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## Media and psychology

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### Abstract

The key to understanding the consequences of technology is psychology. The whole system is looked at by media psychology. There's no beginning and there's no end. It is a continuous loop that includes the developer of technology, the producer of content, the perceptions of content, and the user response. Just as social cognitive theory is described by Bandera as the reciprocal action between environment, behaviour, and cognition, media psychology also evaluates the system's interactive process. There is no chicken in this system, no egg. All of them coexist and coevolved with one another. Throughout the 20th century, both the media and psychology have made significant contributions to western culture. Psychology in the media is very exciting and has enormous potential. This is the beginning of the field, so there is the excitement and burden of defining the path for the early entrants. Recognizing the interactive and diverse human-media relationship is essential to a more precise and practical understanding of the experience of human-media, which is at the core of successful media evaluation, creation and production that can make a meaningful contribution to life and society. We need media psychology because, with new toys and devices on the market every day, media technologies are proliferating at the speed of light. Such innovations implement capabilities that redefine the way we work, play, and connect. However, if we are all able, as individuals, to take responsibility for our position in the system, the instruments of media psychology will only benefit us. It is the only way we can build and make effective use of improved technologies.

**Keywords:** Media psychology, coevolved, dynamic and technology

### Introduction

As new technologies emerge, we need new tools to understand and use them. The last half-century of changes in media and communications technologies are transforming individual lives, popular culture, and global economics relations. Public and academic recognition of the integration of media into daily life has reached a tipping point, and the demand across society for an understanding of how to think about the things they see, hear, and use every day is palpable. Psychologists are responding, applying the rich body of psychological knowledge and theory to the vast world of media experience. The rapid introduction of technology is unsettling and has triggered a spectrum of reactions, from enthusiasm to distrust. We all come to grips in our own ways with change. As technology changes our lives, we are forced to change how we view the world. Human beings are not really very good at that. Media psychology is the response to this dilemma. It is a relatively new field and hard to define. Media psychology is the result. Advances in the field of psychology and other human sciences have given enormous power to those with a large audience for their media. The short answer is media is important because it has the ability to influence people. The main purpose of media is to disseminate the information and knowledge. Media psychology is branch of psychology that focuses on the relationships between media and human behavior. Basically, professionals in this field study how people interact with media and each other due to media influence.

As one of the newest emerging branches of the dynamic psychology field, media psychology is focused on studying the intersections between human behavior and media technologies in our increasingly digital world. Since research shows that 90% of our daily communications are now screen-based through mobile technologies, psychology is expanding its reach to better understand the psychological impact of human interaction with technology across the globe at different societal levels. Psychology plays an important role in the success of social media and influences how business owners use different social media channels to promote their services and products. You need to tap into the emotions if you want to attract customers. It is important for developing long-term customer relationships. The goal of media psychologists is to try to answer those questions by combining an understanding of

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human behavior, cognition, and emotions with an equal understanding of media technologies. Unlike some types of media studies, media psychology is not just concerned with content. Media psychology is the psychological study of the causes and consequences of humans' media use. Research within media psychology seeks to understand and explain the roles, uses, processes, and effects of mediated communication. It is interdisciplinary in nature and draws from a number of disciplines including political science, marketing, sociology, communication, public opinion, consumer behavior, and social, developmental, and personality psychology. Media psychology is the interface between the media and the human response. Implications sometimes involve complex and unique legal and ethical challenges. One generally learns psychology one theory at a time and begins to combine and apply theories based on increasing insight. Media psychology represents the convergence of psychology applied to media, technology, communication, and is an art and science.

Media psychology focuses on how human behavior interacts with both media and technology. It focuses on technology advancement and uses critical analysis, along with the investigation, to develop a model of the perception on the media. It is used as a whole in society or even on an individual level. This is the role of media psychology—using the study of this intersection of human behavior and technology to liberate positive capabilities, to empower users, producers and distributors of technology in ways that satisfy the basic drivers of human behavior and improve society at large across all domains. A study found that middle scholar's reported using social media to see what their friends are doing, to post pictures, and to connect with friends. Other psychological factors related to social media are: depression, anxiety, attachment, self-identity, and the need to belong. Media psychology is not limited to mass media or media content; it includes all forms of mediated communication and media technology-related behaviors, such as the use, design, impact and sharing behaviors. This branch is a relatively new field of study because of advancement in technology. Media also affects the personality of people in many other ways research shows that long term exposure to media creates insensitivity in the person and they are less affected by an incident that in the past may have greatly affected them, like long term exposure to violence on the media makes a person treat violence.

