Contents

Preface xiv

CHAPTER 1 A Scientific Approach to the Study of Media Effects 1

Ways of Knowing 3
Experience 3
Authority 4
Science 5
Goals of Science 5
Prediction 5
Explanation 6
Understanding 7
Control 8
How Are the Goals of Science Achieved? 10
Theory 10
Falsifiability 12
Creativity 13
The Nature of Science 14
Science Is General 14
Science Acknowledges the Existence of Objective Truth 16
Science Assumes a Skeptical Attitude 18
Science's Skeptical Attitude Often Leads to Controversy 20
Science Can't Answer Certain Kinds of Questions 21
Summary 22
Questions to Focus Your Attention 23
Key Terms and Concepts 23
Notes 23

CHAPTER 2 Scientific Methods in Media Effects Research 25
Analyzing Media Content 25
What Is Content Analysis? 26
An Example: The Content of Popular Novels for Adolescents 27 The Sample 27
The Sumple 27
Units of Analysis 28
Categories 28
Coding Agreement 29
Statistical Analysis 29
Interpretation of Findings 30
The Sample Survey 31
An Example: Does Watching a Traumatic Event on TV Cause
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder? 32
The Sample 33
The Questionnaire 33
Descriptive Findings 34
Statistical Relationships 34
Interpretation of the Findings 34
Types of Surveys 34
The Search for Causal Relationships 35
Criteria for Causal Relationships 36
Correlation Coefficients 36
Interpreting Correlation Coefficients 38
The Experimental Method 41
Manipulation of a Key Variable 42
Random Assignment to Experimental Conditions 42
Identical Treatment Except for the Manipulation 42
Control Groups 43
Different Experimental Designs 44
An Example: Using a Video Game to Repair a Bad Mood 45
Participants 45
Independent Variable 46
Dependent Variable 46
Experimental Results 47
Interpretation of Results 47
Controversy about Research Methods 47
Other Methodological Approaches 50
Summary 51
Questions to Focus Your Attention 52
Key Terms and Concepts 52
Notes 52

CHAPTER 3 A Brief History of Media Effects Research 54
Setting the Stage 55
1898—Congress Declares War on Spain 56
1917—Propaganda in World War I 56
The 1920s—Movies Explode as Mainstream Entertainment 56
1929–1932—The Payne Fund Studies 57
What Was the Content of Movies? 57
The Emotional Impact of Movies 58
Does Watching Movies Affect Behavior? 58
The Aftermath of the Payne Fund Studies 60
T1 I . C . M
The Invasion from Mars 60 The Research at Princeton 62
Early Theory of Media Effects: The Magic Bullet Model 63
The People's Choice Study: A New View of Media Effects 63
Why Use Control Groups? 64
Media Impact in the 1940 Campaign 64
The Decatur Study: The Two-Step Flow of Communication 65
Experiments on World War II Movies 67
The Limited-Effects Perspective 68
The Evils of Comic Books 69
The Dawn of Television 71
Many Types of Media Effects 72
Micro-Level or Macro-Level Effects 72
Content-Specific or Diffuse-General Effects 73
Attitudinal versus Behavioral versus Cognitive Changes 73
Alteration versus Stabilization 73
Summary 74
Questions to Focus Your Attention 74
Key Terms and Concepts 74
Notes 75
The state of the s
CHAPTER 4 Time Spent with Mass Media: Reasons and
Consequences 76
The Uses and Gratifications Perspective 77
Why Do People Watch TV? 77
Learning 78
Habit 78
Companionship 80
Arousal 81
Relaxation 83

Escape 83
Passing Time 83
Social Interaction 84

Uses and Gratifications Meets New Media 84
Beyond Mere Descriptions of Media Use 85

The Problem with Self-Reports 86

The Raw Numbers: Media Minutes Add Up 87

The Displacement Hypothesis 89

Displacement of Important Activities 90

Do Electronic Media Displace Sleep? 92

Television Viewing and Obesity 93

Summary 96

Questions to Focus Your Attention 97

Key Terms and Concepts 97

Notes 97

CHAPTER 5 Effects of Media Violence 100

The Presence of Violent Content 102

The Causal Link between Viewing Violence and Behaving Aggressively 106

The Research of Albert Bandura 106

The Long-Term Studies of Leonard Eron and Rowell

Huesmann 109

The Research of Brandon Centerwall 112

The Catharsis Hypothesis 113

A Priming Analysis of the Effect of Media Violence 114

Desensitization to Violence 115

What about Video Games? Are They Training Kids to Kill? 117

An Opinion on Video Games from an Expert on "Killology" 118

The Research on Violent Video Games 119

How Do Violent Video Games Cause Aggression? 124

Why Do People Like Media Violence? 126

Where Does Research on Media Violence Go Now? 128

Why Do So Many People Doubt the Effects of Media Violence? 128

Concluding Comments 130

Summary 130

Questions to Focus Your Attention 131

Key Terms and Concepts 131

Notes 131

CONTENTS X CHAPTER 6 Sexual Content in the Media 134 Human Sexuality Brings Out Passionate Opinion 134 Sorting Out Definitions and Terms 137 The Commission on Obscenity and Pornography 138 Major Finding 138 A Reexamination of the Commission's Findings 139 Research Following the Commission Report 141 Content Available 142 Perceptual Consequences of Viewing 142 Behavioral Consequences of Viewing 143 The Meese Commission Report on Pornography 146 Major Conclusion 146 Major Conclusion 146 Sex on Prime-Time TV 148 The Dynamics of Excitation Transfer 149 Content Analyses 150 Sexual Behavior and Viewing 151 Sex and the Internet 155 Control over Media Content 157 Legal Control 157 Social or Economic Control 158 Control Through Education 158 The Long-Term Stillies of Leonard Erm and Summary 159 Questions to Focus Your Attention 159

