

SOME POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF MASS MEDIA COMMUNICATION FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECTOR

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Abstract

The mass public media play a significant role in providing recipients with the social reality in the current society. Mass media report important information, to the people, from various areas covering politics, economics, health, education, culture, sports, and foreign events. The media is also an intermediary in forming an important public opinion. This critical ability of the media is often manipulated and is misused in favour of exercising the interests of the media owners. Editorial offices do not have the ability to deform the minds of the masses one hundred percent, but they can mediate selected information, to the receivers, which has the effect of slightly modifying their opinion. This contribution offers descriptive and interpretative analysis of some aspects of mass media communication, in a nutshell, with regard to current health and social policy of the Slovak republic.

Keywords: mass media, communication, aspects, Slovakia, manipulation, e-health

1 Introduction

The media is an integral component of today's globalized and mass society, relate to each of us. The mass media have great power, before which they have respect for the opinion leaders – politicians, managers, businessmen, scientists, celebrities, etc. The mediocracy decide what we will read in print and online media, what we will watch in auditory media, or what we will watch in the audiovisual media, which mediocracy is models the public opinion. The media raise issues us forward that we will in the next few hours or days to consider and discuss with the people in the circle of loved ones. Individual editors determine significant media society-wide issues, which are becoming global issues in some cases. Media, among others, play the role of watchdog. Individual editors often take simple citizens in causal issues before state bureaucracy, imperfect legislation and against injustice arising in different areas of the society.

The mass media are apparently acting as protectors of the public, and majority parties share messages with beneficiaries. The problem is that the current recipient of the media is dependent on passive reception of messages; he has no way of verifying the authenticity and assessment veracity of mediated messages. Especially people without university education believe the message of the media as a valid terminal. These recipients believe in media reality, and they do not realize that everything that seems resolved in the media is not really always true. If they perceive this particular belief, then it would be difficult also to isolate the intertwined social aspects of media reality.

Efficiency of the media depends on its ability to establish a full picture of the public opinion through ideas of media managers. The force of public opinion lies in the fact that people determine the boundaries of what they have to think at home, at work or in a close circle, thus functions as a forum indirectly involved in the creating of ideas, opinions and attitudes of the people. Those aware of these facts are powerful and therefore world abuse the media for own self-achievements or personal interests. The media provide a media agenda, political agenda and social agenda.

2 Media manipulation

The company's social relationship can't be separated into political entities versus media, as both sides need each other. (Koprda, Polakevičová, 2014) Journalists focus on policy issues and developments, in particular before the parliamentary elections. The persuasion journalists carry frequently the notion that they are loyal to parties they are affiliated with. Sometimes editors do not publish negative messages about a particular political party, or even refrain continuously. However, there are some progressive media that attempt to remain outwardly independent; therefore they try to modify the political climate indirectly. They, too, help particular political party, but the one that have compromised its competitors. At this point we would like to emphasize, fortunately, that some media are serious, progressive, lean to function in transparent way and not abusing their persuasion in own favour. In our view, however, the media here are generally still less serious, and unscrupulous. Thus, the ongoing will majorly reflect the negative views.

Ranges of authors have written on media manipulations. According to Dieter Prokop (2005, p. 9) media have served "in the Roman Empire imperial interests by means of propaganda culture of Apollon decried

Dionysian cult, and they fought against the enemies of the rulers, against the rival despots like the Democrats.” Even Marshall McLuhan (2008, p. 31, 159) was convinced that the media have the power to impose our own perception of its premise and described earlier media as a weapon (1991, p. 24) As reported by Denis McQuail (1999, p. 21), media are a potential means of influence, control and promotion of innovation in the company, a source of information vital to the functioning of most social institutions and basic instrument of transmission. Zygmund Bauman (2001, p. 97) says that today’s world of professional speakers and entertainers media holds tremendous power and strength, expanding far beyond its once very limited control of the territory and the land they originally operated as only professional politicians. Ignacio Ramonet (2003, p. 56) speaks of entanglement between the dominant media and political power to the extent that citizens are questioning the fact that the fourth power still performs its critical functions.

3 Media function

Mission media characterized by many authors over the functions that should be filled. Theorists emphasize the particular features: articulation of ideas, influence on public control of political activities, training and education, political socialization, influencing economic activity, advertising, creation of a dedicated public opinion or mutual communication of groups that actively participate in socio-political process such as various lobbies and other interest groups, political parties and the like. (Kunczik, 1995, p. 33)

The functionalist approach is based division, which distinguishes six functions. (Burton, 2001, p. 140): information, social (correlation), political (canvassing), cultural (continuity) and fun. We are going on for limited space given to the first three functions.

One of the world’s most important theoreticians of mass media and sociology of culture, Canadian media theorist Herbert Marshall McLuhan (1991, p. 151) draws attention to the fundamental role of the media – store information and facilitating their movements.

