

Selectivity Concept and Observational Learning: Illumination from Neurobiological Notions of Communication

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Abstract

The systematic review was to ascertain the selectivity concept and observational learning: illumination from neurobiological notions of communication. The aim was to streamline all existing evidence on the selectivity concept and observational learning as illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication; contextualise the content with a view of finding out the illumination in all aspects of the neurobiological process and to cast the beam wide for contribution to the overall understanding of the communication in the society at large. The secondary qualitative was adopted for gathering and analysing data for this work. The review finds out that, selectivity concept is an illumination from the neurobiological notions of communication as it pays deep attention to process in which messages can and cannot have effects into influence of individual differences and group affiliation in shaping media influence and attention to selective processes which help to clarify how individual process information. Also, observational learning is illumination from the neurobiological notion of communication, the learning from observation of the environment, or social cognitions is the basic of social cognitive theory hence, the reciprocal determinism, behaviour, cognitive, biological and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bidirectional. Based on these findings, it was concluded that contemporary thinking on selectivity concept ties retention to the level of importance that recalled phenomenon holds for individuals. Keeping in mind that these processes are not discrete, you cannot retain that to which you have not been exposed. Also, the study concluded that observational learning is simply efficient form of stimulus-response learning and as a valuable tool in understanding mass media effects. It was therefore, recommended based on the foregoing that, communication scholars should learn how to individualise messages rather than generalise messages. Also, communication scholars should use selectivity concepts and observational learning to their advantage to sway an audience's way of thinking.

Keywords: *Selectivity concepts, Observational learning, Illuminations, Neurobiological notions, Communication*

Introduction

A person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with one another, if s/he will, in a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent. Collectively, these “ways” have become known as the selectivity concept or the selective processes (Festinger, 1962). Some scholars consider these to be defence mechanism that we routinely use to protect ourselves (and our egos) from information that would threaten us. Others argue that, they are merely routinized procedures for coping with the enormous quality of sensory information constantly bombarding us. Either way, the selectivity concept functions as complex and highly sophisticated filtering mechanisms that screen out useless sensory data while quickly identifying and highlighting the most useful patterns in this data (Baran & Davis, 2020).

In arguing that, the (mass) communication itself appears to be no sufficient cause of the effect, Klapper (1960) offers his assertion that, “reinforcement is or may be abetted by predispositions and the related processes of selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention” (pp. 18-19). His explanation of how these selective processes protect media content consumers from media’s impact neatly echoes in Festinger’s own postulation. Klapper (1960) writes that, by and large, people tend to expose themselves in accord with their existing attitudes and interests. Consciously or unconsciously, they avoid communications of opposite hue. In the event of their being, nevertheless, they exposed to unsympathetic material, they often seem not to perceive it, or to recast and interpret it to fit their existing views, or to forget it more readily than they forget sympathetic materials.

In the context of observational learning, Bandura (1962) notes that, the method of learning that consists of observing and modelling another individual’s behaviour, attitudes, or emotional expressions. Bandura stressed that, individuals may simply learn from the behaviour rather than imitate it. In this regard, however, observational learning is a major component of Bandura’s social learning theory. Bandura also emphasised that, four conditions were necessary in any form of observing and modelling behaviour which were attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Observational learning stipulates that, individuals can acquire new behaviour or information by observing and imitating others. This process involves paying attention to the model’s actions remembering them, being motivated to replicate the behaviour, and having the ability to reproduce it.

According to Nabavi (2014), this observational learning is based on the idea that people learn from their interactions with others in a social context. Separately, by observing the behaviours of others, people develop similar behaviours. After observing, the behaviour of others, people assimilate and imitate the behaviour, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include records related to the observed behaviour. Within the foregoing context, Lou (2013) opines that, Bandura proposed the concept of social cognitive theory. A general contention is that many personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events; behaviour; and environment events.

