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“Joseph Goebbels Nazi Propaganda And Its Relevance In Contemporary Media Setup In The Light Of Uses and Gratification Theory”

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Abstract:

In this research work researcher tried to find out the relevance in two historic concepts which has been dynamically being part of any media understanding through out history i.e Joseph Goebbels's Propaganda which had played major role during the regime of Hitler to propagate Hitler and its policies so that there should be no doubt among the masses in term his decisions. On the other hand, Uses and Gratification theory is proper way to understand how different people use different kinds of media to satisfy their needs. Now with these two concepts researcher disclosed how contemporary media houses are endorsing and practicing media activities directly or indirectly to full their vast interests. Both qualitative and quantitative research approach has availed to understand basic phenomena though which present media houses are going on to justify their professional activities. Snowball sampling are being used to understand the general understanding of public regarding media houses. To understand the news houses approach and quality of content in the light of news currency content of two news channels were analyzed.

Key Words : Propaganda, Media, Use and Gratification theory.

Introduction

Propaganda driven information is intended to persuade an audience to accept a particular idea or cause, often by using biased material or by stirring up emotions was one of the most powerful tools the Nazis used to consolidate their power and cultivate an “Aryan national community” in the mid-1930s.

Hitler and Goebbels¹ did not invent propaganda. The word itself was coined by the Catholic Church to describe its efforts to discredit Protestant² teachings in the 1600s. Over the years, almost every nation has used propaganda to unite its people in wartime. Both sides of World War I used propaganda, for example. But the Nazis were notable for making propaganda

¹*Joseph Goebbels, in full Paul Joseph Goebbels, (born October 29, 1897, Rheydt, Germany died May 1, 1945, Berlin), minister of propaganda for the German Third Reich under Adolf Hitler.

²*Protestantism is characterised by emphasis on the Bible as the sole source of infallible truth and the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone (These are known as the formal and material causes of the Reformation respectively).

a key element of government even before Germany went to war again. One of Hitler's first acts as chancellor was to establish the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, demonstrating his belief that controlling information was as important as controlling the military and the economy. He appointed Joseph Goebbels as director. Through the ministry, Goebbels was able to penetrate virtually every form of German media, from newspapers, film, radio, posters, and rallies to museum exhibits and school textbooks, with Nazi propaganda.

Whether or not propaganda was truthful or tasteful was irrelevant to the Nazis. Goebbels wrote in his diary, "No one can say your propaganda is too rough, too mean; these are not criteria by which it may be characterized. It ought not be decent nor ought it be gentle or soft or humble; it ought to lead to success." Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*³ that to achieve its purpose, propaganda must "be limited to a very few points and must harp on these in slogans until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand by your slogan. As soon as you sacrifice this slogan and try to be many-sided, the effect will piddle away."

Some Nazi propaganda used positive images to glorify the government's leaders and its various activities, projecting a glowing vision of the "national community." Nazi propaganda could also be ugly and negative, creating fear and loathing by portraying those the regime considered to be enemies as dangerous and even sub-human. The Nazis' distribution of anti-semitic⁴ films, newspaper cartoons, and even children's books aroused centuries-old prejudices against Jews (see Lesson 6) and also presented new ideas about the racial impurity of Jews. The newspaper *Der Stürmer*⁵ (The Attacker), published by Nazi Party member Julius Streicher, was a key outlet for anti-semitic propaganda.

Uses and Gratification theory

The Uses and Gratification theory discusses the effects of the media on people. It explains how people use the media for their own need and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled. In other words, it can be said that the theory argues what people do with media rather than what media does to people. Also, this theory is in contradiction to the Magic Bullet theory⁶, which states that the audience is passive. This theory has a user/audience-centered approach. Even for communication, say – interpersonal, people refer to the media for the topic to discuss among themselves. By referring the media, they gain more knowledge and exposure to the world beyond their limited eyesight.

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch pioneered the Uses and Gratification Theory in 1974. But according to McQuail (2010), the theory could be traced from the early 1940's when researchers started investigating why people listen to popular radio programmes and why they read newspapers daily. Therefore, the theory emerged in response to the needs of explanation

³ *Mein Kampf is a 1925 autobiographical manifesto by Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler.

⁴ *Anti-Semitism is based on stereotypes and myths that target Jews as a people, their religious practices and beliefs

⁵ *Der Stürmer was a weekly German tabloid-format newspaper published from 1923 to the end of World War II by Julius Streicher, the Gauleiter of Franconia, with brief suspensions in publication due to legal difficulties.

⁶ *It suggests that the media injects its messages straight into the passive audience

to why people use certain media and the benefit they get from them. Mass communication researchers are using the U & G Theory to examine, explain, and provide answers to why people use certain media and what benefits or gratifications they get after that. The basic assumption of this

There are several needs and gratification for people. They are categorized into five needs.

- Cognitive needs
- Affective needs
- Personal Integrative needs
- Social Integrative needs
- Tension free needs

Cognitive needs:

People use media for acquiring knowledge, information, facts, etc. Among the audience, some have the thirst to acquire intellectual and academic knowledge. This is not a very common phenomenon. Different people have different needs. For example, quiz programs on television give on factual knowledge; to know about current affairs people need to watch the news regularly; search engines on the internet are also very popular since people can browse for any topic easily under the run with no time restriction.

