

Psychological aspects of media use and their effects on emotions

Mgr. et Mgr. Mojmír Sedláček

Abstract

The dimensions of new media, including news websites and social networks, are still not sufficiently explored. The aim of this dissertation was to map the effect of media content on the emotional experience of an individual, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Overview of literature was based on the findings on the impact of media content and focused on the changes in the media environment in the 21st century and cognitivist approaches to emotions with an emphasis on emotion regulation strategies. These, together with changes in emotional experience, were monitored in a quantitative study, during which 166 respondents were shown a stream of six television news reports. In the qualitative part, 14 respondents participated in semi-structured interviews focused on various approaches to the consumption of media content. The results of both studies led to several conclusions: The news content had a negative effect on the experiences of individuals who dealt with subsequent emotions in accordance with their preferred emotion regulation strategies. More frequent use of adaptive regulatory strategies has proven to be effective in mitigating the negative impacts of media coverage. Despite the declared preference for rational and objective content, most consumers were nevertheless subject to emotionally charged messages. The contents of both traditional and digital media are therefore burdensome for most consumers, in line with their personality characteristics.

Keywords

media experience, media changes, media effects, information overload, emotion regulation, bulvarization, cognitivism, online survey, interview, IPA