Stimulus-Response Theory By Klapper

Posted on September 30, 2019

View this essay online:
https://academic-master.com/stimulus-response-theory-by-klapper/

Empirical Review

In the stimulus-response theory, Klapper (1960) researched the mass media on its necessity and sufficiency in attracting a massive audience. This was because the lack of a department that would handle issues of communication through knowledge of mass communication was gaining momentum. As a result of the First World War, there was a lot of propaganda on its outcomes, which led to the emergence of the stimulus-response theory. While looking at factors influencing people's behavior, Klapper, in his theory, attempted to show whether the mass media is necessary and sufficient in controlling human behavior. Since the study was the first one of its kind, he worked with new individuals.

Albert Bandura, in the Social learning theory, observed that the mass-media messages available to the audience give them an opportunity to select from some characters that will depict different behavior, engage their emotions as well as allow mental rehearsal, which will result in the modeling of new behavior. The reactions shown by the people watching them will form a strong reinforcement in their lives and thus may end up in the adoption of such practices (Ngai et al. 2015).

Katz, in his study on the uses and gratifications approach among television viewers, observes that people use the media for varied reasons. As the content in the media is dynamic, the audience is left with some choices to make. The options that the audience settles on must be one that meets their gratifications. Such gratifications will include the building of relationships, being together or just structuring the day.

In the Spiral of silence theory involving large populations, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann observes that the media communicates its opinions to most people. Most of the people will result in their beliefs based on their perceptions with an emphasis on living together to avoid isolation. People's views which matter will be listened to, while those who belong to the minority group will choose to suppress their points. Change agents and innovators need to be vocal so that they may not lose on the programs and values that they hold dear.

Researchers Work, Their Findings And The Effects

Of The Results On The Theory

Stimulus-Response Theory

Klapper (1960) enumerated some generalizations on the impact of mass media. He found out that the mass media is not necessary and useful in affecting the behavior of the audience. However, there are other intervening variables. These variables only present the communication just as a means of reinforcing already existing factors. Main variables that have a significant influence on the functions and effects of mass communication include:- selective exposure- people will always be attracted to watch mass- media in which most of their interests are captured, selective perception and retention- people have biases towards the meaning of mass communication messages arising from preset views. This theory explains the reason as to why most of the mass communication stations develop unique programs to meet the needs of their clientele.

Albert Bandura

He researched the effects of mass communication on the audience. Baran and Davis (2000), working on the social learning theory, categorized mass communication theories into three main categories:- the microscopic theories, which deal with the behavior of everyday life of a person who utilizes media information. How the audience views the data, receives it and uses it, the middle range theories- they deal with the limited effects and perspective of the mass –media. This includes the flow of information and how it diffuses into the audience and the macroscopic theories that address the impact of the media on a people's culture. The audience chooses which channel as well as the program to watch (Lasswell, 1949). This theory confirms that for the mass media station to remain on the air, its programming must be captivating to the audience (Berkenkotter et al.2016).

Uses And Gratification Theory

The proponent of this theory, Katz (1990) was concerned with the way the audience us the mass media for the gratification of their own needs. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs observed that people tend to choose what to see, reading as well and hear, and the different media stations must be alive to such a demand. Maslow draws a pyramidal representation of human needs in five different levels where the basic needs fall at the lowest level, and the needs are upgraded up to the pyramid. Achievement of needs at one level will prompt the individual to desire a higher need in the hierarchy until they get to the top-most need, which is self-actualization.

There are four kinds of gratifications that have been developed by researchers:- information- the audience may be interested in getting information about society and the world of what is happening around us. This provides us with information on what is unfolding around us and personal identity- the

audience may be keen on watching the television just to pick on some models whom they feel can influence their behavior. Such characters affect our self-esteem, and when we see them succeed, we also have an inner feeling that we equally can, integration and social interaction- the media informs us about other people. Watching such a station will cause us either to empathize or sympathize with the characters, and it may result in them becoming our friends or entertainment- sometimes, the media provides a form of relaxation or a means of enjoyment, or just to occupy time.

Riley and Riley (1951) observed that children would use media stories for their games with their peers, while individual children would use the same stories to fantasize and daydream. Their study concluded that different people would use the same messages from the same source differently. The media, therefore, have to be cognizant of these gratifications and meet them; otherwise, they may be kicked out of business.

Spiral Of Silence Theory

In her study, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann points out the kind of content aired by the media. The media will report on material that will reach out to more people. No wonder they invest heavily in laying down infrastructure to ensure that they have extensive audience coverage. Many people, while in social gatherings, may have an opportunity to share past events within the media. Everyone will be keen to contribute just to confirm that they also value what is happening within their environs to avoid being isolated. Other stations have had to imitate well-to-do stations so that they don't lose the market. However, others who are innovators and serve as change agents must not succumb to the modern dynamics but have to offer content that has quality.

The relationship of the above studies, i.e., uses and gratification theory and the spiral of silence theory, to the TED talk video on igniting creativity to transform corporate culture by Catherine Courage.

