

The Effect of Mass ommunication on Individuals (Study of the theory of One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow Multi Steps Flow)

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Abstract: *Communication is an interaction activity between one or more with others, the communication process can take place between one direction, two directions and multi directions, along with the development of technology and information science, mass media which currently continues to develop, so that the term mass communication appears which uses mass media as a means of communication, theories in communication science are numerous, including the theory of One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow. This research focuses on the effect of mass communication on individuals (study of One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow theories) with a qualitative analysis research model, with literature data sources both through books, journals and others, as well as direct observation in the midst of social life in the development of the media, from the studies conducted, At least it can be concluded that mass communication in general, both one step flow, two steps flow and multi steps flow, does not have a significant effect on the current era, gradually decreasing in its influence, but mass communication can be influenced by the role of opinion leaders and also the conditions and needs of the community for information.*

Keywords: Mass Communication, One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow, Multi Steps Flow, Individuals

Introduction

Communication is an activity to provide mutual understanding between one another, either one-way communication or two-way communication, related to communication, there are many definitions and opinions expressed by experts, but in essence it can be understood to make it easier for one person, group with another to understand each other. Communication is defined as the process of conveying a message in the form of a meaningful symbol as a combination of thoughts and feelings in the form of ideas, information, beliefs, hopes, appeals, and so on, which a person does to others, either directly face-to-face or indirectly through the media, with the aim of changing attitudes, views, or behavior.(Wazis, 2022). Basically, the communication media that has been given by Allah Swt to humans is what is called the mouth, but it is not limited to that, such as mute people, will communicate with gestures. In the beginning, communication only used oral, but there was actually another communication using paper, which was carried out by the Prophets and Messengers.

Along with the development of science, there are many theories about communication that have emerged discovered by scientists, which gradually have a positive impact and provide more convenience in communicating, as in the era of technological development, the term mass communication was coined, where mass communication is an Islam teaches how important strategies in communication, the use of language, the use of media and others, so as to have a good impact and provide a positive meaning for the purpose of communication, during the prophetic period, communication was carried out using paper media, with scientific developments, a theory emerged with the term communication that developed in the United States since 1700.(Arifin, 2003)Mass communication, using mass media, both print and electronic, managed by an institution or institutionalized person, aimed at a large number of people scattered in many places, anonymous, and heterogeneous. The message is general, delivered quickly, simultaneously, and at a glance (especially electronic media).(Wazis, 2022).

This research examines the influence of Mass Communication on Individuals (study of



One Step Flow Theory, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow), with the aim of knowing how the influence of this communication theory on individuals and knowing the advantages and disadvantages of each communication theory.

Research related to the influence of mass communication, based on keywords, has actually been a lot of both related to mass media, social media, and its influence on society, audiences or individuals, including:

- 1) Indra Wati's research with the title Influence of Communication, mass on audiences, in conclusion states that the media has a big role and influence on individuals, through the flow of one step
- 2) Fifit Fitrianiingsih with the title Mass Communication Effects on Audiences (Descriptive Study of the Use of Social Media in Shaping Teenage Behavior) in her writing, this author is more centered on the effects resulting from mass communication on adolescents, where social media has a lot of negative influence on adolescents.
- 3) Furthermore, the article written by Melia Santi et al, with the title The Effect of Mass Communication and Media on Students of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, the conclusions produced in this study, that mass communication can affect the mindset and lifestyle of students.

Based on some literature that the author found, specifically, there are no studies that focus on each communication theory (One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow) thus, the author is interested in studying and analyzing research that focuses on the influence of the three communication theory models on individuals.

Research Methods

This research is a qualitative study using library research methods with a Tahlili approach, to find out how the influence of communication theory both One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow. With the data sources that the author uses are primary sources from various relevant literature books, journals and others, then the author analyzes from several references obtained and then draws conclusions.

Discussion

The development of technology and information, affecting many changes in society and in various lines, both in the economic field, social field, educational field and also the field of communication, the development of communication science also continues to change, starting from communication which is considered classic, to modern communication models, so that the term mass communication appears which uses media as a tool in communication. The word mass communication comes from the English term and is short for the word mass media communication (Communication using mass media). The media in question are media produced by modern technology, such as radio, television, movies and newspapers.(Hadi, 2021).

As it is understood, that communication is an activity to be able to convey messages to communicators and expect to have a positive impact on communicants, a communication is considered to be better if it can have an influence on individuals or on the audience, especially in the midst of the development of technological science, the emergence of the term mass communication as part of scientific development, which can facilitate the delivery of communication quickly with the use of various media. According to Abduk Halik (2013: 2), mass communication can be explained from two perspectives: on the other hand, how people construct messages and spread them through the media, and how people find and use these messages for

others.(Santi et al., 2023).

