

Term Paper: Communication Theories for Everyday Life

Throughout this program, through all the courses we have taken, the information we have acquired, and the subjects we have learned, we have been able to reach the conclusion that we are in a changing world. The development of the human being has had communication as a protagonist, with it has been possible to send messages of all kinds allowing each other to understand each other, this is easy to understand today, however, or it was in ancient times when it was only possible to communicate by voice, gestures or some kind of signs. Anyway, human beings have managed to solve this situation, and that is where technology has become the protagonist to make things easier; the need is the key piece that has always led the human being to create more and seek more accessible solutions for everyone, creating more permanent messages. Change also implies giving up and leaving some things behind; when there is something new, society imposes us to replace what we have, even if it is in good condition, for that new artifact that is fashionable and even if it does not have much difference with the previous one, it becomes a necessity, in the same way, the media have also become replaceable.

As we know, the first means of communication are those we know today as ATL, i.e., television, radio, magazines, and newspapers; all of these have been rapidly replaced in recent decades by what is now known as social networks. Although traditional communication methods are still used as an important source of information and entertainment for many people, social networks have changed the way we consume and share information. One of the main reasons for this change is the technology we have, as I am very sure that there is no person in this university who does not own a cell phone, and this gives access to the internet, a tool that really gives you everything you want in a matter of seconds. When I read the first question, I realized that I don't really consume any type of traditional media anymore since I have all that digitized at my

fingertips. I think that if I had to make a ranking of the mediated information sources that I use the least, radio would be in the first place, since everything that at some point radio offered me, today platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, or YouTube offer it to me. I think that not only do I share the idea that radio for some years now is not the same as it used to be before, compared to the digital platforms previously mentioned, in radio there is a lack of original and relevant content, although it is true, many radio stations also offer programs that differ from others, but they also do not offer the possibility of being able to listen to the show again or to go back or forward, which today is very important.

If I have to be honest, in spite of that, I think the radio could still take me to be part of its active audience because, in case of a natural emergency, this is the only medium where I can listen to relevant and last-minute information without the need to be connected. I was born in Peru, and my country is considered a country at risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis, and in case that happens, we have to have a portable radio in our emergency backpacks always to keep us alert and informed in case telephone systems collapse. Television, on the other hand, is the one medium of communication that I am sure will never be an active audience again. Today I have everything in the palm of my hands; without having to live in Peru, I can watch shows that are only broadcast there because by paying a little extra, some platforms allow me to watch them; if I want to watch a movie, I have Netflix, HBO Max, or Peacock; if I want to see the latest news of a famous singer I have social networks and YouTube to find out. Television is something that is simply no longer necessary to use, and in this case, it is different from radio because it would not help in case of a natural disaster because it would have to be connected, and you would not be able to make use of it.

These answers led me to realize that I personally use media and digital platforms according to what society imposes on me as trendy, and in case of emergencies, whatever helps me get out of it. Therefore, in conclusion, I can say that although media can satisfy various needs, from information to entertainment and socialization, there are some that today's generation will use only if they have a specific need.

The second question leads us to reflect on the extent of media dependence in our daily lives. Personally, I would say that the reason I am most dependent on the media is for entertainment. For as long as I can remember, I had a television that allowed me to watch my favorite series and entertained me while my parents worked, nowadays the first thing I do in the morning is turn on my cell phone and click on TikTok to have a little fun before starting my daily tasks. Traditional and modern media provide us with a wide variety of entertainment options, and this, in turn, allows us to relax, pass the time and often expand our knowledge. In addition, I also depend on the media for the information it provides. As I said before, I am from Peru, and not being there physically means that I am not so aware of what is going on politically or economically; in this particular case, I rely more on modern media because, thanks to online newspaper sites, I can know what is happening in my country instantly. Not only do I learn about events in the world, but they also help me to do homework because, with just one click, I have infinite access to different sources of information for different assignments. Finally, I would say that the last reason I rely on media is for socialization. As never before, I have the possibility to connect with other people, either through social networks, online forums, or socializing applications; this makes it much easier to make friends and to let go of that part of me, that is introverted and shy.

