral part of the team. Therefore, when a team does well, they feel high self esteem in connection with their team's victory. They connect with the team as if they were playing the game themselves.

In order to increase our self-image, we enhance the status of the group to which we belong. For example, "Chelsea is the best football club in the world!" We can also increase our self-image by discriminating and holding prejudiced views against the out group (the group we don't belong to). For example, the "Arsenal, the French, Barcelona FC etc. are a bunch of losers!"

The central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, thus enhancing their self-image.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership, Discuss?

3.3   Social Presence Theory

The Social Presence Theory focuses on awareness of an interaction partner. The theory measures communication media based on the degree of awareness of the other person in a communication interaction. In most cases, the higher the social presence level, the better the understanding of both speaker and message. The level is altered with the removal or addition of each communication modality, such as speech, non-verbal cues, and immediacy of exchange or feedback.

Social presence is a concept that has its base in the telecommunications literature. Gunawardena & Zittle, (1997), John Short, Ederyn Williams, and Bruce Christie in 1976 developed social presence theory as a model for analyzing the social - psychological dimensions of mediated communication from a "social cues perspective". They defined social presence as "the degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships" (Short, et al., 1976).

Short et al., explain that the Social Presence Theory is the groundwork for many theories on new medium effects. The idea is that a medium's social effects are principally caused by the degree of social presence which it affords to its users. By social presence is meant a communicator's sense of awareness of the presence of an interaction partner. This is important for the process by which man comes to know and think about other persons, their characteristics, qualities and inner states. Thus increased presence leads to a better person perception.

They argue that the closer we get to replicating the experience of face-to-face interaction (i.e. the "richer" the medium), the better the technology is at conveying social presence, and therefore the more effective the communication will be between the partners. Gunawardena (1995) took Short, et al.'s (1976) work a step further by refining the definition of social presence as "the degree to which a person is perceived as a "real person" in mediated communication" and asserted that social presence can be "cultured" among participants in teleconferences and computer-mediated communication.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Highlight and describe Short, et al model of social presence.

3.4   Social Support Theory

The Social Support Theory focuses on the exchange of assistance through social relationships. Social support is a multi-faceted concept that has been difficult to conceptualize, define and measure. Although this concept has been extensively studied, there is little agreement among theoreticians and researchers as to its theoretical and operational definition. As a result, the

concept remains fuzzy and almost anything that infers a social interaction may be considered social support.

Cassel (1976) explains that social networks are closely related to social support. Nevertheless, these terms are no theories per se. Social Support and Social Networks are concepts that describe the structure, processes and functions of social relationships. Social networks can be seen as the web of social relationships that surround individuals.

The Social Support Theory hypothesizes that social support can serve to protect individuals against the negative effects of stressors (e.g. HIV infection), such as discrimination, by leading them to interpret stressful occasions less negatively. Identification of the importance of networks or training of people in networks is applications of the approach of social support.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Highlight and describe the relationship between Social Support and Social Network.

4.0   CONCLUSION

The effect of mass media communication on the audience members is not only in matters of public opinion on political issues but in matters of personal lifestyles and tastes, consumer behaviour, the sensibilities and dispositions of children, and possible inducements to violence. Feelings regarding these matters vary greatly. Some people construe the overall effects of mass communication as generally harmless to both young and old. But sociologists and communicators believe mass communication influence attitudes and behaviour only insofar as the person is exposed to it contents.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit review behavioural theories of mass communication and related audience effects of the theories. While the Cognitive Dissonance Theory explains the relationships among competing cognitions (beliefs, opinion, attitudes, values and ideas), Social Identity Theory explains that a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership. Thus for a person to increase his self-image he must enhance the status of the group to which he belong. On another hand, the Social Presence Theory measures communication media based on the degree of awareness of the other person in a communication interaction, while the Social Support Theory focuses on the exchange of assistance through social relationships.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Mass communication media shape and direct a society's expectations and behaviours. Highlight and describe how these statement apply to each of the four theories discussed above.

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List-of-Mass-Communication-Theories, - www.scribd.com

MODULE 4:   **Effect Theories of Mass Communication**
        Unit 1   Limited Effects Theory
        Unit 2   Powerful Media Effects Theories
        Unit 3   Media Effects Theories
        Unit 4   Media Violence Theories

UNIT 1   LIMITED EFFECTS THEORIES

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   The Social Category Theory
        3.2   Social Relationship Theory
        3.3   Two Step Flow Theory
        3.4   Social Cognitive Theory
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Reading

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The Limited Effects Theories are mass communication theories which view the influence of mass media message on individuals as limited or even trivial.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to discuss:

- The Social Category Theory
- Social Relationship Theory
- Two Step Flow Theory
- Social Cognitive Theory.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Social Category Theory

The Social Category Theory focuses on reaction against the powerful effects of the media. Okenwa (200) observes that the social category theory exists as reaction against the powerful effect of the media. It assumes that people of the same social category will response to the mass communication message in more or less uniform ways.

