



An Empirical Study of Psychological Assessment Methods in News Communication Activities —Based on the perspective of communication psychology

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Abstract: In the realm of news communication activities, psychological assessment plays a pivotal role. It leverages a variety of methods and tools to evaluate the public's behaviors, psychological, and mental processes. This assessment can guide news communication professionals and policymakers, aiding them in enhancing their societal news communication efforts. This paper delves into the application of psychological assessment in news communication, using empirical case studies for analysis. It offers evaluations in areas such as emotional assessment, cognitive assessment, behavioral assessment, and social impact assessment, while seeking to refine the assessment methodologies. Our findings reveal that the exploration of novel assessment methods, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, acknowledging the influence of diverse groups and societal strata, and ensuring the quality and reproducibility of empirical research are crucial strategies to advance the use of psychological assessment in news communication. This progression is key to the evolution and advancement of news communication.

Keywords: Psychological Assessment; News Communication; Emotional Assessment; Cognitive Assessment; Behavioral Assessment; Social Impact Assessment

Introduction

News communication, a significant medium of social exchange, serves not only as a conduit for timely information and knowledge but also as a molder of individual and societal attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. This influential power of news communication, however, ushers in a range of psychological implications, including emotional fluctuations, cognitive processing styles, and behavioral shifts. Thus, it becomes imperative to accurately evaluate and analyze the psychological ramifications of news communication.

Regarded as a scientific technique, psychological assessment aims to systematically gather, measure, and interpret the psychological state, behavior, and experiences of individuals or groups. Within the realm of news communication research, the application of psychological assessment methods can equip news communication practitioners and decisionmakers with a deeper understanding of the psychological impact of news on audiences. This understanding, in turn, uncovers the role of news in shaping people's emotions, attitudes, cognition, and behavior.

By spotlighting the usage of psychological assessment in news communication, we underscore the innovative research value of exploring the application and significance of these methods within this field. Our research team provides a systematic discourse on psychological assessment methods, elucidating their basic principles and common techniques, with an emphasis on their deployment in the arena of news communication.

By thoroughly examining existing literature and empirical cases, we discuss the role and efficacy of psychological assessment methods in studying the impact of news communication on public emotions, cognition, behavior, and societal norms. By analyzing the strengths and limitations of these methods and striving to refine them, we can offer valuable insights and guidance to news communication practitioners and decisionmakers. This approach not only bolsters the quality and effectiveness of news communication, but also offers useful recommendations for the assessment, innovative research, and practice of communication psychology.

1. An Overview of Psychological Assessment Techniques

1.1 Psychological Assessment: Definition and Core Principles

Psychological assessment refers to a systematic approach aimed at gathering, measuring, and interpreting data related to mental states, behaviors, and attributes of individuals or groups. The main objective of this assessment is to generate information about an individual's psychological traits, which help in understanding and explaining their cognitive processes, emotions, behaviors, and personality. As a crucial part of clinical research and psychological education, psychological assessment offers robust scientific evidence for decisionmakers and individual growth.

[Received 13 July 2023; Accepted 24 July 2023; Published (online) 30, September, 2023]



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In the context of news communication activities, adherence to the fundamental principles of psychological assessment is necessary to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment. These principles, rooted in communication psychology, aim to deeply comprehend the psychological responses and behavioral shifts in the audience. Key principles include having clear assessment objectives, selective assessment indicators, diverse assessment methods, and interpretable assessment results. Adherence to these principles allows a thorough understanding of the audience's psychological cognition, emotional experiences, and behavioral changes, which is critical for evaluating news reports, advertising impacts, and public opinion influences. This understanding further aids in enhancing the quality and efficacy of news communication activities. Moreover, these principles form the basis for exploring and developing new evaluation methods and tools, which can adapt to the dynamic communication environment and audience requirements.

1.2 Categorization and Methods of Psychological Assessment

Psychological assessment techniques are various approaches that systematically evaluate individuals' behaviors, psychological processes, and mental characteristics. Subjectivity and objectivity are two pivotal elements in psychological assessment. Subjective assessment methods depend on self-reported data, such as questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups, while objective assessment methods derive data from direct observation and measurement, like observational methods and experimental research.

1.3 Widelyused Psychological Assessment Tools:

Questionnaires: These are frequently utilized tools that gather self-reported views, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors through structured or semistructured queries.

Experimental research: By controlling and manipulating variables, experiments observe individuals' responses and performance under varied conditions to establish causal relationships.

Observational methods: These obtain objective data by directly observing and documenting individuals' behaviors and responses in natural settings. Observations can be participatory or nonparticipatory, structured or unstructured.

Interviews: These are one-on-one communications used to understand individuals' views, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. Depending on research objectives, interviews can be structured, semistructured, or unstructured.

Focus groups: These involve assembling individuals to discuss a topic, aimed at understanding common views, differences, and new insights.