I believe that this last statement perfectly explains the likelihood of me changing certain behaviors and attitudes when I rely on the media. I feel that, in some ways, the media has become

a mask for people my age. At least with modern media, we have the opportunity to be whom we want to be; today, I can decide to be the happiest person in life and post pictures of me putting on the biggest smile when in reality, I am probably going through the biggest break up in my life, and the only person who will know will be me because my followers and friends will think everything is fine because that is what I let on. Without media dependency, human beings are left vulnerable to be transparent, to be honest with ourselves, and not to pretend anything; moreover, without media, we are somehow forced to interact with people in a real and face-to-face way, to be real and true to ourselves which leads us to accept ourselves as we are and not to fantasize about whom we want to be.

To answer the third question, I would like to start by telling you who I am. Despite everyone saying that I am a very extroverted and social person, I really have always considered myself an introverted and reserved person who knows how to interact with many people. It was probably the experiences in my life that led me to seek to know how to adapt to the different situations that I can go through, but I would say that, above all, what helped me to be who I am are my parents. Mario and Rosa were, are, and always will be the main direct opinion leaders in my life. I believe that a person chooses whom to follow depending on how much admiration they have for them and how much trust and respect they have for them; in this case, my parents have shown me to be people of integrity since I was born. Therefore, every piece of advice and every word they say to me is treasured in my heart and means ninety percent of my final decision. But if I have to be honest, in the last few years, in which I have been more exposed to social networks and media, I have realized that I have added some opinion leaders without intentionally wanting to do so. Since I consume a lot of digital platforms, I am faced with seeing a lot of influencers and the things they opine, and I naturally lean toward what they say, and even sometimes, when my inner self tells me

they are wrong, I force myself to think otherwise. I believe that the main reason for this is that I am constantly consuming the content of these characters, and I create a bond with them without the need to know them personally.

Modern media allows us to be whatever we want, and that is why people who were never known in their lives can become famous with just a ten-second video, and we ourselves, having the possibility of being "followed," can also become opinion leaders for others. Personally, I think I did become an opinion leader. About five years ago, I began serving in the preteen ministry of my church, where I became a leader of a small group of girls between the ages of eleven and fourteen. At some point in my service, girls started asking me about my social media because they wanted to follow me through social media, and eventually, all the girls in my small group did. I remember like it was yesterday when I commented on a vintage clothing page post with a joke, and it wasn't even an hour later when I got a message from one of my spiritual leaders telling me that despite the fact that he knew it was a joke if one of the girls in my small group saw it, she was going to follow my lead and think that was okay, when in fact it wasn't. At that moment, I thought that my leader was exaggerating, but after a few hours, I realized that he was very right; I realized that the power of opinion that I exercised with the girls was very big and that what I commented, what I published or shared was going to be seen by them as something acceptable, so from that moment on I started to be more careful with the type of content I shared.

In conclusion, the use of the media goes far beyond entertainment, every action has a consequence, no matter how small it may be, and this is how we can introduce chapter fifteen, in which we talk about the side effects that the media can have on our lives.

In this chapter, we learned about social learning theory, which basically tells us that children learn about gender roles and behaviors through what they observe and by modeling the

behaviors and attitudes of those closest to them, including those portrayed in media such as movies. Since it is now normal for both parents to work, children are at risk of spending more time with fictional characters than with their own parents, which is why they look to what they see on their small tablets as role models. Movies like Mary Poppins, Pocahontas, Beauty and the Beast, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, and Mulan represent traditional gender roles and reinforce or totally change gender stereotypes.

I wish I could talk in-depth about all of these films, but unfortunately, I have only had the pleasure of being able to see Beauty and the Beast and Mulan, but I think these two films are necessary to answer this question. For example, in Beauty and the Beast, the main female character is portrayed as caring and sensitive, while the male character is portrayed as being tougher, stronger, and reserved, which throughout the film develops, and we see a stronger, more determined Belle, while we see a prince who is not afraid to show himself vulnerable. In the case of Mulan, we have the main character who shows herself to be brave and not afraid of anything, but at the end of the film shows that she was really always afraid but went ahead and persevered at all times, and another hand, we see how Shang always wanted to show himself without feelings but was actually a very emotional person. These two movies show us the reality of life; just like all these characters, we humans also want to show a certain way of being according to the stereotypes that society imposes, but we really keep more than that. These movies teach children that it is okay to show themselves the way they are and that they don't have to follow the stereotypes that society says are okay.