The above concepts of selectivity and observational learning when distilled using components/processes can only precipitate illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication which necessary stimulate or drive for the action. A synthesis of the foregoing is Okon (2014), in a discussion on neurobiological notions of communication posits that, human

anatomy has processing units; this involves impulses that terminate action. Based on this perspective, communication is a discriminatory response of an organism to stimulus. Okon adds that, communication is a deliberate and purposeful or a conscious act. If in the midst of noise in a classroom, one decides to only pay attention to what the teacher is saying that means, one has discriminated the noise in the class. The foregoing analogy no doubt lends credence to the fact that, this is an example of discriminatory response.

One of the inevitable functions of the mass communication scholars is to provide accurate elucidation of research intelligence in a context that, allows for comprehension and interpretation. As main source of information academic environment, do selectivity concept and observational learning as illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication deserve recognition and reverence? Is it thorough, sophisticated, ground-breaking and true? This systematic review hence spawns literally tens of research efforts on and dovetails dozens of intellectual refinements of the process of communication.

The aim of this systematic review is to ascertain and streamline all existing evidence on the selectivity concept and observational learning as illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication. Contextualise the content with a view of finding out the illuminations in all aspects of the neurobiological process. To cast the beam wide for contribution to the overall understanding of the communication in the society at large.

Methodology

A systematic comprehensive search of all materials related to the selectivity concept and observational learning as illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication were conducted. Extensive literature was conducted using libraries, website, Google search engines, relevant documents, publication series, research articles and systematic review of classical scholars hence some outdated references. The secondary qualitative data refers to an analysis of pre-existing data collected by another researcher for a primary purpose (Fielding, 2004). Through this method, a researcher can obtain extensive data, compare, analyse and extract information that would be needed for his or her research. This method also gives the researcher access to materials when s/he cannot travel to obtain data personally or when obtaining desired data proves to be expensive or difficult. Secondary qualitative data was used for gathering and analysing data for this work.

Ambivalence about Three Criss-crossing Dimensions

The selectivity concept is useful for attempting to explain the media choices of individuals. The selective process is comprised of the four steps of selective exposure, attention, perception and retention. The concept, overall says that, people choose messages and media that align with their current beliefs, values and ideas as opposed to messages and media that go against their current beliefs, values and ideas. Through selective processes, individuals interpret the media in their own way and tend to avoid messages that do not confirm their beliefs (Whitaker & Smith, 2012).

Observational learning has been used to assist in modifying child behaviours. In the use of observational learning, two participants are essential: the observer and the model. Observational learning consists of the observer watching the model engage in a specific behaviour. People are not born equipped with sets of behaviours, but instead learn through various experiences which often involve observing (Colledge, 2002). Thus viewing others' behaviours is an important tool in

acquiring new skills (Jahr & Eldevik, 2002). The type and complexity of skills acquired can vary, as long as the learner deems the skill important.

Neuro-biological perspective deals with human anatomy which has processing units- this involves impulses that terminate on the spinal cord and often triggers a reflex action. Based on this perspective, communication is a discriminatory response of an organism to stimulus. This points out the role of the central nervous system in the storage and retrieval of meaningful experiences. Therefore, through the central nervous system, meanings for particular symbols are recorded in the memories of an individual. This view of communication starts with neurobiological activities like thinking, reflecting and carrying out internal dialogues with one's self and lots more because these neurobiological activities are important factors in determining how one communicates and as such, they form the basis for all other forms of communication (Okon, 2001).

The deduction here is that, communication is a deliberate and purposeful or a conscious act. For instance, if in the midst of noise in a classroom, one decides to only pay attention to what the teacher is saying that means one has discriminated the noise in the class. This is an example of discriminatory response. Again a teacher may be teaching in the class and you decide to attend to a textbook which may not be part of the lesson. A plant in the midst of different exposure may tend to grow towards the rays of the sunlight (not towards the direction of the wind). Also, one may be watching a Television and listening to the Radio at the same time. One may decide to tune down the volume of the radio at the start of super story on NTA, in this case, one has selectively responded to the NTA programme while discriminating whatever was going on the radio. This means that communication is a selective process and observational learning.