Questions to Focus Your Attention 139

Key Terms and Concepts 160 Notes 160

CHAPTER 7 Media That Stir Emotions 163

Fright Reactions to Media Are Prevalent 164 Developmental Theory: What Scares One Child May Not Scare Another 165 Experimenting with the Incredible Hulk 166 Why Is the Paranormal So Scary? 169 The Law of Apparent Reality 170 Poltergeist 171 The Nightmare on Elm Street Series 172 The Exorcist 173 Why Do Some Media Fears Linger for So Long? A Theory of

Differential Brain Processing 174

Theory about Emotional Coping: What's a Parent to Do? 175 Is It Fun to Be Scared? 177

Frightening Films and Roller Coaster Rides 177

The Sexual Dynamic in Viewing Frightening Films 178

Beyond Fear: Other Emotional Reactions to Media 180

Empathy: I Feel What You Feel 180

Using Media to Manage Your Mood 182

Does Mediated Emotion Disrupt and Confuse Our Emotional Well-Being? 184

Summary 186

Questions to Focus Your Attention 187

Key Terms and Concepts 187

Notes 187

CHAPTER 8 Persuasive Effects of the Media 189

What Is Persuasion? 189

How Media Messages Persuade without Even Trying 190

Product Placement in Entertainment Programming 192

The Theory of Media Cultivation: Cultivating Attitudes Is Attitude Change 193

If Cultivation Works—How Does It Work? 196

Do Media Messages about the Paranormal Influence

Paranormal Beliefs? 197

Intentional Persuasion in the Media 200

Using Entertainment to Improve Public Health 200

An Unusual Study: The Great American Values Test 201

How Does an Advertiser Determine Success? 203

Evidence for the Effectiveness of Advertising 203

Key Principles of Media Persuasion 204

The Power of the Source 205

Message Features: Simplicity and Repetition 208

More Message Features: Fear, Guilt, and Humor 208

The Health Campaign 210

Subliminal Persuasion: The Magic Key? 214

Early History 215

The Presumed Mechanism 216

Two Important Questions 216

A Caveat: Research on Subliminal Priming 218

The Third-Person Effect 219

Summary 220

Questions to Focus Your Attention 221

Key Terms and Concepts 221

Notes 221

CHAPTER 9 The Effects of News and Political Content 225

Thinking about the News 225

Need for Cognition 226

Need for Cognition and Internet News 228

Political Sophistication 228

Agenda-Setting Theory: A Theory about Thinking 229

Framing the News 230

The Spiral of Silence 233

How Much of the News Do We Remember? 236

Do Sexually Attractive TV Anchor Women Cause Better Memory for the News? 238

The Role of Emotion 239

Is News on Twitter Packed with More Emotion? 243

Another View of News: Do Certain News Reports Cause More

People to Die? 245

Imitative Suicides and the News 246

Summary 249

Questions to Focus Your Attention 249

Key Terms and Concepts 250

Notes 250

CHAPTER 10 The Effects of Media Stereotypes 253

Stereotypical Representations in the Media 253

Sex Role Stereotypes 256

Effects of Sex Role Stereotypes 258

Media Images of Thin Bodies and Effects on Body Image 260

How Important Are Media in Promoting Body

Dissatisfaction? 263

Racial Stereotypes 266

Overrepresentation of African Americans as Lawbreakers 266

The Imbalance in Media Research on Stereotypes 269

An Intriguing and Under-Studied Media Depiction: Faces 271

Summary 275

Questions to Focus Your Attention 276

Key Terms and Concepts 276

Notes 276

CHAPTER 11 The Impact of New Media Technologies 279

The Revolution in New Media Technology 279

Computers and the Internet: Connection or Alienation? 282

The Carnegie Mellon Study 282

Applying the Lessons of History 286

Media Multiplexity Theory 290
New Technology's Distinctive Attributes 293
Screen Time and Face-to-Face Interaction 296
Will Our Old Brains Catch Up to the New Technology? 297
How New Technology Relates to Physical and Cognitive
Health 298

Cyber-overload 299

Summary 300
Questions to Focus Your Attention 301
Key Terms and Concepts 301
Notes 301

CHAPTER 12 Meet Marshall McLuhan: A Less Scientific Approach to Media Impact 304

Is There Any Value to Considering Marshall McLuhan? 304 Meet Marshall McLuhan 305

The Eras of Communication History 306

The Tribal Age 306

Moving from the Tribal Age to the Print Age 307

Moving On to the Current Electronic Age 308

The Medium Is the Message 310

The Effects of Electronic Media on Human Beings 311

Education in the Electronic Age 312

War in the Electronic Age: Not So "Hot" 314

Politics in the Electronic Age: Was Barack Obama

"Cooler" than Mitt Romney? 317

Drugs in the Electronic Age 319

Privacy in the Electronic Age: Fading Fast 319

Why Does McLuhan's "Theory" Fail as a Scientific Approach? 320

McLuhan's Influence 321

Final Reflections 322

Summary 324

Questions to Focus Your Attention 324

Key Terms and Concepts 324

Notes 324

Important Sources on Marshall McLuhan 325

GLOSSARY: THEORIES AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS DISCUSSED IN THE TEXT (BY CHAPTER) 326

NAME INDEX 336 SUBJECT INDEX 341