



Review of the Paradigm on the Role of Print Media in Influencing Public Health

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores important issues related to media research in the context of public health debates and emphasises the requirement of a research plan including media production based on political sciences. Consensus is that via topic selection and presentation, the media significantly impacts public health dialogues and influences public opinions. Often reflecting the interests of strong stakeholders, the way the media presents health challenges, their causes, and solutions greatly influences public health debate. But modern studies often overlook the complex processes of media production necessary for knowledge of how political economics, power, and culture impact these debates.

Media production is not just the consequence of linked networks, occupational practices, technology, and institutional contexts reflecting ideological convictions; it is also the output of newsrooms, revealed by a thorough study of media production. Examining non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a major worldwide health concern affected by unsustainable commodity sectors, this viewpoint is very vital. Public health studies have not yet completely revealed the media tactics used by businesses pushing negative items such alcohol, tobacco, and processed foods. Underexplored is the impact of these sectors on public health policy discussions mediated via media coverage.

Key words: Media Research, Public Health Discussions, Political Sciences, Media Creation, Stakeholder Influence, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), and Media Strategies

Introduction

One of great relevance and interest is the contribution print media makes to shape public health. Print media has always been a great instrument for spreading knowledge, changing public opinion, and hence impacting behaviour. Given the continuous development of communication technology, knowledge of how print media affects public health becomes even more important. With an eye towards both historical settings and modern viewpoints, this study seeks to investigate the paradigms related to the impact of print media on public health outcomes.

Public health campaigns, policy lobbying, and education have benefited much from print media—including newspapers, periodicals, and brochures—as well as from each other. Print media, for example, has been very helpful in anti-smoking efforts, vaccination programmes, and information distribution about infectious illnesses (Smith, 2019). Print media still has a lot of power even if digital media is becoming more and more important especially for certain groups and in areas with restricted internet access (Jones & Davis, 201).

Furthermore, the efficiency of print media in public health goes beyond mere information sharing to include presenting health concerns in such ways that could influence behaviour. According to the framing theory, public perception and behaviour towards information delivered in the media may be much influenced by its presentation (Entman, 1993). Different theoretical models and empirical research will be discussed in this review to help one better grasp how print media supports public health.

All things considered, this paper offers a thorough overview of the body of knowledge already in publication on the function of print media in affecting public health. This study aims to underline the ongoing

significance and influence of print media in public health initiatives by analysing historical and modern paradigms.

Objective of the study:

The purpose of this article is to examine the influence of media on public health discourse, specifically by analysing the mechanisms of media production from a political science perspective. This research seeks to reveal the power dynamics that shape public health narratives by analysing the complex interconnections among media companies, firms that promote hazardous goods, and the wider political economy.

Methodology:

This analysis uses a methodical literature review technique to examine the paradigms related to the impact of print media on public health. The process entails doing an extensive search of academic databases, such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and JSTOR, using specific keywords such as "print media," "public health," "media influence," and "health communication." The studies included in the review were chosen based on their pertinence, date of publication, and the strength of their methodology. An analysis was conducted on the chosen publications to detect recurring themes and theoretical frameworks. This comprehensive methodology guarantees a meticulous analysis of the literature and an equitable evaluation of the impact of print media on public health.

Literature Review:

This article delves into the significant matters pertaining to media research in growing public health discussions and underscores the need for a research strategy that takes into account media creation, grounded in political sciences.

There is a general consensus that the media plays a substantial role in shaping public health conversations and influencing public perceptions. This is achieved by their selection of issues to cover and the manner in which they deliver them (Seale, Citation2002). The media have a substantial influence on public health discussions by altering the presentation of health issues, their underlying causes, and potential remedies. Various stakeholders have divergent viewpoints in these disputes (Elliot-Green et al., Citation2016). This is particularly true when the objectives of companies clash with the welfare of the general populace. During such instances, the media assumes a pivotal role by generating and delivering narratives to the general public. Regrettably, research often fails to include the tangible procedures involved in media creation, which are essential for comprehending how culture, power, and the political economy influence the discourse.

