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Read, Think, Write 2

The study I chose to read was a peer-reviewed academic journal titled "Strategic

Communication and Social Media Within the Context of Media Ecology: A Study on

Instagram." According to the study, its aim is to "analyze Instagram's strategic communication

approach within the context of media ecology, and to analyze its communication strategy to be

able to effectively reach its target audience with a special focus on its official blog." The term

"media ecology" is defined in *A First Look at Communication Theory* as "the study of the

interrelationship of people, media, culture, and consciousness, and of the changes that occur

among them."(414).   This article acknowledges the way social media has influenced our lives

dramatically, and how it sets up new rules for strategic communications by creating new roles for

businesses and content creators on social media. The main question the study seeks to answer is

how businesses on social media should adapt their communications strategy throughout their

journey.

Two specific research questions are raised during this process: The first research

question is "Who is the target audience of the blog post and whom does each blog post talk to?"

The second research question is "How has the communication strategy of Instagram, carried out through its official blog, changed in the context of media ecology?"

In order to answer the research questions, MAXQDA18 was utilized. MAXQDA is a software program used for qualitative data analysis, and in this specific case, it was used to analyze the qualitative data of Instagram's blog posts. It used a coding procedure to evaluate the data from these content creators.

Its findings for the first research question were this: the official blog of Instagram has two main target audiences, trade oriented and engagement oriented. The trade oriented audience can be divided into two groups, or sub-themes, which are consumers and stakeholders. Some sub-themes of the engagement oriented audience are cyber-bullying considerates, disadvantaged groups, media illiterate and ICT help seekers.

Their findings for the second research question indicated a large shift over the years in content creators' reasoning for making blog posts. Many people blogged for publicity or for advertising purposes between the years of 2010 and 2016. A new era began in 2017 when "blogging for publics" began. A "public" is a term referring to a specialized group whose members have reason to be interested in an organization, so while some members on Instagram might have a reason to be interested in content about cyberbullying or the LGBTQ community, other members might not be interested.

While there are still gaps left to be addressed concerning these topics, Instagram undeniably has a massive influence on the culture, and the change in blog posts over the years

prove that Instagram has been able to keep up with the ever-changing world and its various

cultures. It has adapted to welcome users with different social, political, economic and religious

backgrounds, and is a much more diverse platform today than it was in 2016. By adapting to

these expectations of diversity, business owners can more easily engage users, and create

popularity and positivity for Instagram itself.

There are many theoretical implications for a study like this, one of which being the

possibility that Instagram's target audiences will change within the span of the next few years.

Media ecology is constantly changing and shifting between different mediums, and there is a

chance that even Instagram will lose its popularity quickly with the rise of a new platform.

If I were to study a specific issue in the context of this theory, I would most likely study

the rising influence of social media on women's body image. I think this study would be

important to conduct because there are many women who experience dissatisfaction with the

way their bodies look, particularly during their teenage years, and there is much evidence which

points to the rise of social media as a leading factor. Because there are so many content creators

on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, it can become extremely easy to compare lifestyles,

backgrounds, and appearances, although often the content seen on the media is carefully curated

and purposefully designed to be unrealistic. However many young women are susceptible to

believing that the things they see are realities and that they must change themselves to fit in with

these constructed realities.

It is important to study in the context of media ecology because with the changing of the

environment, evidence points to the fact that women's mental health and body image also appear

to be changing. I think it is useful to determine the ways in which social media platforms create

a negative perception of the self and if there will be an increase in this with advancements in

technology.   Like the previous study, I would be analyzing the data with qualitative methods. I

would most likely conduct a survey between women of different ages and different cultural,

religious, and social backgrounds, and have them answer a series of questions to determine how

positive or negative their body image is. I would assign numbers based on their answers, and

based on the numbers given determine any trends in the way certain sub-groups of women view

themselves. For example, I would use this method to determine whether or not 13 year old girls

are impacted more negatively than middle aged mothers. To conclude, it is important to look at

issues such as these in the context of media ecology and conduct research in order to make

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positive change for the future.

Works Cited

Bozkanat, E. & Aslan, P. (2022). Strategic Communication and Social Media within the Context of Media Ecology: A Study on Instagram. *Journal of Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication*, (39), 94-109, DOI: 10.31123/akil.1144447