Bittner (1989) quoted in Okunna (1999) explains that in social categories theory, the audience is made up of different sub-group, each constituting a 'mass within a mass'. Meaning that mass communication audiences are differentiated according to either their age, gender, religious and ethnic affiliation, income level etc.

Okunna explains that members of each sub-group belong to a social category, and are likely to have similar interests and attitudes which differ from those of members of other social category, and which determine which mass media they use and how they use them… Within each category, members have had commonly shared experiences and therefore have similar social norms, attitudes and values.

For instance, it has been observed that men read newspapers than women. Confirming this Wilbur Schramm quoted in Okunna (1999) explains that men read more newspapers, and read to greater length and greater depth than women, and that men are more likely to use newspapers for information than entertainment, when compared with women.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Social category theory exists as reaction against the powerful effect of the media, Discuss?

3.1   Social Relationship Theory

The Social Relationship Theory assumes that people's reaction to mass media messages is modified by their informal social relationships with significant others – relations, friends, social groups etc.

Okunna observes that another factor which is important in understanding the effects of mass communication on the audience is the interaction between people in a society. This is explained in the social relationships theory of mass media effects, which is closely related to the Social Categories Theory. The emphasis in the social relationships theory is on the interaction of members of social categories, that is, the relationships between them. In these social relationships or interaction, interpersonal communication in face-to-face situations is of paramount importance. During this face-to-face communication, members of a group are able to influence one another, and this can help to determine the effect of mass media messages of the people.

For instance during election or other important issues of public opinion, individuals decisions and actions (e.g. voting) may be influenced by decisions of family or other informal social relationship the person belong to.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Interpersonal communication in face to face situations is of paramount importance in the Social Relationship Theory. Discuss?

3.2   Two-Step Flow Theory

The Two-Step Flow Theory focuses on the influence of media messages. This theory asserts that information from the media moves in two distinct stages. First, individuals (opinion leaders) who pay close attention to the mass media and its messages receive the information. Opinion leaders pass on their own interpretations in addition to the actual media content.

The term personal influence 'was coined to refer to the process intervening between the media's direct message and the audience's ultimate reaction to that message. Opinion leaders are quite influential in getting people to change their attitudes and behaviors and are quite similar to those they influence.

The Two-step Flow Theory has improved our understanding of how the mass media influence decision making. The theory refined the ability to predict the influence of media messages on audience behavior, and it helped explain why certain media campaigns may have failed to alter audience attitudes an behaviour. The two-step flow theory gave way to the multi-step flow theory of mass communication or diffusion of innovation theory.
.
 The theory was first introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet in 'The People's Choice', a 1944 study focused on the process of decision-making during a presidential election campaign in the USA. These researchers expected to find empirical support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions. They were surprised to discover, however, that informal, personal contacts were mentioned far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as sources of influence on voting behavior. Armed with these data, Katz and Lazarsfeld developed the two-step flow theory of mass communication.

Two-step flow model
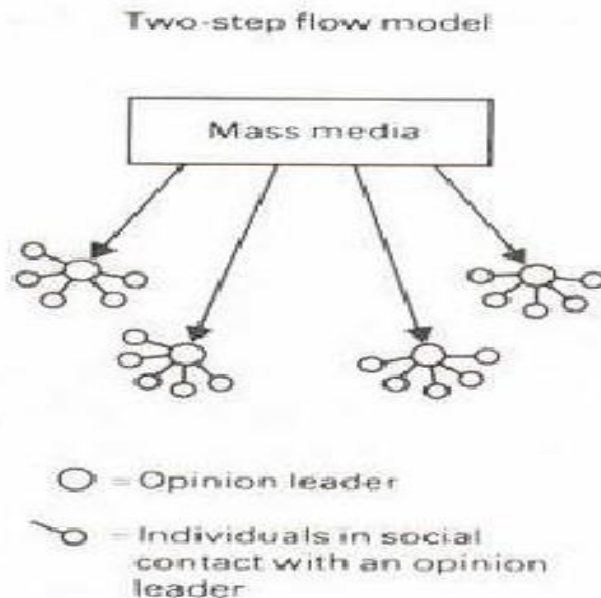
SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