Psychological assessment employs a combination of subjective and objective methods and uses various tools like questionnaires, experiments, observations, interviews, and focus groups. By systematically evaluating individuals' psychological characteristics, these methods provide a scientific foundation for diagnosis, education, career guidance, among other areas.

1.4 Application Examples of Psychological Assessment Techniques

Psychological assessments in news communication activities encompass various aspects. Here are some practical application examples:

Advertising effectiveness evaluation: This involves assessing the impact of advertising on audience cognition, emotions, and behaviors through questionnaire surveys, experimental research, and other methods. The insights gained help optimize advertising strategies and improve advertising effectiveness.

News report impact analysis: This involves understanding the psychological reactions and opinion shifts of the audience towards news reports through interviews, focus group discussions, and other methods, providing a robust basis for news report enhancement.

Public opinion guidance evaluation: This involves assessing the impact of specific public opinion guidance on the psychological cognition, emotional experiences, and behavioral changes of the public through observational methods, questionnaire surveys, and other means. The insights gained help develop more targeted public opinion guidance strategies.

Social media psychological analysis: This involves analyzing users' psychological traits and behavior patterns on social media through data mining, text analysis, and other technical tools to provide support for social media operations and news communication strategies.

Communication psychology research: This involves exploring the psychological mechanisms in the news communication process, such as the influence of cognition, emotion, motivation, and other factors on information processing and communication effects through experimental research, questionnaire surveys, and other methods. The insights gained provide a scientific foundation for the development of news communication theories.

Psychological assessment methods offer an extensive range of application values in news communication activities. By adhering to the fundamental principles of psychological assessment and employing various assessment methods and tools, it is feasible to accurately understand the psychological characteristics and behavioral changes of the audience. This understanding provides robust support for decisionmaking and practice in news communication activities.

2. Evaluating Psychological Impacts in News Communication

Communication psychology plays an indispensable role in news communication research, evaluation, and practice. It is critical for assessing interpersonal communication, mass communication, and new media communication. The psychological evaluation of news communication primarily encompasses four methodologies: sentiment analysis, cognitive assessment, behavioral assessment, and social impact evaluation.

2.1 Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis involves evaluating audience emotions, attitudes, and affective responses. The key techniques are: Self-report questionnaires designed with emotion-related questions can elicit audiences' self-described emotional states, reactions, and attitudes. For example, emotion surveys can measure audiences' emotional experiences following news exposure.

Physiological indicators including heart rate, skin conductance, and facial expressions can be gauged to infer audiences' emotional responses to news content.

Emotion lexicon analysis extracts affective vocabulary from news texts to evaluate the emotional tones and potential impacts on audiences.

2.2 Cognitive Assessment

Cognitive assessment examines audience cognition, information processing, and comprehension of news content. Major methods consist of:

Memory tests evaluate news information encoding and retention by measuring audiences' ability to recall details. Question-and-answer tests can assess memory of news stories, for instance.

Reading time measurements record time spent reading news to indicate depth of processing and integration. Longer reading times suggest deeper cognitive processing.

Comprehension tasks test understanding of news information by having audiences summarize, paraphrase or interpret the content.

2.3 Behavioral Assessment

Behavioral assessment investigates the impacts of news exposure on audience behavioral responses. Key techniques include:

Observing and documenting audience behaviors in context after news exposure to directly evaluate behavioral impacts. Tracking audience behaviors such as purchases and donations following news consumption.

Administering questionnaires about behavioral intentions, willingness to act, and actions taken in response to news.

Conducting controlled experiments to manipulate news exposure and measure effects on decision-making and behaviors.

2.4 Social Impact Assessment

Social impact assessment examines the broader societal influences of news communication on public attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Major approaches consist of:

Large-scale opinion polls surveying audience attitudes and persuasion after news exposure.

Social network analysis to gauge impacts on online interactions and information diffusion flows.

Computerized text mining of news and social media to determine impacts on public agendas.

A strategic combination of methodologies tailored to the research aims, target population, and context is imperative for robust psychological assessment of news communication effects. These methods constitute a versatile toolkit for investigating the psychological and social impacts of news.

3. Empirical Research on Psychological Assessment in News Communication

The application of psychological assessment techniques such as sentiment analysis, cognitive evaluation, behavioral assessment and social impact appraisal can provide deeper insights into the psychological effects and social influences of news communication on audiences. This holds great significance in the evolving news communication landscape, contributing to enhanced news quality, effective public opinion guidance and social progress. The following four cases demonstrate empirical research on the application of psychological assessment in news communication.

Case 1: Applying Psychological Assessment to Study News Effects on Public Emotion

Objective: This case aimed to explore the impacts of news communication on public emotion and quantify the effects using psychological assessment approaches.

Method: Questionnaire surveys and physiological measurements were utilized. Emotion questionnaires measured audience self-reported emotional states and reactions to specific news stories. Physiological indicators including heart rate and skin conductance were tracked to gauge emotional responses. Combining these methods enabled comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of news communication's emotional impact.