Affective needs:

It includes all kinds of emotions, pleasure and moods of the people. People use media; say television, to satisfy their emotional needs.

The best example would be when people get emotional or sometimes even they cry for a sad scene while watching the movie/soap opera.

Personal Integrative needs:

This is the self-esteem need. People use media to reassure their status, gain credibility and stabilize. So people watch television and assure themselves that they have a respectable status in society. For example, people watch advertisements in the media like jewellery ads, furniture ads, apparel ads, etc. and buy these products so that they can change their lifestyle. Hence the media helps them to do so.

Social Integrative needs:

It encompasses the need to socialize with family, friends and relations in society. For social interaction nowadays, people do not seem to gather socially during weekends instead they have turned to social networking sites on the internet such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr etc. to satisfy their needs.

Another example is people may start watching a particular programme, not because they have any self interest, but because their neighbour/friend watches it such that both the parties may have something in common to discuss.

Tension free needs:

People sometimes use the media as a means to escapism from the real world and to relieve from tension and stress. For example, people tend to relax while watching television, listening to the radio, surfing the internet, etc. In fact, media has the power to grab audience mind since it makes them feel connected with the situation and characters emotionally. The needs are specific in nature to the individual and how the media satisfies the need is subjective. For example, some people may watch the news to relax while others may get tensed or agitated by the same. The media is the same, but people use it for different needs.

On television, most people watch reality shows nowadays not only its popular, but because of the following reasons:

- It is more realistic.
- It provides entertainment.
- It is more interesting.
- There are new concepts cropping up every now and then.
- Viewers can participate as well in many ways while sitting at home.
- Controversies are extensively covered.
- Sensationalism brings in more viewers.

Criticism of Uses and gratification theory:

- The uses and gratification theory does not bring into consideration the power of media.
- It is more audience-oriented study.
- Positive point of the uses and gratification theory is it focuses attention on individuals in the mass communication process.
- It mainly focuses on people's selectivity on media content rather than its unintended effects in their minds.
- Researches of this theory conclude the results are subjective rather than objective.

Review of Literature

Some scholars (such as Ruggiero, as cited in Gallion, 2010) predicted that the emergence and widespread usage of the Internet would come with new changes in roles, personal, and social habits of media users. This diversification of the use of media is what promotes the U & G Theory. Similarly, Stafford et al. (cited in Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2008), buttressed that the emergence of new media and computer-mediated technologies have rejuvenated the Uses and Gratification Theory and also provide a new wave of scholarship. Students are described as the major users of social media. Therefore, the Uses and Gratification Theory is an ideal theory to identify and analyse the reasons why they use social media (Whiting and Williams, 2013; Yoo and Kim, 2013). Furthermore, applying the U & G Theory in social media

studies is of great importance because these new forms of mass media are somewhat new in relation to old media. Unlike the traditional media that provided users with limited choices, these new media come up with new options, and the theory will assist to explain the users' needs and the gratifications achieved (Gallion, 2010; Matei, 2010). As there are limited studies to revalidate the U & G Theory in relations with social media, therefore, this paper intends to apply the U & G Theory to help to explain whether the students are using social media and why, and the gratifications they achieved. For these reason, this paper seeks:

Objective of the Study

This study focused on uses media for the purpose of propaganda and at the same time how uses and gratification theory during the boom of media houses of state owned enterprise in with the following objectives to determine:

1. How Media practitioners' application of the principles, practices and concepts inherent in Uses and Gratification Theory;
2. How their communication messages were understood;
3. The decision to choose a particular medium for communicating with their audiences; The audiences' active roles and dispositions in deciding which medium to expose themselves to as a result of the gratification they derive from the media.

Hypothesis

H1: Propaganda is major portion of media houses.

H2: How active audiences do check intention of media houses as per Uses and Gratification theory.

Limitations

The main limitation of this research article is the frequency and size of sample as the sample was confined to two national channels with frequency of three weeks other wise if frequency and sample size would be much high results could be different and give the exact situations of the media while propagating particular message with some intention.

Conclusion:

This research article gauge the impact of news on the audience with the special reference of Nazi Propaganda by Joseph Goebbels and how audience perceive these message as per the theory of Use and Gratification theory when active participant chooses their message as per their need. The outcome of the research showed that there is direct impact of news or information disseminating any media house with their own vested interests but there is vast number of active participants do understand that what is the intention of the messenger (media houses). But at the same time we can't deny that majority of population do fall under the category of propaganda as there is big gape between informed and propaganda. Use and Gratification theory has its relevance but at the end of day in South Asian countries where majority of population is living middle class and poor class impact of media as a propaganda is more obvious than choosing message as per their need.

This research can open new means/tracks to new researcher who in future wants to explore new dimension of such concepts and theories in order to decipher how message by different media house are being manipulated to fulfill their vested interests compromising basic ethics of journalism.

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