Independent expert for the media and Dean of the Faculty of Mass media at Bratislava School of Law in Bratislava Samuel Brečka argues that mass media are the intermediaries of policy, based on the following facts:

- Thanks to widespread media and audience are citizens of the most important sources of information society and politics.

- The media bring your own picture of social and political life.

- The media are essential in intermediary relationships and public policy.

- The media are important factors in political socialization.

- The media play an essential political role, especially during elections. (Brečka, 2002, p. 135)

Theorists are, though, not unanimous in defining the functions of the mass media. For example, Lutz Hagen (Schulz et al., 2004, p. 51) says that the mass media are reporting function, to disseminate facts and opinions and also watch and criticize politicians. Juraj Vojtek (Matúš, 2008, str. 31) recognizes six media functions: information, political, social, aesthetic, cultural, and educational.

4 Media and its negative impact on human health

Regarding people’s social functions, mass media offer their own pattern of behaviour, which then the common individual is influenced to accept. (Polakevičová, 2012). For example, they tend to lean to present malnourished model as a model of beauty, despite the fact that various surveys show that men are rounded up like ordinary women. The media also present alcohol, smoking, and sex in context of successful people.

5 Media and its positive impact in promoting prevention

On the other side, the media have an important stake in educating patients, and also in preventing citizens from civilizational diseases. They have an incredible function of disseminating information among people, about the negative consequences of poor diet, alcohol abuse, smoking, and unprotected sex.

The media promotes a healthy life style by disseminating information about healthy lifestyles and healthy eating, thus, so many people can prevent disease before it is too late, and patients can, thereby, improve their prospects for better health. The media also disclose information about frequent, but rare diseases. In order, people could know exploring symptoms of these diseases to recognize and call the ambulance, respectively, before they get to the health centre. Worth to mention that the Slovak mass media devotes apparently good attention to health, either through transmitting individual World Health Day, or through specific stories of patients.

6 Media and therapeutic effects of social communication

One of the negative aspects of the present century is hurriedness. Due to lack of time, one has little contact with his family and the elderly, these days. Just media can spread the idea that the family is the most important element in helping the elderly person to cope with the changes associated with aging. (Bočáková, 2011, p. 161). Modern times in addition, it offers new possibilities for communication, which allow seniors to be with his family in everyday voice, respectively, visual contact, when just at that time can’t meet in person, which is in any

case social and therapeutic effects for people. Mass media can also support a variety of humanitarian actions to tackle poverty in the world. (Tomášiková, 2011, p. 225)

7 Media healthcare nexus, results of the Slovak Republic

Adequate presentation of preventive programs in Slovakia has both positive and negative results. On the one side, conscious patient protects his health and also saves time of the doctor who can correct the scope of education as needed. On the other side, in Slovakia there is an increased patient awareness so that people start to draw attention to medical errors. Patient dissatisfaction with the health care in Slovakia is addressed by the health surveillance administration office. The largest submissions the administration office received in 2011 was 1651, when we break down this figure, we find that the office received 1 391 submissions in the field of health care administration, and 260 were carried over from 2010.¹ In 2008 the office dealt with 1 452 submissions and in 2006 it investigated 1321 submissions. (Lincényi, 2009)

In Slovakia, professionals have been discussing for over a decade about the need to digitalize healthcare. The necessary legislature to launch e-health was made by the Ministry of Health, which was approved by the members of parliament at the meeting, as of May 17, 2013. The Act on the National Health Information System, which entered into force since July 1, 2013, for example, accepted electronic medical treatment, electronic medical records, patient summary, or electronic insurance card. The approved standard created a legislative environment that will maximize the benefits obtained from the use of health care information, while ensuring quality and more efficient health care to citizens / patients.²

Obviously, Citizens abroad are increasingly entering into the mobile medical technology and video, which would mean upheaval in the diagnosis and treatment of the patient.

The Slovak medical community, too, has had the opportunity to see the latest technology at occasional professional conferences, such as, Cisco EXPO 2011 of July 2011, when the head of the Bratislava I Internal Clinic of the Medical University and member of the Presidium of the Slovak Medical Society, Prof. Stephen Hrusovsky, conducted patient examination that aimed at testing the presence of the new health care service. (Lincényi, 2011)

8 Conclusion

Commercial oriented mass media have, in the 21st century, significant negative effects on the human health. On the other hand, it is the mass media, which are among the main educators of prevention activities through publicizing a healthy lifestyle. In fact, there is a huge expectation of obtaining more health benefits, in the years ahead, from advanced technologies that may have a greater role in the diagnosis and treatment of the patient. Equally, important is the interpersonal communication, which has the capacity of providing social and therapeutic benefits, especially for older people.

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