Theoretical Framework

The social cognitive theory, individual differences theory and cognitive dissonance theory keystone the review:

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura (1986) is credited with the development of the social cognitive theory as an expansion of the social learning theory. The social cognitive theory or Bandura's theory states that, there is an interrelationship between an individual, the environment, and their behaviours (Grusec, 1992). Numerous studies which investigated how people imitated behaviours after watching the behaviours of others were generated as a result of Bandura's theory. Human behaviour is learned and regulated by stimuli within the environment (Bandura, 1999). Humans are able to recognise important information expressed through various mediums, including observational learning. The social cognitive theory states that, much of human learning occurs either intentionally or inadvertently by observing the behaviours of others and the resulting consequences (Bandura, 1999). The person who is observing, views the behaviours displayed as favourable or unfavourable. When observational learning is used, the model can convey new ideas and ways of thinking and behaving to those watching (Bandura, 1999).

Modelling enables humans to expand their knowledge and skill base and develop new sets of behaviours (Bandura, 1999). Observational learning is particularly effective with children learning novel, complex tasks (Schunk, 2000). Novel, complex tasks require new procedural learning and development of outcome expectations. Therefore, modelling provides a template for children to learn new skills and apply these skills to future, similar interactions. The social

cognitive theory proposes two ways in which humans learn; observational and enactive learning, although most behaviours are learned through observation (Colledge, 2002). Observational learning is learning through the observation of others, while enactive learning is learning through direct experiences (Colledge, 2002). A more common term used for observational learning is imitation. Observational learning is believed to provide behavioural cues which are positively reinforced by natural consequences (Schunk, 1987). Enactive learning, on the other hand, is primarily independent. The accompanying consequences of the behaviour are the sole sources for learning. Enactive learning requires the person to be dependent on the consequences of the tried behaviours.

Individual Differences Theory

Individual differences theory was propounded by Melvin Defleur in the year 1970. Defleur postulates that, no matter the homogeneity of the society, there are bound to be some differences in personality, values, judgements, tastes, perceptions and grades. Ndimele and Innocent (2006) are with the view that, information from the same mass media to the members of the mass media audience have been found to generate different reactions or effects on the individual members of that audience. From the foregoing, no two persons can see or perceive the same reality at the same time without slight differences. Considering Defleur 1970's postulation therefore, the contact of the audience with the media messages will definitely elicit different reaction and responses either positively or negatively. According to Okon (2001), individual differences theory is an early refinement of the magic bullet theory. Okon states that, the theory postulates that, no matter the homogeneity of the society, there is bound to be some differences in personality, grades, values, judgement and tastes. Okon states further that, individual differences theory is based on the fact that, since it is known that, there is selective judgement based on individual differences, it follows that, people select and interpret contents in different ways; hence, different persons must respond differently to the same message.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive dissonance theory was propounded by Leon Festinger (1957), which explains that, the bedrock premise of dissonance theory is that, information that is not consistent with a person's already-held values and beliefs will create a psychological discomfort (dissonance) that must be relieved. People generally work to keep their knowledge of themselves and their knowledge of the world somewhat consistent. Later and more specifically, Festinger wrote "if a person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with one another, he will in a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent" (p.93). Cognitive consistency was juxtaposed as "a tendency (on the part of individuals) to maintain, or to return to a state of cognitive balance, and...this tendency toward equilibrium determines...the kind of persuasive communication to which the individual may be receptive." The idea that people consciously and unconsciously work to preserve their existing views. However, information that is inconsistent with a person's already-held attitudes creates psychological discomfort or dissonance (Baran & Davis, 2020, pp.148-149).

Results

Observational learning: The observational learning theorist would take the aggressive cues theory a step further. This theory says that, people can learn by observing aggression in media portrayals and, under some conditions, model its behaviour. If there are 50 ways to leave your lover, then there must be at least 49 ways to be violent or aggressive. And watching violent media portrayals will teach you new ways to be violent. Ever watch a whodunit, such as a Colombo episode, where you spot where the criminal makes the fatal mistake? Ever catch yourself saying, "If I ever committed a murder I would not make that mistake?" What? Are you suggesting, there is a circumstance where you would kill someone? Or, how about this? Imagine walking down a dark alley and someone steps out in front of you and makes a threatening gesture. What would you do? Anyone think of some kung-fu/karate moves you might make to defend yourself? That's a pretty aggressive/violent thought. And you learned it by watching a media portrayal. So the Observational learning theorist says that, not only would the media violence increase the probability of the viewer committing an aggression or violence, it teaches the viewer how to do it. Does media mirror society or does it influence it? (The answer is both.) The observational theorist hedges his bet by pointing out that, you will not automatically go out and mimic the violent act, but you store the information away in your brain. Again, think about sex instead of violence. Does watching sexual portrayals teach you new ways to think about sex and perhaps engage in sexual acts? If you see that sleeping with someone on a first date is normal, after a while, you start believing that everyone must be doing it, so you should, too.