To answer the second question, I am inclined to follow the ideology that I have believed in since I was a child. I personally believe that pornography is not beneficial for human beings. The sexual act was created by our God as a gift to be performed within marriage and only with your

spouse; therefore, the consumption of pornography is a sinful behavior and harmful to individuals and relationships, as it perverts sexuality by focusing on the satisfaction of sexual desires outside of marriage and also usually involves behaviors that are harmful to individuals. In this chapter, we learned about learning theory, which suggests that consuming pornography can have negative effects on people, especially in terms of shaping attitudes and behaviors related to sexuality; therefore, consuming this type of content would reinforce harmful stereotypes and promote bad attitudes towards women. On the other hand, the catharsis theory tells us something completely opposite since, according to this theory; pornography would allow us to release tension in a safe way, which in some way or another suggests that pornography is beneficial.

We have often heard from our parents that spending too much time in front of the television can harm us; the cultivation theory suggests something similar. In response to the third question, in this chapter, we study that this theory suggests that the more continuous and prolonged our exposure to television, the more the attitudes and perceptions we have of the world can be shaped.

It is well known that both VH1 and MTV are television channels that focus on broadcasting music videos and another music-related programming, and this was the key that made them so popular among young people, greatly influencing popular culture and music trends for several decades. If we were to study rock videos, such as those found on these two television channels, we might expect "heavy users" to adopt a worldview that reflects the attitudes and waltzes promoted by these videos. However, I hold the position that not all rock videos are the same; most of them often feature images and messages that can be sexually suggestive or violent, which can greatly influence how the audience views life and relationships. Definitely, if we compare the views adopted among "heavy users" of MTV and VH1 with the views adopted among "heavy users" of NBC, they will be totally different. This is because morning TV shows focus on real-life stories

and people, while rock music videos tend to feature fictional and exaggerated situations and characters. As I said at the beginning, the cultivation theory suggests that if someone is continually exposed to one type of television content, it will influence their attitudes and perceptions of viewers. In conclusion, this might signify that, in a certain way, “heavy users” would follow some inspiration from rock music videos.

Changing the subject a bit and answering the fourth question, from a public relations point of view, agenda building and priming are important to manage the images of companies and non-profit organizations. A couple of months ago, I had the opportunity to help my brother in the area of public relations in his non-profit organization *Paqariy*, an organization that brings help to underprivileged children in faraway cities, and that is where I learned a little more about these terms. Agenda building refers to the ability to understand what issues and problems are important to the target audience and stakeholders, while priming refers to thinking in advance about how the audience will interpret what you will say and how they understand the issues and problems. With these two tools, the company or organization can prepare itself to get an idea of the public's perception of its industry, product, or service.

The importance of these two processes lies in the consequences of their effectiveness, as they frame potential problems in a favorable way and mitigate possible negative perceptions, and obviously bring to collision the creativity of those working in the area because it allows finding quick and effective solutions, also allows to manage the image of the company in a simple way, and thus cultivate something positive in the minds of the audience creating a good reputation.

Finally, I would like to answer the last question in a personal way. Apart from the positive effects that were talked about in this chapter, I think I have personally seen that the media helps to promote a healthy community full of empathy and understanding, obviously in the case that it is

used correctly. Many times I have been tired, stressed, sad, and just not wanting to do anything, and receiving a little message from someone telling me how proud they are of me changed my life completely, or seeing a post from someone who went through the same thing as me and managed to overcome it gives me the courage to keep trying and not stay where I am, and I think the theory that could best explain these effects would be the Social Learning theory, because it suggests, as we learned before, that people learn behaviors and attitudes according to what we observe, therefore if I see a publication of someone who is explaining how they overcame a situation that I am also going through, I will have a more positive attitude because in my brain there is the idea that if that person overcame it, I would also manage to do it.