

# Pedagogical Framework of Media Psychology: A Concept Review

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## Abstract

Media Psychology is known as an area of study within psychological studies and now a day as a part of media and cultural studies that deal with the social, cultural and psychological aspects of mass media. As an interdisciplinary stream of study, media psychology is influenced by the approaches and practices taking place in media and cultural studies. This manuscript looks media psychology as an application of theories, concepts, methods, approaches and instruments to study the media environments, including philosophical, aesthetic, literary, historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, political, economic and scientific investigations, as well as, applied, professional and pedagogical perspectives. The study also makes an in-depth analysis of the interaction taking place between various academic and applied aspects of psychology and multitude of media focusing on how media affects or influences the psychology of people, how people think and relate, how it affects values or beliefs, and how it shapes leisure and work time.

**Keywords:** Media Psychology; Media Effects; Pedagogical Framework; Application and Viability of the Domain

## Introduction

Media Psychology is a new rapidly growing field in communication studies and psychology established to lend support, research and expertise of human psyche and behavior to various outlets of media and entertainment. Research and development potential in the field of media psychology is broad and is currently in its defining stages in a country like India. Media psychology professionals project limitless opportunity in this field due to the constantly growing advancement of technology and increased human involvement with the access to it.

Media Psychology transcends several subjects of wider acceptance like Psychology and Sociology, as it assumes that the psychology of people and their methods of social organization are, in large measure, a product of a culture's characteristic information patterns.

As a new multidiscipline, media professionals working in the field of media psychology use psychological theories, concepts and methods to study the impact of the mass media on individuals, groups and cultures (Carll, 2003).

Media psychologist wants to know how a particular medium affects or influences the psychology of people, how people think

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and relate, how it affects values or beliefs, and how it shapes leisure and work time. The media psychology also tries to understand how one mode of communication affects human behavior differently than another mode of communication.

In media psychology, it's important to study how the media influence behavior especially, since today most of the culture is "media-centric." Recent researches conducted by media houses shows that people between the ages of 15 to 35 spend more time surfing the internet than they do in front of the television.

The rapid - almost daily- changes in media technology and the resulting effects on culture makes this field of media psychology one of the most dynamic and exciting areas today. Recent trends in social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace have increased the importance for businesses and organizations to understand how the media impacts behavior (Derwin, Merode & Shayne, 2006).

Recent natural calamities and disasters gave communication researchers an opportunity to study and recommend changes so that news organizations can inform the public during and after disasters without inflicting more damage.

### **The Pedagogical Framework**

Quite multidisciplinary in nature, media psychology practices diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of media environments, including philosophical, aesthetic, literary, historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, political, economic and scientific investigations, as well as, applied, professional and pedagogical perspectives.

Media psychology looks into the matter of how media of communication affect human perception, understanding, feeling, and value; and how our interaction with media facilitates or impedes our chances of survival (Diesch and Caldwell, 1993).

In media psychology, we study about media environments, their structure, content, and impact on people. If today we look around, we will notice that mediated technologies are everywhere, from our cell phones to our Facebook page to the website that provides our daily stock quotes to our favorite news blog. If we walk into any business house, nonprofit organization, art gallery, classroom, or health club computerized information devices are there - everywhere. They're on car dashboards and on cell phones, even household appliances.

On computerized devices, users access the Web to communicate. They talk to each other, to companies, to organizations, to people they know and people they don't know. This virtual conversation takes place over several different interfaces, continuously, and has ushered in a new age of consumer-designed content, crucial for businesses and other entities to understand and leverage.

This communication revolution translates into possibilities that were unimaginable even 10 years ago for those in the field of Media Psychology. Organizations no longer have a choice but to understand how the psychology of using, interacting with and benefiting from social networking sites, websites and other mediated interfaces affects overall goals or the bottom line (Fischhoff, 2005).

Many with interests in health care, education, business or the arts benefit from their understanding in media psychology. A health care professional, for example, can apply media psychology research in a variety of ways, including creating media-based tools for therapeutic purposes, or using media devices for health care prevention, such as weight loss, smoking cessation or helping implement an exercise plan. Media can also be used for support groups and distance health care.

Websites and suppliers of educational materials especially benefit from professionals with knowledge of media psychology. Educational-based companies must understand how to design interfaces that impart learning and empower students, young or adult. Also schools and companies that create distance-learning programs need the expertise of media psychology professionals to advise content writers and designers on interface functionality and ease-of-use.