Factors that influence observational learning

Several factors which may influence observational learning include developmental status, model prestige and competence, various consequences, outcome expectations, goal setting, and self-efficacy (Schunk, 2000). Developmental status refers to the developmental and cognitive capacity of the model. When the developmental and cognitive status of the model and observer are similar, observational learning will be the most effective. Model prestige and competence refers to an increase in attention by the observer when the models are seen as competent. Different consequences as models complete tasks have different motivating effects on observers as well. Outcome expectations refer to how observers are more likely to imitate behaviours the observers believe will lead to positive outcomes. Furthermore, goal setting refers to how observers are more likely to attend to models which demonstrate behaviours that achieve desired goals. And finally, self-efficacy refers to observers who attend to models when a belief exists that the observers are capable of performing the demonstrated behaviour.

People's behaviours are shaped by other factors in addition to their individual thoughts. The social cognitive theory purports that, people behaviours are driven within a structure of triadic reciprocity, which states that, behaviours, cognition, personal factors and their environmental events all interact with each other (Schunk, 2000). Thus, the behaviour of preschool children is shaped by cognitive development, personal factors such as personality, and environmental influences. Therefore, in an imitative situation, multiple factors determine how the observer will behave. Such behaviours may include a child's disposition or the type of environment in which the child is placed.

Importance of age-matched peers

Success with observational learning is increased when peers are equivalently age-matched. The age-matched peer is a representative symbol for the observer. The model is then considered an entity that was created in order to be representative of the observer (DeLoache, 2000). Previous research shows that, pre-schoolers adjust their behaviours to match those behaviours of children age-matched and older (Brody & Stoneman, 2001). In modelling, the model's age and competence is important when influencing imitation (Schunk, 1987), therefore, watching a video or live child who is age-matched to those children observing can serve as a beneficial way to modify behaviours of pre-schoolers. Responsiveness is increased in children when perception of similarity exists (Barnett, 2001). Interestingly, the findings show that, the learning of new cognitive skills is not affected by gender (Schunk, 1987). Thus, the child sees acceptance from peers of either gender when the model engages in certain behaviours and the child wants that same acceptance.

Observational learning is a type of social comparison where the observer compares himself to a social standard and then self-evaluates his actions based on how closely the model represents him (Schunk, 1987). If the observer feels any sense of similarity to the model, the observer uses those representative behaviours as a social cue. The observer is more likely to imitate social behaviours of those who have a higher competency than those with a lower competency (Schunk, 1987). Therefore, a model and observer of similar age and development are important for the observer to produce the most imitation. Thus, if the observer does not relate to the model, the observer is less likely to accept those behaviours as suitable. Pre-schoolers who feel an association with the model based on similarity are looking for positive consequences for their actions. Watching another's success creates expectations which the child is likely to experience themselves (Schunk, 1987). Children attempt to learn advantageous behaviours while avoiding those behaviours which are unsuccessful (Schunk, 2000). Children regard behaviours to be acceptable based on watching the model producing successful behaviours (Grusec, 1992). Observed results are comparable to those results directly experienced and the results can change a child's behaviour (Colledge, 2002). The child will likely begin to accept those behaviours to be appropriate for that specific procedure and experience.

In addition to increasing a child's ability to perform novel, complex tasks, modelling also increases the acceptance of certain behaviours. Modelling allows children to learn the types of actions that are acceptable in certain situations (Bandura, 1999). Furthermore, modelling may be an effective tool to develop the observer's cognitive skills if the modelling involves affect and actions in combination rather than actions alone (Colledge, 2002). Pre-schoolers observing peers begin to learn social rules and to determine what types of behaviours are acceptable for imitation. These social rules apply in situations where the pre-schooler may have little or no previous experience.