What are the distinguishing characteristics of opinion leaders?
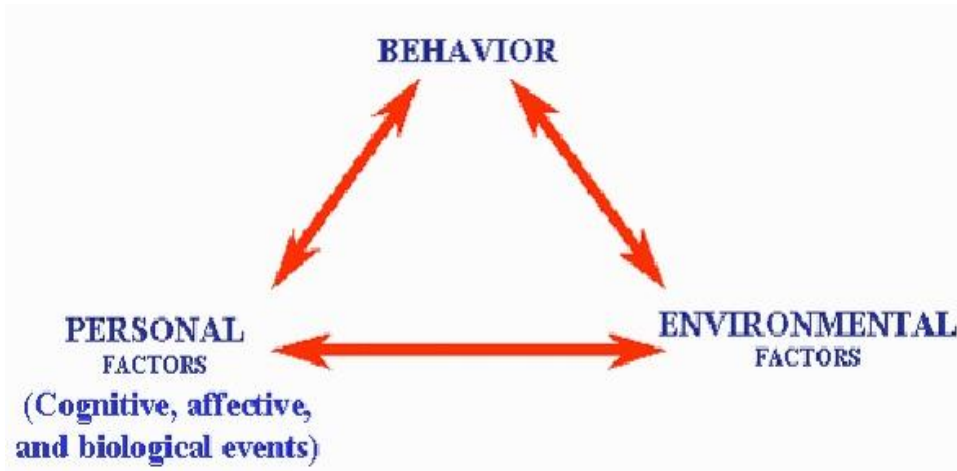
3.3   Social Cognitive Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory focuses on the explanation of behavioural patterns. The theory explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns, while also providing the basis for intervention strategies (Bandura, 1997). Evaluating behavioural change depends on three factors; environment, people and behavior. It provides a framework for designing, implementing and evaluating programs.

Environment refers to the factors that can affect a person's behavior. There are social and physical environments. Social environment include family members, friends and colleagues. Physical environment is the size of a room, the ambient temperature or the availability of certain foods. Environment and situation provide the framework for understanding behavior (Parraga, 1990).

The situation refers to the cognitive or mental representations of the environment that may affect a person's behavior. The situation is a person's perception of the lace, time, physical features and activity (Glanz et al, 2002). The three factors environment, people and behaviour are constantly influencing each other. Behavior is not simply the result of the environment and the person, just

as the environment is not simply the result of the person and behavior (Glanz et al, 2002). The environment provides models for behaviour.

In 1941, Miller and Dollard proposed the theory of social learning. In 1963Bandura and Walters broadened the social learning theory with the principles of observational learning and vicarious reinforcement. Bandura provided his concept of self-efficacy in 1977, while he refuted the traditional learning theory for understanding learning.

 Source: Pajares (2002).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Social Cognitive Theory provides a framework for designing, implementing and evaluating programs. Discuss?

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit we review the Limited Effects Theories of mass communication. These theories argue that the influence of a mass media message on individuals is limited or even trivial. The Limited Effects Theories are considered a major trigger for the development of new mass communication theories like the Two-Step Flow theory, Social Category Theory, Social Relationship Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit reviews the limited effects theories of mass communication. Theories concerning the effects or impact of mass communication media have evolved over time: Social Category Theory assumes that people of the same social category will response to the mass communication message in more or less uniform ways. The social relationship theory assumes that people's reaction to mass media messages is modified by their informal social relationships with significant others. The Two-Step Flow theory assumes that opinion leaders are quite influential in getting people to change their attitudes and behaviors and are quite similar to those they influence. The Social Cognitive Theory focuses on the explanation of behavioural patterns.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What was the origin of the research study that served as the foundation for Two-Step Flow?
2. How crucial is the impact of mass media exposure during a campaign?
3. What about the role of interpersonal connections?

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2   POWERFUL MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The mass media of communication is presumed to have all powerful effects on the audience members. Is assume that mass media had a direct, immediate and powerful effect on its audiences; that mass media plays major in opinion formation; that western media domination of the media, affects developing nations (e.g. Nigeria) cultural affiliation and alienating the mass media audience from their local cultures through instrumentality of propaganda and checks.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to highlight and describe:

- Hypodermic Needle Theory
- Lippmann's Theory of Public Opinion Formation
- Cultural Imperialism Theory
- Lasswell's Propaganda Theory
- Gate Keeping Theory

3.0   **MAIN CONTENT**

3.1   Hypodermic Needle Theory

The Hypodermic Needle Theory focuses on the direct influence via mass media. The theory states that mass media had a direct, immediate and powerful effect on its audiences.

Okunna explains that in the early attempts to understand the effects of mass communication, the media message was liken to a bullet released at a member of the audience. Like a bullet, the message would be received by the individual directly and it would have an immediate and powerful effect on him or her, persuading him or her to behave exactly the way the media message advocated.