Basically, social media can be considered as one of the kinds of communication media. Social media in general is a medium used to socialize (relate, both personally, groups and so on) between its users.(Fitriansyah Broadcasting Study Program of BSI Jakarta Communication Academy & Citation, 2018).. Along with the rapid development of the times, information technology becomes a factor in the folding of time and space. People become more enthusiastic in expressing their Islamic identity in the digital space, which is increasingly easy to cause problems in society.(Aprilyawati & Nurudin, 2022).

Mass communication is communication that uses mass media, both print and electronic, which is managed by an institution or person who institutionalizes and is addressed to a large number of people who are scattered in many places, anonymous and heterogeneous.(Tambunan, 2018). The implementation of communication can have an influence on other people, both individually, groups, organizations and others, so that many theories about communication are found, but in this study the focus of the author's discussion is how the influence of mass communication on individuals with the One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow theory models.

This theory was first developed by Paul Lazarsfeld (1901-1976), Bernard Berelson (1912-1979) and Hazel Gaudet (1910-1980) in the 1940s, the three figures successfully played a role in the implementation of collaborative research that resulted in the One Step Flow theory in the context of mass communication, which describes the dynamics that are able to influence society about mass media and its effects. Scientists argue that the effects of mass media apply directly as said by the syringe theory. For this reason, Lazarsfeld utilized the American presidential election in 1940. Lazarsfeld and several colleagues chose Erie County in Ohio and Elmira in New York as research sites. The research was conducted using quantitative methods (the largest number) from May to November 1940. Only 5% of respondents claimed that they experienced a change in attitude after seeing media messages directly(Tambunan, 2018).

Here's a schematic of the One Step Flow Theory

One-step flow



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The definition of one step flow theory itself is one step flow theory, this theory comes from the hypodermic *needle* theory (*Hypodermic Needle Theory*) which was developed where the media directly conveys messages to message recipients without going through intermediaries. This means that the media conveys messages in one stage so that it cannot reach all communicants and cannot also have the same effect on each communicant.

Here are some definitions of communication that support communication as a one-way action (Hamdan, 2019):

1. Carl I. Hovland, "Communication is a process that allows a person (communicator) to convey stimuli (usually verbal symbols) to change the behavior of others (communicants).
2. Gerald R. Miller, "Communication occurs when a source conveys a message to a recipient with the conscious intention of influencing the recipient's behavior".
3. Everett M. Rogers, "Communication is the process by which an idea is transferred from a source to one or more recipients with the intent to change their behavior".

One-Step Flow theory is one of the mass communication theories that describes how information is disseminated in society through the mass media. and becomes the basis for understanding how the influence of mass media and communication works in the political and social election process. The one-way communication pattern is the process of delivering messages from the communicator to the communicant either using the media or without the media, without any feedback from the communicant in this case the communicant acts as a listener only.

Some of the keys to the One Step Flow theory include:

1. Mass Media as a Primary Source: This theory considers the mass media as the main source of information and social influence. People receive information directly from the media without the need to go through "opinion leaders".
2. Direct Media Influence: This theory argues that mass media has a direct influence on individual attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. Individuals receive information from the media and can be influenced by it.
3. Selective Selection: Although mass media has a direct influence, individuals can make selective choices about the information they receive. This means that individuals are more likely to accept information that is in line with their own beliefs and attitudes.
4. Empirical Research: This theory is supported by empirical research conducted by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues in the 1940s, who found that mass media influenced political elections in a direct way, although selective selection still prevailed.

While the One-Step Flow Theory provides important insights into the role of mass media in influencing individuals, many later studies have identified that the communication process is not always this simple. The influence of "opinion leaders" and social interactions still play an important role in disseminating information and influencing individual attitudes. Therefore, this theory has become one of many approaches to understanding the complexities of mass communication in modern society.

Furthermore, the Two Steps Flow Theory, this theory originated from the results of research conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld et al, regarding the effects of mass media in a United States presidential election campaign in 1940. the study was conducted with the assumption that the stimulus response process works in producing mass media effects. However, the results of the study showed otherwise. The mass media effect turned out to be low, and the S-R assumption did not adequately describe the reality of mass media audiences in the dissemination of

information flows and the formation of public opinion.(Wiryanto, 2000).