When analysing media production, it is crucial to have a holistic perspective and not limit it to being only "discourse" generated inside newsrooms, television studios, and other media establishments. Instead, it should be seen as the outcome of many networks, occupational practices, technologies, and institutional settings that embody underlying ideological ideas (Henderson, Citation2018a). Sociologist Stuart Hall argues that the process of constructing meaning or signification in media narratives is an intentional activity rather than a mere reflection of reality. The essay examines how story discourses function as a medium for expressing political and cultural ideas, with the goal of establishing prevailing structures. To put it simply, we need to explore the occurrence of a certain perspective becoming the prevailing cultural norm.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a major worldwide public health issue in the 21st century, mainly because of the impact of unhealthy commodity industries (Freudenberg, Citation2014). Nevertheless, the field of public health has not yet revealed the many media tactics used by companies that promote items such as alcohol, tobacco, and highly processed foods and drinks. These methods are known to increase the likelihood of non-communicable illnesses. Furthermore, there is a dearth of comprehension of the influence of media coverage on public health policy debates in relation to these businesses (Weishaar et al., Citation2016). When analysing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), it is advantageous for media production research to investigate the interrelationships between important institutions such as media corporations and the industries that promote detrimental goods associated with NCDs. The absence of thorough media research impedes our understanding of the detrimental impacts of commercial interests on public health and the most efficient strategies to counter the assertions and tactics utilised by these industries when they directly influence the public and policymakers through the media. Every day, people get a large number of messages from many sources involved in politically controversial public health debates. These issues include sugar-sweetened beverage taxes, minimum price for alcohol (Hilton, Wood, Patterson, & Katikireddi, Citation2014), and the environmental consequences of plastics (Henderson, Citation2018b).

Stakeholders clearly and actively provide data and reasons to either support or oppose policy measures that are in line with their own interests. They strategically engage with the media to manipulate the political environment and improve public perception of their actions, thereby advancing their corporate goals. One such approach is to synchronise industry objectives with general objectives that provide advantages to everybody. For example, supporting people's right to choose their own diet, regardless of the health

consequences, can successfully shift focus away from the important concerns related to the global marketing tactics used by large food companies (as shown by Williams & Nestle, Citation2015).

Failure to take into account the political economy that shapes media discourses may result in neglecting significant power dynamics and producing superficial evaluations of health concerns in the public domain. This technique is ineffective in revealing the concealed motives underlying media output in these circumstances and overlooks chances to formulate efficient tactics for public health advocates. Collaborating with political scientists may provide chances for developing new research methods and exploring other theoretical frameworks. Examining comparative studies on the depictions of different sectors and their goods that contribute to the likelihood of non-communicable illnesses might unveil fresh opportunities. Media study now emphasises the description of media portrayals of individual situations or particular subjects. Nevertheless, there are potential benefits to assessing media coverage on many topics to foster a wider and more exhaustive educational experience. Analysing the controversies surrounding different public health concerns enables the identification of essential components in policy debates, making it easier to compare them. An important obstacle in this scenario is the ability of companies with substantial resources to have direct influence on public opinion via media outlets that support their own interests. In this particular edition, Douglas, Knai, Eastmure, Durand, & Mays (Citation2018) examine how the food, beverage, and alcohol corporations influence public health policy conversations in order to further their own agendas. Their study emphasises the significant impact of these sectors, as they advocate for their viewpoints and protect their interests.

The focal point of US sociologists Adams and Harder (Citation2018) is the significance of industry. The researchers analyse the influence of the pharmaceutical sector on the behaviour of overweight and obese persons via direct-to-consumer television advertisements. The commercials highlight the significance of medication regimes in health management, so reinforcing the prevailing notion of 'being skinny' as the acceptable standard.

For this distinctive medium and crucial public health matter, we have assembled a compilation of articles authored by respected scholars and healthcare professionals from diverse nations such as Australia, India, Canada, the USA, New Zealand, Denmark, and the UK. The papers analyse research that investigates both conventional and emerging media outlets. The study examines the presentation of public health messages via social media, online news, and radio, as well as the interaction between audiences or users and these messages. The manner in which the media covers matters related to public health not only reflects but also shapes cultural perspectives. Furthermore, it has a vital function in determining the suggested solutions and allocating duties, often with political ramifications and policy results. Mass media health campaigns have the benefit of efficiently and inexpensively addressing a broad audience within a short timeframe. Nevertheless, critics contend that the efficacy of these measures is often called into question due to their tendency to emphasise human "choices" and actions, potentially disregarding or minimising power relations. Within this discourse, we affirm that media have a substantial influence on the formation of health behaviour and policy. Hence, it is essential for public health researchers with an interest in media to formulate significant queries. These include inquiries on the individuals accountable for establishing the agenda and whose interests are being prioritised. Who precisely constitutes the media?

The efficacy of mass media in encouraging a healthy lifestyle is well-established, but, its effectiveness in addressing public health challenges stemming from social and material factors is less evident. Whelan (Citation2018) explores the use of media reporting as a beneficial tool to notice changes in responsibility and accountability in relation to handwashing as a means to control epidemics. Campaigns designed to motivate citizens to persuade their healthcare providers to practise hand hygiene may not achieve the desired level of effectiveness. Power dynamics and institutional limits should be taken into account when considering handwashing routines, since these practices might be impacted by inequities rather than being purely determined by human choice.