This theory assumes that the mass media message could reach a very large group of people directly and uniformly to influence change in thought, attitude and behaviour.

The theory, also known as the 'Bullet Theory' graphically suggests that the message is a bullet, fired from the "media gun "into the viewer's "head". With similarly emotive imagery the hypodermic needle model suggests that media messages are injected straight into a passive audience which is immediately influenced by the message

Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, (1944/1968) express the view that the media are a dangerous means of communicating an idea because the receiver or audience is powerless to resist the impact of the message. There is no escape from the effect of the message in these models. The population is seen as a sitting duck. People are seen as passive and are seen as having a lot media material "shot" at them. People end up thinking what they are told because there is no other source of information.

Early mass communication model

Mass Media

O = Isolated individuals constituting a mass
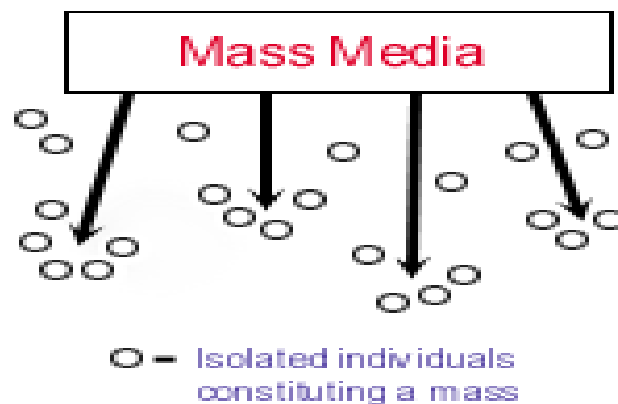
Magic Bullet Theory Model

Source: Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

How did the Magic Bullet Theory view the audience and mass media's relationship to the audience?

3.2   Lippmann's Theory of Public Opinion Formation

Lippmann's Theory of Public Opinion Formation focuses on average people lack of understanding of their world and inability to make coherent assessment of their actions.

The theory explains that people do not know the world directly, but only as a "picture in their heads"; consequently, they responded to a "pseudo-environment" in their political judgments. To know the world, people need maps of the world, but Lippmann argues that the maps on which most people rely on have been drawn by special interests.

Lipmann observes that among the factors that lead to perceptual distortions (on the part of the average person) of the real world were: censorship, limitations of social contact, insufficient time to study public affairs, the necessity for communicators to express complex events in very short messages, and fear of threatening facts, as well as preconceptions, prejudices, and stereotypes. How was it possible to overcome these limitations in a democracy so that people can come to a rational, objectively based understanding of the world, and a common will?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe the concept of Public Opinion.

3.3   Cultural Imperialism Theory

Cultural Imperialism Theory focuses on the Western media domination of global mass communication. The theory states that Western nations dominate the media around the world which in return has a powerful effect on Third World Cultures by imposing on them Western views and therefore destroying their native cultures.

Beltran (1978), quoted in Okunna (1999), defines cultural imperialism as 'a veritable process of social influence by which a nation imposes on other countries its set of beliefs, values, knowledge and behavioural norms as well as its overall style of life.

Okunna observes that whether through their importation media culture or through the barrage of Western television culture which flows into their countries through Direct Broadcast Satellites

(DBS) over which they have no control, developing countries are at the receiving end of alien cultures which are alienating their peoples from their own cultures.

The Cultural Imperialism Theory, which was developed in 1973 by Herb Schiller, assumes that humans do not have the free will to chose how they feel, act, think, and live. They react to what they see on television because there is nothing else to compare it to besides their own lives, usually portrayed as less than what it should be. It also explains that there is one truth and no matter what that truth never going to change. For instance, as long as the Third World countries continue to air Western Civilization's programs then the third world countries will always believe they should act, feel, think, and live as Western Civilizations act, feel, think, and live.

Thus, Sengupta and Frith, (1997) explain that the cultural imperialism was developed in the 1970s and conform to media situation as it existed at that time. The nature of media (i.e., print, radio and television), at that time, promoted a one-way, top-down transmission system from dominant country to dominated country that theoretically gave rise to a passive audience and a powerful media.

However, advancement in new media, telecommunications, computers, and satellite technology provide for greater interaction between sender and receiver than has ever before been possible. Therefore, the cultural imperialism argument that has been framed in terms of center nations with power over disempowered periphery nations must be reevaluated as the advanced media slowly penetrate into developing nations.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Cultural Imperialism focuses on the Western media domination of global mass communication. Discuss.

3.4   Lasswell's Propaganda Theory

The Lasswell Propaganda Theory focuses on mass media propaganda effects. The theory states that mediated propaganda conditioned the audience slowly over time. Propaganda works through projection of master symbols, emotion charge images (e.g., a national flag). Thus, symbols must be created and people must be gradually taught to associate specific emotions with these symbols. Master symbols associated with strong emotions posses the power to stimulate large-scale mass action if used wisely.