Four sub-processes of observational learning

The social cognitive theory states four sub-processes are involved in observational learning: attention, retention, production, and motivation (Schunk, 1987). For the sub-process of attention, the pre-schooler must be aware of the events happening within their environment. Young children give a task only a limited amount of time and attention needed to master that task (Bandura, 1986). Further, the child must be attentive to the actions being exhibited in order to continue with the

following sub-processes. Pre-schoolers must be able to take the observed information and store the information within their memory, thus creating retention. Retention of the information occurs without the child consciously being aware. The child must transfer the learned actions or information into symbolic forms and store it for easy retrieval later (Bandura, 1986). Within the production sub-process, the pre-schooler interprets exhibited behaviours as those that should be imitated. Children are looking for social acceptance, and by being more like their peers, children feel a sense of security and acceptance. Finally, motivation is demonstrated when the pre-schooler has enough incentive to imitate the actual behaviours (Schunk, 1987). The child has now connected the importance of the exhibited action to social acceptance and begins using those same behaviours.

Importance of the environment

A person's environment plays a large part in the formation of an individual's beliefs and actions. Environments may consist of various settings including school, home, medical, and work. The social cognitive theory states that cognitive processes evolve through environmental influences (Bandura, 1999). Thus human behaviour is determined by the environment in which the person is exposed, and the expressed behaviour is modified by the environment (Grusec, 1992). Observing a peer engaging in an activity within a socially acceptable environment can help mould the observer's idea of what is acceptable. People can observe others in a variety of environments. One such environment is the imposed environment (Bandura, 1999). For example, an imposed environment is when the observer is placed in a situation whether prepared or unprepared and has little control over what happens. Another type of environment, the selected environment, occurs when an observer is selected and placed within an environment with specific activities. A third type of environment is a constructed environment (Bandura, 1999). A constructed environment occurs when a person generates the environment to fit the needs of the observer. An example of a constructed environment for a child is an environment which is intended to produce a specific feeling or emotion. Depending on the type of environment in which the observer is placed, different reactions and feelings determine what acceptable behaviour is.

Deep Neck on the Prima Facie of Selectivity Concept

Selective process: explains that people choose messages and media that align with their current beliefs, values and ideas as opposed to messages and media that go against their current beliefs, values and ideas. Some psychologists consider these to be defense mechanisms that we routinely use to protect ourselves (and our egos) from information that would threaten us. Others argue that they are merely routinized procedures for coping with the enormous quantity of sensory information constantly bombarding us. Either way, the selective processes function as complex and highly sophisticated filtering mechanisms that screen our useless sensory data while quickly identifying and highlighting the most useful patterns in this data. Perception theory is basically a psychological concept which describes different angles individuals view event, situation, ideas from their own perspective; which more often than not, does not reflect the true state of things. We are actually moving away from media – all powerful, pervasive media, hypodermic needle theory, media could do a lot of things, it could persuade you to do a predetermined behaviour stimuli. Here we look at individual and the individual does what s/he feels to do with message that are congruent with his/her belief system.

Ayittah (2013) looks at perception from the sense organs; with the ability to determining objects and its qualities and response to stimuli. There is physical or chemical stimulation of the five sense organs by way of signal in the nervous system during perception of sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing. Okpoko (2013) in his postulation views perception from personal construct. He argued that everybody has his “perceptual screen” which comprises his aspirations, needs, values, expectations, experiences and attitudes which shapes his interpretation of whatever data that comes his way. These pre-existing attributes in individuals is what differentiates them from the other person which makes for different interpretation of issues of the same status. Selective process theory is comprised of four steps: selective exposure, attention, perception and retention. Through selective processes theory, individuals interpret the media in their own way and tend to avoid messages that do not confirm their beliefs. Whitaker and Smith (2012), they include: selective exposure, selective retention, selective perception and selective attention. People tend to expose themselves to those messages that are congruent with their existing attitude and interest. In the event of their being expose to it. They often seems not to perceive it or recast or interpret it to fit their existing views or to forget it more readily. You adjust to recast to suit your pre-existing or predisposition. Example, you may find a believer drinking alcohol when you approached him, he started by twisting the scripture to suit his sinful nature.

