



Research

Media Effects and Cultural Approaches to Research



Should Life Imitate Culture?

Since the emergence of popular music, movies, television, and video games as influential mass media, the relationship between make-believe stories and real-life imitation has drawn a great deal of attention.



Researching the Effect of Mass Media on Individuals and Society

○ Media effects research

- Attempts to understand, explain, and predict the effects of mass media on individuals and society

○ Cultural studies

- Focuses on how people make meaning, articulate values, comprehend reality, and arrange experiences through cultural symbols



Early Theories of Media Effects

- Hypodermic-needle model
 - Media shoot effects directly into unsuspecting victims.
- Minimal-effects model
 - Researchers argued that people generally engage in **selective exposure** and **selective retention** with regard to the media.

Early Theories of Media Effects (cont.)

- Uses and gratifications model
 - Researchers studied the ways in which people used the media to satisfy various emotional or intellectual needs.



Conducting Media Effects Research

○ Experiments

- Test whether a hypothesis is true
- Utilize an experimental group and a control group

○ Survey research

- Collecting and measuring data from a group of respondents

○ Content analysis

- Studies specific media messages



Contemporary Media Effects Theories

- Social learning theory

- Four-step process
 - Attention
 - Retention
 - Motor reproduction
 - Motivation

- Agenda-setting

- Media set the agenda for major topics of discussion.



Contemporary Media Effects Theories (cont.)

○ Cultivation effect

- Heavy viewing of television leads individuals to perceive reality in ways consistent with portrayals on television.

○ Spiral of silence

- Those whose views are in the minority will keep their views to themselves for fear of social isolation.



Contemporary Media Effects Theories (cont.)

○ Third-person effect

- People believe others are more affected by media messages than they are themselves.
- Instrumental in censorship