In his analysis of the research, Lazarsfeld then proposed the idea of 'two-step flow' and the concept of opinion leaders. Their findings on the failure of mass media compared to the influence of interpersonal contact led to the idea that information often flows from radio and newspapers to opinion leaders, and from them to other less active people in society. Two step flow theory and research has the following assumptions:

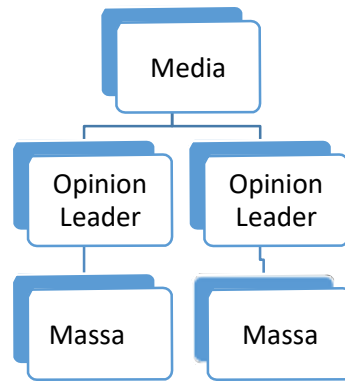
1. Individuals are not isolated from social life, but are members of social groups in interacting with others.
2. Responses and reactions to messages from the media will not occur directly and immediately, but through mediation and are influenced by these social relationships.

Here are the key points in the Two-Step Flow Theory:

1. Opinion Leader: This theory identifies the existence of opinion leaders in society. Opinion leaders are individuals who have greater knowledge, trust and insight in a particular topic or field. They tend to actively participate in interpersonal communication and are often a source of information for others.
2. Two-Step Communication Process: The Two-Step Flow Theory states that information from the mass media first reaches opinion leaders. Opinion leaders then interpret, analyze, and communicate the information to others in society. In other words, the communication process involves two steps: mass media → opinion leader → general public
3. Opinion Leader Influence: Opinion leaders have a significant influence in shaping the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of the general public. They act as filters for information from the media and help in evaluating the relevance of the information to the individual.
4. Selective Selection: Although opinion leaders play an important role, individuals in society can still make selective choices about the information they receive from opinion leaders. This means that while opinion leaders can influence, individuals still have a role in choosing the information they will receive.

The Two-Step Flow theory makes an important contribution to understanding how information and the influence of mass media are disseminated in society. It highlights the importance of interpersonal communication and the role of individuals with authority or trust in shaping public opinion. However, as in many other communication theories, the dynamics of communication in modern societies can be more complex, and there are other factors that also play a role in the process of decision-making and social influence.

This communication model can be seen as follows;



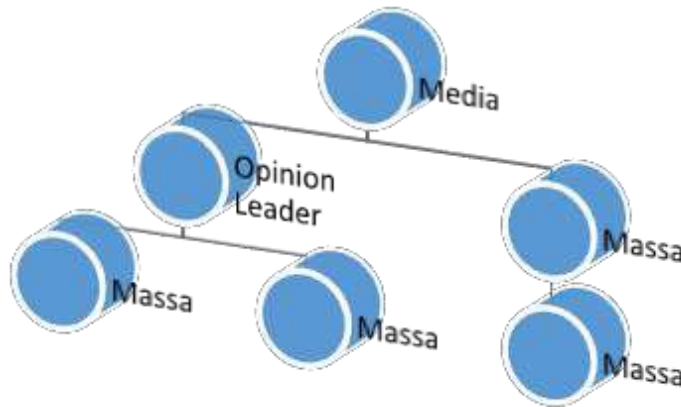
In this model, it is explained that the mass media does not directly influence the audience, but through the mediation of other parties. The other party in question is the opinion leader or opinion leader. This model is based on evidence that the effect of mass media is limited, that people receive mass media exposure indirectly, namely through mediation.(Hamdan, 2018).

Furthermore, the Multi Steps Flow Theory. Multi-Step Flow Theory is a further and more complex development of Two-Step Flow Theory. This theory recognizes that the process of communication and social influence does not only involve two steps as in the Two-Step Flow Theory, but can involve several steps or stages in disseminating information and influence in society. Multi-directional Communication Pattern is a communication process that occurs in a larger group where communicators and communicants will exchange ideas dialogically.

Here are the key points in Multi-Step Flow Theory

1. Process Complexity: Multi-Step Flow theory recognizes that the process of communication and social influence can involve more than two steps. Information from mass media may not only reach opinion leaders but may also pass through several intermediaries or stages before reaching the general public.
2. Opinion Leaders and Gatekeepers: In this theory, opinion leaders still have an important role in disseminating information, but there is also another role called "gatekeepers". Gatekeepers are individuals or groups who have control over access to information and can decide whether or not it reaches opinion leaders. They can regulate the flow of information in society
3. Alternative Communication Paths: Multi-Step Flow theory recognizes that there are many different communication paths in society. Information can move through different pathways depending on the topic, context, and individuals involved in the communication process. It recognizes the complexity of social interactions and changing influences.
4. Selective Selection and Multiple Filters: Individuals in society can still make selective choices about the information they receive, but in the context of Multi-Step Flow Theory, such selection can occur at various stages of communication. Each intermediary or gatekeeper can select and interpret information before sending it to the next step.