### Processing Information

From a biological perspective, we know that human brains are hardwired to notice change because the change in the environment increases the probability of danger. There are different theories on how we understand what we see and hear. The culturalist approach suggests that the meaning or interpretation of media is subjective or individualized. Since perception involves all the senses and also giving meaning to all information a person takes in, different people can get different meanings from the same media. The memory has patterns of organization, also called scripts or schemata, which contain strings of associations that are activated by new experiences. New fragments of information are added to the existing scripts whenever we experience something new. Perception is also affected by our belief systems, attitudes, and needs. For instance, if you are someone who is a passivist, that is, a

person who does not condone violence at any time, you may watch a movie about war and take away the message that the movie was showing what tragedy violence can be. If someone who is patriotic or fascinated by weaponry watches the same movie, they may think the movie was glorifying war and showing off some of the best guns ever made. In this way, it is said that there exists selective perception, or, "the principle of least effort." It is easier to perceive messages that go along with what you expect or believe. Every receiver of information has their own frame of reference, or place they are coming from when they receive new media.

The communication through technological gadgets is easy when compared to face to face communication because of the psychological theory of mind and emotional involvement. In an ultimatum game, the divider is in charge resource distribution with a second party. In most cases, money is the resource, which the divider has control over and can choose as much as he wants. The recipient must accept the consequential offer if he is satisfied with the share. Alternatively, he can reject it in protest, especially if the money does not fulfill the intended needs. Failure to agree on the share means that both the players have no financial shares. Media psychology is in a unique position to involve both researchers and practitioners due to its diverse history and expanding interdisciplinary reach. The mental processes investigated range from deliberate and thoughtful decision making to reflexive responses and a variety of processes in between. An understanding of mental processing is important to every aspect of communication and communication professions from advertising to entertainment and computer games to computer collaboration systems. Specific projects focused on media psychology in our department include children's responses to health messages, emotional contagion in instant messaging, entertainment narratives in health communication, and decision-making in computer-mediated work teams. The connection with the public created through media allows the sharing of information garnered from psychological research; yet beyond that, providing general advice through the media also requires an understanding of how best to create media so as to allow for an understanding of such research. Discoveries are being made at an accelerated rate in the social sciences, and the ability to share that information accurately with the public is an invaluable application of psychological media research. Media psychology is a field with a diverse past and rapidly expanding future that offers both research and educational opportunities for students in any area of psychology.

### Benefits of Social Media

- **Mental Health**
  - **Provides a sense of belonging:** Everyone wants to fit in to some degree, so when a friend or family member posts on our Facebook wall, we feel accepted.
  - **Makes it easy to find role models:** Social media facilitates connecting with people who share interests or concerns. If you're training for the Boston marathon and finding it hard to go that extra mile, connecting on social media with your running hero can give you an inspiration boost.

- **Increases trust:** A study by Valenzuela, Park and Kee showed that Facebook increases trust among users because the detailed information provided by contacts reduces uncertainty about their intentions and behaviors.
- **Increases bonding while decreasing loneliness:** When people have one-on-one interaction on social media (e.g., getting a “like,” instant message or comment), they feel more bonded, a Carnegie Mellon University study showed.
- **Makes us happy:** That’s right. Despite all the talk about “Facebook depression,” social media does make us feel better—but only while actively engaged. University of Missouri psychologists discovered that the actively engaged test subjects experienced a physiological response that indicated an increase in happiness. This increased happiness, however, went away once subjects switched back to passively browsing.
- **Spreads happiness to others:** Researchers found that happiness spreads across social networks to at least three degrees of separation.
- **Physical Health**
  - **Positively affects how people manage their health:** More than 40 percent of users have improved their health habits as a result of what they read on social media.
  - **Improves health via smartphone apps:** Having a phone app at hand helps keep users focused on exercise, diet and weight, plus some apps have social features so other users can provide additional support.
  - **Increases quality of healthcare:** 60 percent of doctors think the quality of care they provide is improved because of social media.