The Three Selectivity Concepts

Selective exposure/attention: is at play when people tend to expose themselves to communications which are in line with what they believe but avoid communications that challenge their beliefs. Members of the audience have a variety of media contents to choose from, but whatever content one is to be exposed to will be such that agrees with what one stands for. Selective exposure is people’s tendency to expose themselves to or attend to media messages that they feel are in accord with their already-held attitudes and interests and the parallel tendency to avoid those that might create dissonance. On the whole, it is the idea that people tend to expose themselves to messages that are consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. Democrats will watch their party’s national convention on television, but go bowling when the GOP gala is aired. Lazardfeld, et al. (1944) in their Erie County voter study discover that about two-thirds of the constant partisans (Republicans and Democrats) managed to see and hear more of their own side’s propaganda than opposition’s...but-and this is important-the more strongly partisan the person, the more likely he is to insulate himself from contrary points of view. According to Nwachukwu et al. (2013), is a person’s selection of contents he can concentrate on among a variety of available options, while ignoring others. The eye receives data and transfers to the brain for interpretation. For the fact, that the eye is fast in capturing events as they occur means that there is tendency to view many things at the same time.

The presupposition here is that communication is a deliberate act, an active process. In other words, people consciously expose themselves to messages they would want to expose themselves to. One does not just wake up and find oneself in a communication environment when one does not want to be. We usually expose ourselves to something that holds gratification/relevance to us. According to this concept, people tend to expose themselves to media messages that are in agreement with their existing attitudes, beliefs, opinion, worldview and interest and avoid messages running contrary to their held beliefs. The underlying factor in this

concept is reinforcement of attitudes, beliefs and world values. The reason is that people usually try to maintain cognitive consistency/balance. So there is the tendency for people to always seek out messages which support the values and beliefs they already have. Joseph Klapper observes that the media do not influence us that much but rather reinforce what we already think or believe due to certain mediating factors that have already influenced what we believe (e.g. church, family, school etc).

For instance, if you were watching John Austin's preaching on TBN and after his, T. B Joshua comes on the air and you change the channel, you are doing so because John Austin's message is the one that is congruent with your belief and values. In other words, it holds reinforcement for your belief but that of T.B Joshua does not. The act of changing channel is a deliberate and active process. Before now it was believed that all one needed to do is to react in a particular way to a media message is to expose oneself to the message. This is the assumption of the hypodermic needle media theory (or uniform effect theory which states that people will react to the same media message in the same way) which relegated to the background selectivity influence theory. People link crimes to media exposure. It is very difficult to catch individual attentions, audience members actively and selectivity adopt himself to that which he wanted to expose reinforcement is the variable, reinforcing attitude/belief. Example here- The Lord chosen Church and vest.

Selective perception: is hinged on the individual's misinterpretation of a message based on his pre-existing attitudes, experiences and opinions. No matter how factual what is being viewed is, the individual is judging from an already existing stereotyped template which definitely will influence the result of his assessment. Baran and Davis (2020), selective perception is the mental or psychological recasting of a message so that its meaning is in line with a person's beliefs and attitudes. Selective perception comes after exposure. Perception is actually attaching meaning to external stimuli. E.g. someone may look at a tree and perceive the awesomeness of God and another may merely be appreciating its beauty. The common denominator under selective perception is consonance (that is agreement) with beliefs, attitudes and other idiosyncrasies members of mass communication audience have diverse interests, beliefs and attitudes and experiences lead to differences in the way they perceive, interpret and respond to particular message. Hence, for every communication situation, we enter, we enter with our own frame of reference because we already have certain background knowledge concerning the issue. People perceive particular media message different because of different in beliefs, interest etc.