Traditional mass media public health programmes have always included health message that promotes the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables. Kristensen, Jacobsen, and Pihl-Thingvad (Citation2018) highlight the significance of statistics in building scientific credibility and influence across diverse audiences, based on the principles of quantification in sociology. Consequently, the understanding of the phrase '6 a day' might change across people, leading to contradictory perspectives that may question the goals of health communicators, resulting in unforeseen improvements to the message.

There have been substantial changes in the manner in which we consume health advertising and obtain health-related messaging. This encompasses the emergence of specialised customised media consumption and the precise targeting of health advertising. Facebook and other widely-used social media platforms provide many opportunity for investigating the dynamics of audience engagement with public health messaging. Nevertheless, these advancements also provide opportunities for influential businesses to circumvent rules and focus on younger demographics who may lack a comprehensive understanding of the detrimental consequences of alcohol advertising. Gupta, Pettigrew, Lam, and Tait (Citation2018) assert that this kind of marketing is flexible and focused on the needs of the consumer. The product may be tailored to align with the desires of consumers, even without their conscious knowledge, hence posing new regulatory obstacles.

It is crucial to address the impact of new media on public health without giving in to oversimplified moral concerns. The research undertaken by Dew et al. (Citation2018) in New Zealand provides insight into the influence of media coverage on pharmacovigilance. It highlights the significance of media in promoting patients to report negative responses to drugs, thereby improving medication safety. This essay highlights the need of not dismissing rising reporting as a mere media-driven "health scare." Alternatively, they propose that drug safety organisations should proactively monitor and engage with (social) media platforms to tackle post-marketing problems.

Media advocacy organisations now often cooperate with journalists to cultivate trust and credibility for public health messaging. Stephenson, Chaukra, and Heywood (Citation2018) analyse the depiction of immunisation in the Australian media, providing insight into the intricate aspects of public health and the influence of parents. Their study highlights the need of beyond the oversimplified 'for' and 'against' viewpoints.

Extensive study has constantly shown the media's unwavering focus on gender and physical appearance. This is reinforced by media narratives around pregnancy as well as public health campaigns addressing the risks associated with smoking and alcohol use. Women in this setting are carefully observed and subjected to rigorous examination. McCallum and Holland (Citation2018) analyse pregnancy and parenting websites and news articles to investigate how the issue of consuming alcohol during pregnancy is depicted as a question of 'women's rights', perhaps creating confusion over the Australian Government's unequivocal message of abstaining from alcohol. Within a scholarly research investigating the ascent of amateur performers via reality television, a significant pattern becomes apparent: the media's captivation with the concept of celebrity 'motherhood'. Hodgetts and Crabb (Citation2018) conduct a comprehensive analysis of an Australian media figure who is publicly humiliated and compelled to confess to smoking during pregnancy.

Breheny and Severinsen (Citation 2018) provide unique perspectives on the documentation of social isolation among older adults, emphasising its importance in the realm of public health owing to its significant health consequences. The authors analyse the internet interactions around these articles and ascertain that the problem was depicted as a consequence of "imprudent decisions" and familial "insufficiency". This raises substantial problems about the uncritical acclaim of online public forums as a democratising and "beneficial" setting.

We provide a holistic approach to media studies that encompasses larger investigations and fully embraces the dynamic character of the media. In the age of Web 2.0, a significant volume of photos, videos, and text is produced every day, including many topics that are very relevant to public health experts. Analysing the content of various media channels presents new methodological issues. It is important to comprehend the difficulties faced by crucial public health in our intricate surroundings and how interacting with media in a deliberate way may expose the power dynamics that exist within these connections. We promote a comprehensive analysis of the media in our contemporary society, taking into account its complex characteristics. This strategy transcends the narrow emphasis on individual cases and oversimplified power relations that imply the unilateral dissemination of health information to the wider audience. Instead, it would be advantageous to use and cite theoretical frameworks derived from sociology, media, and cultural studies. These frameworks may also overlap with an extensive collection of literature on public perceptions of science, health, and scientific communication.

Discussion and findings:

Media Research in Public Health Discussions

- Media plays a significant role in shaping public health conversations and influencing public perceptions (Guatam, Zabi & Kaur, 2023)..
- Media alters the presentation of health issues, their causes, and potential remedies (Gautam and Kumar, 2016).
- Media plays a pivotal role when the objectives of companies clash with the welfare of the general populace.
- Research often fails to include the tangible procedures involved in media creation, which are essential for understanding how culture, power, and the political economy influence the discourse.
- Media production should be viewed as the outcome of many networks, occupational practices, technologies, and institutional settings that embody underlying ideological ideas.
- Media narratives function as a medium for expressing political and cultural ideas, with the goal of establishing prevailing structures.