### The Role of Media Psychology

The role of the media psychologist is to examine the interaction between people and various types of information that are delivered via some technological medium. The field of media psychology developed from both a concern for the effect of different types of technology on people of all ages and a desire for technologically-driven companies to capitalize on behaviors associated with different types of media. Professionals in this field attempt to identify everything from learning outcomes of educational technology to the effects of prolonged exposure to a specific form of media. For example, professionals in this field might concentrate on the influence of television, radio, or print advertising on consumers. Other areas of focus include researching and analyzing the role of social media in interpersonal communication and social behaviors. The ways in which individuals interact with various types of interfaces is also an area of media psychology that is beneficial for different organizations. For instance, media psychologists might study the effects of video game graphics and sound on children, the level of understanding of online educational material on adult learners, or the effects of subliminal product messaging in film and television on adolescent purchasing behaviors. The human reaction to change--resistance--is normal. Humans also have the added gift of selective memory to help maintain

cognitive comfort. The rapid introduction of technology is unsettling and has triggered a spectrum of reactions, from enthusiasm to distrust. We all come to grips in our own ways with change. As technology changes our lives, we are forced to change how we view the world. Human beings are not really very good at that. Media psychology only recently becomes an official academic discipline. Media and social media are distributors and drivers of social change. We need an increased understanding of the effects of media to help manage our future. Our community must grapple with our cultural or religious sensitivities. If we don't shape our future, it will shape us. Yet, the last 50 years have produced valuable and interesting work in media psychology-related research and study, much of it from outside of psychology. Our collective anxiety over the impact of media on individuals and society, such as the portrayals of violence, consumer manipulation, or information overload has fueled a good bit of the research. If someone is interested in working with people in a mental health treatment capacity, then the logical next step is a clinical psychology program--even if he or she wants to use media technologies within that practice. First become a clinician and then learn how to translate that to technology. Nothing is worse than bad psychology in volume. As most people know, working with clients as a mental health professional requires specific training, supervised practice, an internship, and has licensing requirements. The value of positive psychology has been validated. Positive media messages are helping to improve public understanding of major social and medical consequences of issues affecting the public, such as body weight, diet, lack of exercise, high cholesterol and hypertension, to highlight only a few.

### Theories of Media Psychology

- **The Affective disposition Theory:** This is used to differentiate the perspectives on different forms of media, with attention focus. It is based on the emotions and opinions of the person towards characters, enjoyment, and appreciation from people, those individuals that form feelings about characters that are both positive and negative, and the media that focuses on the conflict, and how people react.
- **Simulation Theory:** This is a theory that argues that the mental simulations that happen don't fully leave out the external information that's near the user. Rather, it's stimulated and reshaped into memories to run the simulation that's there. It's why the user creates experiences without technology, simply because of the relevance of the internal processing there.
- **Theory of Play:** This is a psychological theory that plays a key part in media enjoyment, with the idea being that it has a more conceptual connection to the presence. The activity of playing gives consistent results, and this theory is characterized by three things: that it's attractive and intrinsically motivated, that it implies a change in our perceived reality, that it's frequently repeated, and the theory of play was based on explanations from different psychologists, and it's based on how an individual uses media to be satisfied, and how the media changes ones life. The play is self-contained, but people are impacted both negatively and positively from what they see around them, and looking at the different forms, it can showcase how someone reacts to the desires in their environment.

**Conclusion**

Media Psychology focuses on the roles psychologists play in various aspects of the media, including, but not limited to, radio, television, film, video, newsprint, magazines, and newer technologies. The emphasis on media as a distribution path implies separate domains for media and psychology rather than an integration where media development and analysis is informed by psychology. Research has found that playing action video games has a positive effect, leading to improvements in visual attention. Therefore, research is revealing both problems and benefits from the relationship between media stimulation and attention. More study is important. There is potential for understanding the perception of media effects and impact. Although a frequent response, the data left many questions unanswered about the respondents' perception of agency relative to media, i.e. whether individuals and society are perceived as victims of media's influence or interactive participants. Both areas will be important for further study as they hold implications for the effectiveness of media applications in areas such as education, healthcare and public policy. New knowledge is emerging. We presently know a lot more than we understand. The tools of media psychology can only help us, though, if we are also willing, as individuals, to take responsibility for our part in the system.

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