Businesses need those with knowledge of media behavior to formulate technology training programs that impart knowledge and ease users' fears. Companies that specialize in technology need professionals who can advise engineers on interface design and usability, as well as learning styles and preferences. And virtual companies that employ Instant Messaging and other virtual communication tools use media psychology professionals to facilitate and guide virtual team-building.

Media psychology researchers are conducting some of the most advanced research today in how social networking tools can be used for social justice, community building, identity and branding.

Advertising firms and corporations need people who understand these tools, such as Twitter, My Space and You Tube, to implement the new marketing paradigm constructed from these tools.

The pedagogical framework of media psychology basically intends to promote, sustain and recognize excellence in media psychology scholarship, research, criticism, application and artistic practices (Giles, 2003). The framework mostly engage a theoretical and practical understanding of the psychological impact of evolving media content, the study of human behavior while working with media applications, the analysis of how media affects individuals and cultures and how the new media applications like social networking, digital broadcasting can be used for socially constructive purposes. The framework develops a critical and practical knowledge of the use of psychology to understand how audiences interact with media and also explores the psychological effects of media, how media use can be researched and evaluated, and how to communicate with different audiences across different mediums (Bernard, 2012).

### **Viability of the Domain**

Media psychology is a new rapidly growing field in psychology established to lend support, research and expertise of human psyche and behavior to various outlets of media and entertainment. Research and development potential in the field of media psychology is broad and is currently in its defining stages in countries like India.

Having a formal education in Media Psychology or a formal training in media studies with an understanding of psychology can offer us a range of communication activities to work. From research point of view, media psychology offers a lot of opportunities to scholars having a formal training in communication and psychology to study and investigate media more seriously as new influential forms of communication are expanding frequently. A perfect case study is the rise of social networking websites like Twitter and micro-blogging. These social networking sites and blogs are creating a sense of “ambient intimacy” for its users by providing an always on channel of social information streaming in and out of consciousness, which is an interesting area of study in itself.

As a media psychologist, we can expand both the psychological and communication areas into a systematic analysis that is broader and more interconnected in scope. Thus media psychology is a complex field, and is the study of connections between human psychology and processes in media systems at various scales.

A formal training in media psychology can help us to become a media psychologist. Practice licensing and certification for this field is not required in many countries including India, unless one plans to perform clinical services and counseling to human subjects. Acquiring the knowledge specific to our field of choice through experience and/or education to go along with our knowledge of human behavior and psychology will help us to deal with the psychological aspects of media studies.

A formal training in media psychology will also help us to work as a media consultant for creative directors and producers of works made for television, the Internet, gaming and education. Our knowledge of cognitive, developmental, cultural and positive psychology--coupled with the understanding of the technological components for production in our field of interest--will make us a valuable asset to movie, television and Internet producers concerned with producing positive works with an accurate depiction of human life circumstances and cultural environments (Bernard & Friedland, 1998).

One can also have an opportunity to work as a marketing director for a wide variety of businesses and industries who utilize television and Internet to market and brand their products and services. A media psychology training and education will provide scholars with a deeper understanding of the minds of consumers than the traditional track toward becoming a marketing director. Social networking is an area that is covered deeply within the education of media psychology. One will be responsible for staying abreast of marketing trends, competition and applying one’s media psychology training and education to help to produce effective branding for organizations.

For those interested in the arts or entertainment industry, a background in media psychology will enable them to consult with writers, directors, animators, and video game producers. As a consultant, one can provide accurate descriptions of real-world social conditions, illnesses and stereotypes so that those in the industry can create meaningful and empowering movies, television programs and products (Oliver, Shrum & Vorderer, 2006).

A formal training in media psychology offers a rich diversity of options for those who believe in the combination of psychology and media.

## Conclusion

To understand media systems as a media ecologist, one requires an ability to develop new approaches to media studies. One has to develop a method of working to study in depth the roles psychologists play in various aspects of the media, including, but not limited to, radio, television, film, video, newsprint, magazines, and newer media technologies. One needs a sense to understand the complex relationship between psychology and media representatives.

A very good understanding of emerging issues and themes of the entertainment and creative industries including the impact of media on human behavior and an overall understanding of the media’s effect on human psychology can help one to disseminate accurate and research-based information to professionals and the public regarding psychological issues in mass media as a mass communicator.

At research front, there have been lots of opportunities to develop a set of theoretical frameworks for the study and practice of media psychology especially the effects of media on the public, and the effectiveness of media in transmitting psychological information.

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