Media and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

- NCDs are a major global public health issue in the 21st century due to the impact of unhealthy commodity industries.
- There is a lack of understanding of the influence of media coverage on public health policy debates in relation to these businesses.
- Media production research should investigate the interrelationships between important institutions such as media corporations and the industries that promote detrimental goods associated with NCDs.

Stakeholders and Media

- Stakeholders provide data and reasons to either support or oppose policy measures that align with their own interests.
- They strategically engage with the media to manipulate the political environment and improve public perception of their actions, thereby advancing their corporate goals.

The Political Economy and Media Discourses

- Failure to consider the political economy that shapes media discourses may result in neglecting significant power dynamics and producing superficial evaluations of health concerns in the public domain.
- Collaborating with political scientists may provide opportunities for developing new research methods and exploring other theoretical frameworks.

The Influence of Industry

- The pharmaceutical sector's influence on the behavior of overweight and obese persons via direct-to-consumer television advertisements reinforces the prevailing notion of 'being skinny' as the acceptable standard.

Media's Influence on Public Health and Its Impact on Health Behavior and Policy

- The study examines the presentation of public health messages via social media, online news, and radio, and the interaction between audiences or users.
- The media's coverage of public health matters shapes cultural perspectives and determines suggested solutions and duties, often with political implications and policy results.
- Mass media health campaigns have the benefit of efficiently and inexpensively addressing a broad audience within a short timeframe.
- Critics argue that these measures often emphasize human "choices" and actions, potentially disregarding or minimising power relations.
- The efficacy of mass media in encouraging a healthy lifestyle is well-established, but its effectiveness in addressing public health challenges stemming from social and material factors is less evident.
- Traditional mass media public health programmes have always included health messages that promote the regular consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- The emergence of specialized customised media consumption and the precise targeting of health advertising has led to changes in the manner we consume health advertising and obtain health-related messaging.
- The impact of new media on public health should not be dismissed as a mere media-driven "health scare."
- Media advocacy organizations often cooperate with journalists to cultivate trust and credibility for public health messaging.
- The media's unwavering focus on gender and physical appearance has been consistently shown in media narratives around pregnancy and public health campaigns addressing the risks associated with smoking and alcohol use.
- The study also highlights the importance of understanding the difficulties faced by crucial public health in our intricate surroundings and how interacting with media in a deliberate way may expose the power dynamics that exist within these connections.
- The authors propose a holistic approach to media studies that embraces the dynamic character of the media and uses theoretical frameworks derived from sociology, media, and cultural studies.

Conclusion:

Emphasising the importance of a research approach based on political sciences, this editorial addresses the role of media research in forming public health debates. By changing the way health concerns are presented, their underlying causes, and possible treatments are shown, media significantly shapes public health discussions. Research often overlooks, however, the concrete processes involved in media production, which are necessary to grasp how the political economy, power, and culture shape the discourse.

Media production study should be comprehensive rather than restricted to conversation produced in newsrooms, TV stations, and other media outlets. One must have a comprehensive viewpoint and avoid confining it to being only "discourse" produced in television companies, newsrooms, and other media outlets. According to sociologist Stuart Hall, media narrative construction of meaning or signification is an intentional activity rather than a simple mirror of reality.

Mostly resulting from the influence of unhealthy commodities industries, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a significant global public health concern in the twenty-first century. In keeping with their own interests, stakeholders actively provide facts and arguments to either support or reject policy initiatives. Working with political scientists might provide chances to investigate alternative theoretical frameworks and create fresh research approaches. Comparative research on representations of many industries and their products helping to increase the probability of NCDs might expose new prospects.

This collection of papers from academics and medical experts from across the world looks at how public health messages are presented on radio, social media, and online news. For public health experts, the media's influence on cultural viewpoints and choice of offered remedies and distribution of responsibilities is very vital. Mass media health campaigns have the benefit of quickly and affordably reaching a large audience

within a limited period of time, but detractors contend that their emphasis on personal decisions and actions calls into doubt their usefulness most of the time.

Health messages stressing the consistent intake of fruits and vegetables have traditionally been part of conventional mass media public health campaigns. But everyone's interpretation of the word "6 a day" can differ, which would result in contradicting opinions that would challenge the objectives of health communicators.

Changes in the way we consume health advertising and acquire health-related information have resulted from the development of specialised customised media consumption and the exact targeting of health advertising. Social media channels provide chances for researching audience participation with public health message as well as for powerful companies to break free from regulations and concentrate on younger populations.

Media advocacy groups now often work with reporters to build credibility and trust for public health messages. Media stories on pregnancy and public health initiatives tackling hazards connected with smoking and alcohol use support the media's constant attention on gender and physical beauty.

Considering the complicated properties of the media and its interactions with the larger public, a complete approach to media studies is advised. This method goes beyond the limited focus on specific situations and simplistic power dynamics suggesting the one-sided distribution of health knowledge to the larger public.

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