For instance, if a catholic member is watching the TV and sees a Pentecostal pastor praying for someone and the person is falling under anointing, s/he may perceive it as wrong because the act of falling during prayer is not in consonance with his/her already held belief. But a Pentecostal may see the person as falling under anointing. Likewise two persons may be watching a model on TV, one may perceive the model as malnourished and having eating disorder while the other may see the model's figure as the ideal figure/beautiful (the former believe being plumb is the ideal). Therefore, what we mean by perception is making sense out of our environment. So what is the variable here; issues that are congruent or incongruent with beliefs, attitudes and idiosyncrasies e.g. Roman Catholic Church- Statute of Virgin Mary- the core Roman Catholic reverence it but other from another background (Pentecostal Church) will see the statute as idol worship.

Selective retention: this is the ability of an individual to remember media contents which makes more meaning to him than the ones which he considered secondary. Though sometimes, such contents are retained with distorted interpretation depending on how they were perceived. One of the major aids to selective retention is on the medium the message was received. Baran and Davis (2020), selective retention is the process by which people tend to remember best and longest information that is consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and interests. Name all the classes in which you have earned the grade A. name all the classes in which you have earned a C. the As have it, no doubt. The relevance of the concept to the systematic review cannot be overemphasized considering the fact that members of the audience will react to the same programme in different ways. The reactions are guided by pre-existing attitudes, opinions, backgrounds, cultures experiences which shape their perception.

Selective retention deals recall and subconscious, here- hinges at messages/processes that yield positive reinforcement. The underlying factor is that such messages are more likely to be retained/remembered. Simply put you retain information you know holds relevance for you or positive reinforcement for you. That is an individual may retain messages that support his/her belief or appeals to his/her interest. So selective retention depends on the importance one attaches a message. Exposure to message does not mean that one would retain the message. You can only remember those things you choose to remember. There are numbers you commit to memory and you do not check the phone- you forget about those ones you do not want to retain.

Implication of this Selective Influence for Communication Scholars

There is dire need for audience research; this is necessary because, we now know that some media contents do not have uniform influence on every audience member who exposes him/herself to them. Example; while a boy may see soap operas as waste of time and Premier League as worthwhile, a girl may do the reverse. When one carry out audience research, there are two things we look out for (i) demographic character and (ii) psychographic characteristics of the audience.

Audience demographics: To know this, you divide the audience population along the line of age, gender, educational level, occupation, income, location (residence) and ethnic backgrounds. In carrying out this research, you may find out that the characteristics of your audience members are upper-income, middle aged, middle income individual not above 35. Audience demographics characteristics help media specialists in becoming very proficient in determining media habits of the mass audience e.g. younger people perceive things different from older people. For older people, certain things are seen by younger people as of the same sex are likely to expose themselves to certain media content e.g. it has been observed that the female folk generally watch the soap opera called “Untamed Beauties.” Dividing the mass audience along the line of income, drawing from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, we find out that while individuals in some group in the audience may be ready to spend one million naira for a door to satisfy their security needs, some other group would not even think of this. The first group can afford to do this because based on their status in the society, security is a paramount need. But to the second set of individuals who have not got to that other individual stage, their major concern is to satisfy their physical needs (that is need for food, water, etc). So an advertiser advertising bullet proof doors would target the first category of individuals. Audience demographics helps advertisers to know groups to target.

Audience psychographics: Here, one is researching on the audience dividing them by basically looking at the internal psychological make-up of the individuals that make up the mass audience. This have to do with research on audience attitudes, opinions, values or self-esteem. These psychological characteristics determine the media content they are likely to expose themselves to, perceive and retain. By researching audience psychographics, one can find out that people who always want to learn about new things- the curious, experimental, the knowledge seekers. These beings are receptive to new innovative ideas, they accept change, and are early adopters. You may also find that there are self-opinionated people who are given to dogmatism- these individuals do not believe that anyone knows better than them. If you find a dogmatic individual coming into a communication environment, you should know that there's nothing that you would say that will change his/her mind on an issue. Audience research is necessary for one to know who is likely to get exposed to programmes.