He, therefore, rejected the Magic Bullet Theory and stating that propaganda was more than just using media to lie to the people. People need to be slowly prepared to accept radically different ideas and actions .Communicators need to come up with well developed, long term campaign strategy in which new ideas and images are carefully introduced and then cultivated.

Lasswell (1971) observed that the worldwide economic depression and political strife had made people particularly vulnerable to propaganda convey through mass media message. He reasoned

that the power of propaganda was not so much the result of the substance or appeal of specific messages but, rather, the result of the vulnerable state of mind of average people.
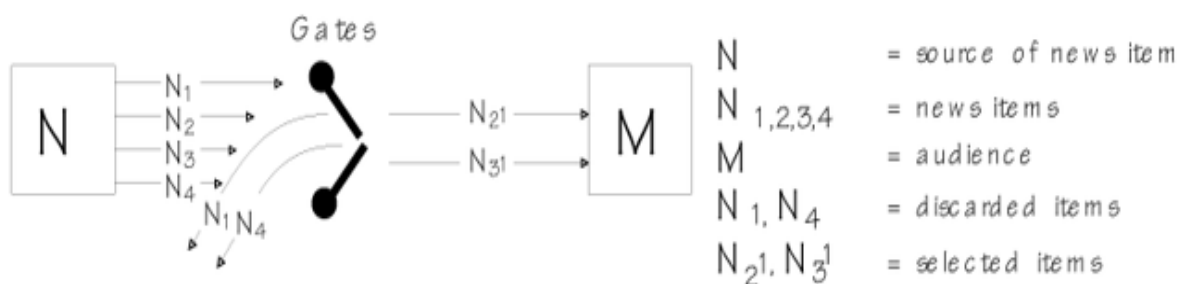
SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Using example describe how a master symbols associated with strong emotion can stimulate large scale mass action.

3.5   Gate Keeping Theory

The Media Gate Keeping Theory focuses on media regulation of information flow. The term gate keeping was coined by an Austrian Psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1947. In mass communication the term refers to the filtering or blocking of unwanted information or messages. The gate keepers refer to persons who (a) controls access to information; (b) influence decision making and actions; c) having influence. Lewin illustrated the role of the gate keeper with the role of a mother who determines what is good for her children.

Gatekeeping is one of the mass media's central roles in public life: people rely on media gatekeepers to transform information about events into a manageable number of media messages. David Mann White suggested having selection process in Newspapers in 1950. The gate keeper has to decide what to publish and what not to publish in a Newspaper. Today Mass Media play a gate keeping role as they decide what the people should watch, listen and enjoy.

The theory posits that gatekeeping determines not only which information is selected, but also what the content and nature of messages, such as news, will be. The theory describes the powerful process through which events are covered by the mass media, explaining how and why certain information either passes through gates or is closed off from media attention.

Source: White (1964)
This applied to gatekeeping in media only. For gatekeeping in organizations this model is not recommended

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

How are Gatekeeping Theory and Agenda Setting Theory related?

4.0   CONCLUSION

Okunna (1999) explains that from the very beginning of mass communication, there has been a preoccupation with the influence or effects of mass media on the media audience (society). Because of their special power to affect the way people think, feel, and behave, the mass media have been credited with incredible persuasive ability to change attitudes and behaviour. This has made the media a source of worry, especially to governments.

This is the view of the powerful effects theories of mass communication. These theories of mass communication effects believe that persuasion is the main effect of the mass media.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, we have been able to review related theories of powerful media effects. Firstly, the Hypodermic Needle Theory assumes that mass media had a direct, immediate and powerful effect on its audiences. The theory liken the message to a bullet, fired from the "media gun "into the viewer's "head" with a powerful effect on the audience. Secondly, Lippmann's Theory of Public Opinion Formation assumes that everything the audience knows about their world is from the media, thus making the mass media public opinion formation.

The Cultural Imperialism Theory explains the power of the media to transmit beliefs, values, knowledge and behaviour from a self dependent country to a dependence country. And while Lasswell's Propaganda Theory describes the powerful effects of media in using the propaganda to effects audience views; the Media Gate Keeping Theory explains the power of the media to check what the audiences read, watch or listen.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What were people's general conceptions of the mass media from its inception?
2. What forces are in place to lessen any undesirable effects from gatekeeping?