Catherine Courage, on igniting creativity, looks at some of the factors influencing creativity. Though creativity is inborn and has its roots in our childhood days, its potential can only be felt when it has been utilized. Pablo Picasso said that every child is an artist, but actualizing it depends on our actions as we grow up. Factors pointed out by Catherine include:- environmental foundations, experiments, and storytelling. In relationship to uses and gratification theory, they agree on all these factors. While in Maslow law there is the partitioning of needs, these needs arise from our socioeconomic status which further determines our geographical positioning, in this social classes we can decide to move upwards based on how we will interact and utilize the environment around us. If we can rise in social status, we will be able to communicate with other people, of course, doing better than ourselves and thus improve performance in the long run. For Maslow to have been able to develop the pyramid, he must have carried out successful experiments that placed people into those different groups. Storytelling, which is a means of arousing our creativity, is critical in helping us move up the pyramid. From stories, humans can improve their identity and thus perform better.

In the spiral of silence theory by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, it is possible that a person can either choose to be silent and belong to a big group or to assume the heart of an innovator and a change agent who are unwavering in their efforts to ensure that that which should be done is done. Many people are stalled in life as they contemplate the perception of other people towards them. Either they have to define their environment and change their path. They should be ready to carry out experiments and be resilient as they do so because failure is just but part of the process. Even Thomas Edison had to fail one thousand times before the electric bulb functioned. As a person in this communication theory listens to stories, they should pick on those stories that will be constructive to their lives. One can still be correct even if within the minority (Berkenkotter et al.2016).

Application of the uses and gratification theory in the TED Talk videos on igniting creativity to transform corporate culture by Catherine Courage.

The theory developed four gratifications such as information, personal identity, integration, social interaction and entertainment. For all these gratifications to be realized, the individual must understand that it rests with him or her. People should embrace the courage to face life and any threats as well as opportunities that it may offer. We should not blame our supervisors for our lack of growth. At times, we look at the environment around us and the tools of the trade at our disposal, and we give up. We all have high capacities within us, and it's not just limited to the people who matter in society, such as mathematicians, computer gurus, and engineers. Creativity is an inherent thing. Pablo Picasso observes that what we do with the artistic nature that we were born with determines what we will become in the future.

Information- she observes that information may arise from the environment, the experiments or storytelling. In the environment creative institutions such as Google and Microsoft have captured the aerial environment and created jobs for people. Such an environment results in a flexible schedule for people working within such institutions. This means that there is more revenue for the company as well as the employee, which improves their socioeconomic welfare. For example, Microsoft company offers paid maternal and paternal leave to its members, which is good for society as the parents have enough time with their newborns. An individual can design his space in their working environment. Space is bound to increase or decrease depending on how creative we can be.

Experiments are not an exception if we have to get quality results at the end of the day. Starting with prototypes, companies have been able to develop superior products from the feedback they get from their client. Any product can be improved to the taste of its consumers. Never shy away from mistakes. While working on experiments, we should remain focused on the execution as well as the process. Micro improvements of instrumentalism are detrimental to innovations. The individual should improve their ideas and iterate them until the results are spectacular. Great information realized from experiments contributes to ideas that drive real innovation and business success.

Storytelling, when adequately used, appeals to more people. Stories are persuasive; they can be inspiring as opposed to the use of written materials for the audience to view. Customers are, at times,

there, just waiting to hear a story about the practical application of a product. Such a story will increase their commitment to such an outcome, hence retaining or raising the market share. One parent who had a sick child and took him to the hospital would not grapple with the fear of his son being put in an MRI machine. When he shared his predicament with the medics, he was advised to prepare an armature of a CT scan machine where the boy would be comfortable when playing his games. This exposure, in the long run, changed the boy's perspective of the medical equipment and would be convenient to be on such a machine which would accord him a new lease on life.

Aspects Of The Talk In The Video That The Theory Explains Well And Why?

The talk revolves around being creative. Creativity is seen as a means of meeting most of our needs. As we graduate from one need to the next, we will be on our way to self-actualization, a dream of any human being.

All three factors affecting creativity are well addressed in theory.

Environmental foundations- the environment or the position in the pyramid that one occupies depends on success factors attributable to the individual. If the individual does not become sensitive to the fact that there is more than enough space, they will remain limited by their mediocrity.

Storytelling- as Riley and Riley (1951) point out, the storytelling is key to our success. Our success dates back to our childhood dates if it was not lost along the way. Children who do not use stories remain as daydreamers and thus lose touch with reality.

How Useful Was The Theory In Explaining The Talk

The theory reveals that we live in an environment, and success in the environment depends on our excellence in doing things. As such, creativity is critical. We need as much information as possible, which is readily available from the environment, from experiments as well as stories.

As much as the theory has been useful, it doesn't explain the position of other people who may matter in our lives. Organizations are made up of people. The talk has been particular about a person and not about their social interaction and integration (Ngai et al. 2015).

Relationship Of The Theory, The Video Talk, And

The Empirical Study

There is a definite correlation between theory, empirical research and video talk. Our lives are influenced by what we see, and this later forms our perceptions. What we see is dependent on the environment that we either expose ourselves to or find ourselves in.

Since we live in a democratic world where the media is self-regulating with minimal interference from the state, the management should employ the spiral of silence theory in availing content to its audience. They don't have to look popular (vox populi) as the popular will was granted to the media beyond what the government can curtail.

References

Berkenkotter, C., & Huckin, T. N. (2016). Genre knowledge in disciplinary communication: Cognition/culture/power. Routledge.
Ngai, E. W., Tao, S. S., & Moon, K. K. (2015). Social media research: Theories, constructs, and conceptual frameworks. International Journal of Information Management, 35(1), 33-44.