Results: Different news types exerted varying emotional impacts. Positive news elicited joy and satisfaction while negative news provoked anger and anxiety. Physiological data corroborated these findings, showing emotion-related physiological activity. These methods provided deeper insight into the psychological mechanisms and effects of news communication on public emotion.

Case 2: Applying Psychological Assessment to Evaluate News Impacts on Consumer Behavior

Objective: This case sought to investigate the impacts of news communication on consumer behavior using psychological assessment techniques.

Method: Behavioral observation and questionnaire surveys were conducted. Observing purchasing choices, consumption decisions and brand preferences following news exposure evaluated behavioral impacts. Questionnaire surveys further probed consumer attitudes, emotional reactions and purchase intentions regarding news. Integrating both methods enabled comprehensive analysis of the psychological processes driving news communication's effects on consumer behavior.

Results: Specific news types stimulated consumer interest and purchase decision-making. Questionnaire data confirmed these impacts, elucidating links between consumer attitudes, emotions and purchase intentions in response to news. These methods provided greater understanding of the psychological mechanisms of news communication's effects on consumer behavior, delivering strategic insights for marketing.

Case 3: Applying Psychological Assessment to Examine News Influence on Social Values

Objective: This case applied psychological assessment to analyze the nature and extent of news communication's impact on social values and concepts.

Method: Large-scale questionnaire surveys and text analysis techniques were implemented. Questionnaire data provided insights into audience value changes regarding news topics. Text analysis uncovered value preferences and social concept transmission in news content. Integrating both methods allowed holistic evaluation of news communication's effects on social values.

Results: News communication significantly impacted social values and concepts. Specific news shaped public values and attitudes toward social issues. Group surveys and text analysis illuminated the psychological processes and mechanisms by which news communication remodels social values.

In summary, these cases demonstrate the utility and potential of psychological assessment techniques in empirical research on news communication effects. They provided valuable practical insights and illuminated future research directions to further probe the multifaceted psychological impacts of news communication. However, psychological assessment research also faces challenges and limitations that warrant careful research design, methodological pluralism and comprehensive analytical strategies. Overall, these cases underscore the vital role psychological assessment can play in advancing knowledge and practice in the news communication domain.

4. Improving Psychological Assessment Methods in News Communication Research

4.1 Evaluating Strengths and Limitations

Psychological assessment techniques have advantages like objectivity, replicability, broad applicability and validity. They can provide quantifiable, reliable data to elucidate news effects on audience psychology. However, limitations exist including respondent biases, sampling constraints, and tool shortcomings. Comprehensive consideration of multiple factors is imperative for robust assessment.

4.2 Methodological Enhancement Tailored to News Communication

Innovative methods are needed to match the rapid changes, diversity and interactivity of news communication. Advanced techniques like eye-tracking, EEG and physiological measurements could better capture audience psychological processes and reactions. Integrating qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups can provide richer insights into audience news comprehension and interpretation. Methodological enhancements can thus better grasp the complex dynamics of news communication.

4.3 Interdisciplinary Research: Opportunities and Challenges

Drawing assessment techniques from other disciplines provides opportunities to generate more comprehensive, in-depth evaluations and enrich understanding of news communication. However, interdisciplinary research also faces challenges such as disciplinary differences in language and methods as well as complex research designs. Establishing collaborative mechanisms and communication platforms is key to fully utilize complementary strengths across disciplines and catalyze methodological innovation.

In summary, evaluating and enhancing assessment methods can improve their accuracy and applicability in news communication research, providing better understanding of psychological and social impacts of news. Researchers should select methods tailored to specific research aims, populations and contexts. Furthermore, actively pursuing interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial to drive innovation and progress in psychological assessment methods, providing comprehensive insights into news communication effects on audience psychology and guiding improvements in news quality and social progress.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research yielded important findings regarding the application of psychological assessment in news communication: Firstly, these methods play an integral role in understanding news influences on emotions, cognition and behavior, providing tools like sentiment analysis, cognitive evaluation, behavioral assessment and social impact appraisal.

Secondly, psychological assessment holds vast potential for application in the evolving news landscape, necessitating continued innovation to meet emerging needs. Leveraging advanced technology and interdisciplinary collaborations can enrich understanding of news communication effects.

Thirdly, major future trends were identified, including investigating differential news impacts, evaluating emerging media effects, integrating qualitative techniques, and promoting interdisciplinary research.

Finally, evaluating and enhancing psychological assessment methods is vital for generating actionable insights and guiding policy and practice in news communication. Focused innovation tailored to news communication and harnessing interdisciplinary research synergies can significantly advance assessment methods and their application.

This research illuminated the multifaceted applications and contributions of psychological assessment techniques to empirically investigating news communication effects, providing a foundation to develop more responsible, high-quality news reporting practices that serve the public good.

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