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3   CUMMULATIVE EFFECTS THEORIES

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Understanding of what affects the media has on individuals and society has been of interest to researchers for decades. Our understanding of media effects has gone through primary phases of reviewing related theories, thus we present a review of some cumulative effects theories of mass communication.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the Framing Theory
- Describe the Priming Theory
- Explain Self Perception Theory
- Discuss the Social Learning Theory

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Framing Theory

The Framing Theory focuses on how the mass media decide where people think about. Baran and Davis (2009) explains that the Framing Theory examines the idea about how people use expectations to make sense of everyday life. The basis of the Framing Theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. This field of meaning can have an effect on the audience's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours by connecting a particular meaning or interpretation on an issue.

The theory assumes that the mass media draw the public attention to certain topics, it decides where people think about; the journalists select the topics. This is the original agenda setting 'thought'. The way in which the news is brought, the frame in which the news is presented, is also a choice made by journalists. Thus, a frame refers to the way mass media and media gatekeepers organize and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided. Frames are abstract notions that serve to organize or structure social meanings. Frames influence the perception of the news on the audience, this form of agenda-setting not only tells what to think about, but also how to think about it.

For example, when a journalist selects a topic that he or she is going to write about, they are inevitability drawing the audience's attention to a particular topic, which is the original concept behind the agenda setting theory. However, the way or the frame in which the information is presented to the audience is also decided by the media practitioners or the gatekeepers. The framing theory refers to not only how the audience is influenced and interprets what is presented to them by the media, but also refers to the media's ability to persuade its audiences to accept one meaning of a concept over another. (University of Twente)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What do we mean when we say that the news media "frame" issues?

3.3   Priming Theory

The Priming Theory focuses on Media effects. The theory states that media images stimulate related thoughts in the minds of audience members. It refers to the ability of the media to control the interpretation of new information by feeding the public prior information. This prior context set frames of reference within the audience members, which ultimately affects their judgments. Mass communication media therefore, has the capability to influence people to think based on the media concepts that have been presented to them

For example, if the press continuously reports an issue that might ordinarily seem irrelevant, once the issue becomes news, it tends to become relevant. Thus, the more coverage an issue receives, the more of an impact it has on the opinions the public forms about the issue and those involved.

Iyengar & Kinder (1987), quoted in Chong and Druckman (2007), describe priming as follows: 'By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are

judged. Priming refers to changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations' (Iyengar al. 1984).

Mass communication media, therefore, play a very important role in the society. The public does not always notice the strong effects of persuasive advertisements or well-narrated news story presented by media however the increasing demands determine the impacts of these media concepts to the people in all aspects. People buy a certain product because of the appealing commercial on television. People conform to the latest fashion trends because of the models and endorsers on the magazines. People vote for a certain politician because of constant release of propaganda through news. These are just few of the many examples showing the strong effects of mass media on the public. Even though the people are often unaware of these influential demands and plain consumerism, the society still relies on the ability and credibility of mass media for providing information that would help each cluster function well in the society

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What question does Priming Theory seek to answer in the context of mass media?

3.4   Self-Perception Theory

The Self-Perception Theory provides an alternative explanation for cognitive dissonance effects. The theory suggests that people develop their own attitudes, opinions, and other internal states partly by observing their behavior and concluding what attitudes that must have caused them. According to the theory, introspection is a poor guide to one's internal states, because internal cues are weak and ambiguous, and a person is in the same position as an outside observer, who relies on outward behavior in interpreting another's internal states.

The theory is counterintuitive in nature, as the conventional wisdom is that attitudes come prior to behaviour. Okunna (1999) explains that among television entertainment programmes, the soap opera and situation comedy are particularly full of gratifications for television viewers. An application of the Self-perception Theory (Bem. 1972) to television viewing explains viewers' use of these types of programmes to gratify their need to reduce stress. She a says that the theory explains human behaviour after it has occurred as a natural response to a stimulus; then she explains her behaviour and attributes this explanation to herself.

Daryl J. Bem, a social psychologist developed the theory in 1967

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

3.5   Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory is a general theory of human behaviour, but Bandura (1977) and people concerned with mass communication (e.g television news) have used it specifically to explain media effects. Bandura warned that children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modelling.

Social Learning Theory in media pertains to how learning can be facilitated by mere observation of what's being presented through media. Albert Bandura cautioned that TV might create a violent reality that was worth fearing. Bandura's warning struck a responsive chord in parents and educators who feared that escalating violence on TV would transform children into bullies. Bandura regards anxiety over televised violence as legitimate.

He explains that social learning or "observational learning" involves how behaviours and attitudes can be modeled merely by observing the behaviours and attitudes of others. Bandura preformed an experiment called the Bobo Doll Experiment involving having children observe adults displaying aggressive behaviour toward a doll named Bobo. The adults punched, kicked, and verbally insulted the doll, all in the children's presence. The result of the experiment showed a marked increase in aggressive behaviour from the children toward Bobo the doll. These results tend to support the Social Learning Theory.