The following is a schematic of the multi-step flow communication model



The Multi-Step Flow theory describes a more complex reality in mass communication and social influence than the simpler Two-Step Flow model. It recognizes that many factors, such as topic complexity, different information sources, and social dynamics, can influence how information is disseminated and understood in society. The theory provides a more comprehensive insight into social interactions and communication processes in modern society

B. Analysis of Advantages and Disadvantages of the Theory

The communication model described earlier, there are three models that are the focus of this study, namely One Step Flow, Two Steps Flow and Multi Steps Flow, each of these theories has its own characteristics, but of these three theories certainly have advantages and disadvantages including:

- 1) *One Step Flow theory* is a communication that utilizes media to convey messages to communicants, without any opinion leader, thus this theory has advantages including
 - a. Time Efficiency, without requiring a long time, by utilizing the media in delivering messages to communicants.
 - b. Providing stimulation to communicants, a message conveyed with a one-step flow model, can provide stimulation and curiosity of communicants, so that they have the potential to seek more information about the message conveyed.
 - c. Save Costs. In today's technological era, all activities that involve media and people, of course, have their own costs, such as advertisements that are delivered when involving many people, automatically increasing expenses, this one Step flow theory is able to reduce the number of expenses by not involving many people.

While the weaknesses in this one step flow theory include:

- a. Mass perception is not the same. Each communicator has a different level of ability to understand a message, the use of this theory has the potential to create differences in understanding among audiences.
- b. Messages cannot be ensured to be conveyed thoroughly. The theory that relies on the media as an intermediary for delivering messages and only one way, the media itself is certainly very diverse, such as print media, television media and other online media, success will also be determined

by the media used in delivering messages, for example, when using television media that is expected to convey messages, it may not be able to cover all communicants as targets.

- c. It is difficult to measure the percentage of success of the message, in addition to the weaknesses above, the owner of the message is also difficult to measure the level of success, both in terms of the delivery of the message, the same understanding of communicants and others.
- d. Dependence on facilities and means for the message to be conveyed to the masses

2) Two steps flow communication, communication that involves opinion leaders in delivering messages, and it is possible that messages can be conveyed to the audience before they can do the review first before being conveyed to the masses, through *opinion leaders* as intermediaries who will disseminate information to the wider community, the advantages of this theory include:

- a. Opinion leaders can process messages so that they are easily understood by the masses in accordance with the social conditions of society.
- b. More focused message delivery
- c. Providing discussion opportunities with the masses

The weaknesses of this theory include:

- a. Depends on the mastery of opinion leaders and their stature
- b. The message depends on the needs of the community

3) Multi steps Flow communication theory, is a communication that is carried out in various directions, this type of communication provides an open space, all opinion leaders have and equal strength, and can provide better consideration, the advantages of this theory include:

- a. Target mass can be wider
- b. Curiosity and stimulation in the early stages
- c. There is a reciprocal relationship between communicators and communicants

While the weakness of this theory

- a. Different media to convey the message
- b. Leads to Differences in Understanding
- c. Overriding Opinion Leaders

These three theories do not seem to have a big influence on individuals, because the influence of communication can be determined from various aspects, moreover, today's society is more selective in receiving information from the mass media more selectively, this is in line with the writing of Syukur Khalil which the author cites states The phenomenon of mass media coverage lately tends to show the opposite reality.

Existing news reports, especially those broadcast by private television stations tend to lead to decontextualized, dramatic news concepts.(Dalimunthe, 2015).

Thus, at least it can be understood, that the influence of communication can affect the masses and individuals:

1. Messages delivered according to Individual Needs / social conditions
2. Opinion Leader Expertise
3. Satisfaction and straightforward
4. Provides direct benefits

5. Time efficiency
6. The balance of strengths and weaknesses should be equal

Conclusions

Based on the above study, about these three communication theory models, each has strengths and weaknesses, in terms of message processing, but with regard to its influence, this theory does not seem to have a positive impact on individuals, because this mass communication will be able to influence individuals still depends on the social conditions of society, the ability of opinion leaders as an intermediary in delivering messages.

Mass Communication will be able to influence at least, if there is a basic need for the community for information from what is conveyed, opinion leaders who are considered influential and even in the midst of technological developments in the current 4.0 era, individuals and society have started to receive information conveyed through technology or mass media.

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