Outboard Implication of Selectivity Concept:

- i. The selectivity concept gives an insight into processes that depict/epitomize situations where messages can either have effect or not. This means that there are times, one may embark on wasted efforts as media persons. If one package programmes that are not in agreement with the target audience beliefs, attitudes and interests.
- ii. The selectivity concept elucidates the influence of individual differences and groups affiliations in shaping media influences. Social category and social relationship: Deeper Christian Life Ministry and the issues of ring and gold. The media have been found to be very effective in creating awareness but when it comes to real change in audience members individual differences, interpersonal relationship and group affiliation come to play. Two individuals may exposed themselves to same media content, but will not react to the message in the same manner due to differences in psychological make-up and perhaps associations they keep.
- iii. It focuses attention on how individual processes information: among the members of the mass audience watching/listening to news on TV/Radio, some are likely to remember the news bits that came up first rather than those that came last. So as a media person, one should be able to determine messages that should come last as well as those to be emphasised. This brings up the primacy and recency theory; some people go back to doing other things after listening/watching the headline news, they are most likely to remember the news bits that came first. This has to do with primacy. Recency explains situation when one remembers the messages that come last
- iv. It shows that one is no longer under the power of the media. It has therefore, transferred power of the mass media to the audience. Subsequent theories after the magic bullet/stimulus response theory of audience member and mass media influence. It was due to the perceived influence of the media that terms like PG (parental guidance), classification of movies, etc came up. These measures were taken to protect the infant mind (that is children), though some adults have being found to have infant mind. Nevertheless, media influences can be handled by interpersonal relationship. But according to Klapper, both mass media and interpersonal influences must come to play for audience change to occur. The three stages of influence are 1. Awareness; 2.

Affective; and 3. Conative. The media play great roles in awareness level; at the affective level, social groups and interpersonal relationships play greater roles. Mass media alone cannot push people to action, media influence can be reduced through interpersonal relationship.

Discussion

The distillation of the systematic review is the illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication, using this context as a framework, the systematic review showed that selectivity concept pays deep attention to process in which messages can and cannot have effects, provides insight into influence of individual differences and group affiliation in shaping media influence and attention to selective processes helps clarify how individuals process information.

This brings to fore the underlying notions of individual differences and cognitive dissonance theories, the systematic review by extrapolation guaranteed potential support for limited-effects view. Using controlled variation, this review demonstrated that numerous individual differences and group affiliations limited media's power to change attitude. This led logically to the development of dissonance theory, the idea that people work consciously and unconsciously to limit the influence of messages that counter to their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. This dissonance reduction operated through selectivity in exposure (attention), retention, and perception.

The systematic review further revealed that observational learning is illuminations from neurobiological notions of communication. Hence, the learning from observation of the environment, or social cognition, is the basis of social cognitive theory. According to Bandura (1994), social cognitive theory explains psychological functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation. In this model of reciprocal determinism, behaviour; cognitive, biological, and other personal factors; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bidirectionally. In summation, the findings of the systematic review is that things people experience in their environments for example, mass media can affect people's behaviours, and that effect is influenced by various personal factors specific to those people.

Conclusion

Based on the results and findings of the systematic review, the study concluded here, that contemporary thinking on selectivity concept ties that retention to the level of importance the recalled phenomenon holds for individuals. Keeping in mind that these processes are not discrete, you cannot retain that to which you have not been exposed. That is individuals will choose to expose themselves to and remember best the media messages that align with their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. On the contrary, individuals will choose to ignore media messages that go against their core values, beliefs and attitudes.

Also, the study concluded that observational learning is simply efficient form of stimulus-response learning and as a valuable tool in understanding mass media effects. Observers can acquire symbolic representations of the behaviour, and these pictures provide them with information on which to base their own subsequent behaviour.

Recommendations

Selectivity concepts and observational learning illuminating the neurobiological notions of communication are thorough, ground breaking and truth, with right research and knowledge. It is therefore, recommended based on the foregoing that:

- i. Communication scholars should learn how to individualize messages rather than generalize messages.
- ii. Communication scholars should use selectivity concepts and observational learning to their advantage to sway an audience's way of thinking.
- iii. Media personnel should be able to determine messages that should come last as well as those to be emphasised.
- iv. Mass media and interpersonal influences must come together for audience change to occur.

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