Social Learning Theory in media and the Bobo experiment correspond to each other in significant ways. For example, acknowledging mass media's influence on human behaviour in societies valuing freewill in novel ways, and where accountability for a person's action ultimately ends with the individual themselves, presents a vicious paradox.

For example, mass media contents showing violent behaviour towards a specific ethnic group or widely distributing stereotypes pertaining to gender characteristics (e.g. girls are emotional and boys are logical) may be learned and imitated on the individual level. If negative outcomes result and become widespread, the line between mass media's accountability and individual accountability may not be apparent thus creating a cycle where mass media plays the "individuals can make their own decisions" game while individuals comprising society collectively learns via media to internalize negative attitude towards minorities.

An important factor of Bandura's social learning theory is the emphasis on reciprocal determinism. This notion states that an individual's behaviour is influenced by the environment and characteristics of the person. In other words, a person's behaviour, environment, and personal qualities all reciprocally influence each other. Bandura proposed that the modeling process involves several steps:
   1. Attention – in order for an individual to learn something, they must pay attention to the features of the modeled behaviour.
   2. Retention – humans need to be able to remember details of the behaviour in order to learn and later reproduce the behaviour.
   3. Reproduction – in reproducing a behavior, an individual must organize his or her responses in accordance with the model behavior. This ability can improve with practice.
   4. Motivation – there must be an incentive or motivation driving the individual's reproduction of the behaviour. Even if all of the above factors are present, the person will not engage in the behaviour without motivation.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

4.0   CONCLUSION

Okunna (1999) observes that people seldom want to be changed, either by the mass media or any other factors. The attitudes which people already hold are strong barriers to change. In fact, the mass media are more likely to reinforce the existing attitudes and lifestyles of members of the media audience, than to change them. This reinforcement itself is an important effect of mass communication. Effects should not be understood solely as a complete change of attitudes and behaviour.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit explores related cumulative effects theories of mass communication. Starting from the Framing Theory, which focuses on how the mass media decide where people think about; the theory assumes that the mass media draw the public attention to certain topics, it decides what people think about; the journalists select the topics. Secondly, the Priming Theory explains that media images stimulate related thoughts in the minds of audience members

Furthermore, while the Self-Perception Theory suggests that people develop their own attitudes, opinions, and other internal states partly by observing their behaviour and concluding what attitudes that must have caused them; in the Social Learning Theory we observe that social learning or "observational learning" involves how behaviour and attitudes can be modeled merely by observing the behaviour and attitudes of others

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Who supplies the frames? Briefly describe how each party you've identified participates in the framing process.
2. How are the Gatekeeping, Agenda Setting, and Framing Theories related?
3. How are the theories of Framing and Priming different?

8.0   **REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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UNIT 4   MEDIA VIOLENCE THEORIES

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Violent or aggressiveness influences behaviour more than watching certain programs, films or listening to certain music. Many studies illustrate that media affects behaviour and actions. However, this is a contentious issue that we attempt to review here.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit the student will be able to describe:

- Reinforcement Theory
- Linkage Theory
- Catharsis Theory
- Aggressive Cue Theory

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Reinforcement Theory

The Reinforcement Theory focuses on how mass communication media effect behaviour. The theory states that people seek out and remember information that provides cognitive support for their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. Okunna (1999) explains that mass media rarely have a

powerful persuasion effect on media audiences because people can use a variety of defensive mechanism or strategies to shield themselves from media messages which are contradictory to their attitude and behaviours. The assumption here is that people do not like to be wrong and often feel uncomfortable when their behaviours or beliefs are challenged

Thus, an individual uses selective process (selective exposure, selective reception, and selective retention etc) to protect his held belief and behaviour. B. F. Skinner, a key contributor to development of the theory, argued that the internal needs and drives of individuals can be ignored because people learn to exhibit certain behaviour based on what happens to them as a result of their behaviour.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

From what perspective does the Reinforcement Theory examine people behaviour?

3.2   Linkage Theory

The Linkage Theory focuses on how children view fantasy and reality. The theory explains that people (particularly children) always assume a link between mass mediated fantasy and concrete reality. This affects their behaviour, encourage or stimulate violent lifestyles or behaviour.

For example, increasing violent behaviour among children and teenagers could be attributed to the increasing violent cartoons in the media today, especially the paid mass media. There is currently higher tendency among children and teenagers who have access to violent cartoons and other violent media contents to exhibit violent behaviour than those who does not. The fact is that children and most teenagers live in fantasy world and will want to act like the media character hero at every such opportunity. They hardly can differentiate between fantasy and reality.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Highlight and discuss possible effects of children exposure to Cartoon Network?

3.3   Catharsis Theory

The Catharsis Theory also known as the Sublimation Theory, focuses on the use of violent mass mediated content as an alternatives for aggressive thought and feelings. Gunter (1994) explains that the expectation is that an angered individual may use violent media instead of engaging in aggressive behaviour. Catharsis effects have long been held to be an unlikely explanation of television effects.

The Catharsis Theory has played an important role in the discussion about the effects of violence in the mass media for many years. It implies that the execution of an aggressive action under certain conditions diminishes the aggressive drive and therefore reduces the likelihood of further aggressive actions. The crucial point in catharsis theory is that the observed aggressive action does not necessarily need to be executed in reality – it can instead take place in the actor's fantasy or in the media.

The theory states that viewing violence is sufficient to purge or at least satisfy a person's aggressive drive and, therefore, reduce the likelihood of aggressive behaviour. For instance, the theory holds that people get self satisfaction or reduce aggression by watching related media contents.

However, the theory seems weak in achieving it objectives. Since watching say sexual acts has been attributed as the major stimulant for many violent sexual experiences. Thus, instead of bringing satisfaction it rather stimulate the individual into violent urgency to satisfy the aggressive urge.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Compare the Catharsis Theory and Aggressive Cue Theory.

3.4   Aggressive Cue Theory

The purpose of the Aggressive Cue Theory is to explain and determine what variables should be taken into consideration when trying to figure out why people act out aggressively or a direct or indirect consequence of mass mediated violence. The Aggressive Cue Theory could be utilized to help minimize aggression acts that lead to violent crimes. If people are aware of conditions that predispose them to aggression, they could then consciously try to avoid certain those circumstances. Additional resources could be allocated to prevent and to act as deterrents in specific events that are known to have aggressive and violent acts committed by people that are typically not associated with those events

The first assumption is that people who expose themselves to mass media violence exhibit higher levels of aggression. For instance, watching mass mediated violent movies or cartoon in the case of children can trigger aggressive behaviour and subsequently violent behaviour with little provocation.

The second assumption is that people behave aggressively because of their emotional state or state of frustration they are experiencing at the moment and not really as a direct response to mass mediated violence. For instance, the traffic in Lagos can trigger violent emotion and

subsequently aggressive behaviour without actually a direct contact with mass mediated violence.

The third assumption is that people can take up to violent behaviour because they feel the act is justified. Berkwitz (2006) explains that a stimulus does not directly produce aggressive behavior but that it actually prepares you for aggressive action. A combination of aggressive cues and environmental stimuli would have to be present as well as something that triggers the response. The additional condition is what sets off the aggressive response but it is not the only factor that is responsible for the outcome of the external aggression.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Stimulus does not directly produce aggressive behaviour but that it actually prepares you for aggressive action. Discuss.

4.0   CONCLUSION

There seems to be an impulse towards violence within the human psyche (as a species, we began as hunters), an impulse that is restrained by learned behavioural patterns. Some people learn restraining behaviour patterns more effectively than others. Some people forget learned behaviour patterns when their innate impulse towards violence is triggered, either by a personal confrontation, or an encounter with violence in the media.

There's quite a bit of debate among media researchers (and everyday people as well) as to how much of a connection there is between media violence and real life. Although most researchers believe that the effects of media violence are mitigated by other factors and are rarely direct, some do believe there is a strong correlation between exposure to media violence and real-life behaviour. Other theorists argue that media violence researchers have grossly overstated their case, and that media violence does not impact individuals or society as much as many believe.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit reviews four theories of media effects; the Reinforcement Theory, Linkage Theory, Catharsis Theory and Aggressive Cue Theory. Each of these theories targets either the negative or positive effects of media on its viewers. For instance, while Catharsis theory discuses the positive effects media have another audience, the Catharsis, is a way to vent all of the built up aggression that may be causing an individual discomfort. Catharsis assumes that we all experiences threatening impulses that we try to resist. All of these experiences that we try to repress gradually build up until our normal means of repressing them cannot be managed the Aggressive Cue Theory, however, sees the opposite. The theory assumes that people who expose themselves to mass media violence exhibit higher levels of aggression. It predicts a increases in

this violent behaviour when watching a violent act take place on television, or through any form of media.

Also while the Linkage Theory explains that people (particularly children) always assume a link between mass mediated fantasy and concrete reality, the Reinforcement Theory observes that people seek out and remember information that provides cognitive support for their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. The media can cause enormous change in the society. Discuss.
2. Highlight and describe the possible effects of many potentially harmful mass media contents that surround us in society

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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