

Assignment Title: 5.2 Understand the Public Perception of Science as Influenced by the Media

Unit 5: Perceptions of Science

Most of the participants agree that science influence e their day to day work and thereby their lifestyle. One of the participants answered to question 6: Do you think science influences your day to day work and lifestyle?

“ YES. Science influences my day to day activities in different ways. The most are health articles disclosing findings of research about the risk of different diseases, beauty products causing skin infection and cancer like sun cream, food products i.e. genetically modified crops bad for health articles to name a few. This alternates my lifestyle every single day in making decisions of what is right for me and my family.”

According to the questionnaire, vast majority of the audience think that children are both positively and negatively influenced by media. Two of the participants answered that:

“ YES, children are positively influenced with the amount of research going on in the science industry. This news makes children think of how we came to existence and with their overflowing young minds, their thirst for knowledge broadens up, which is definitely a good sign. “

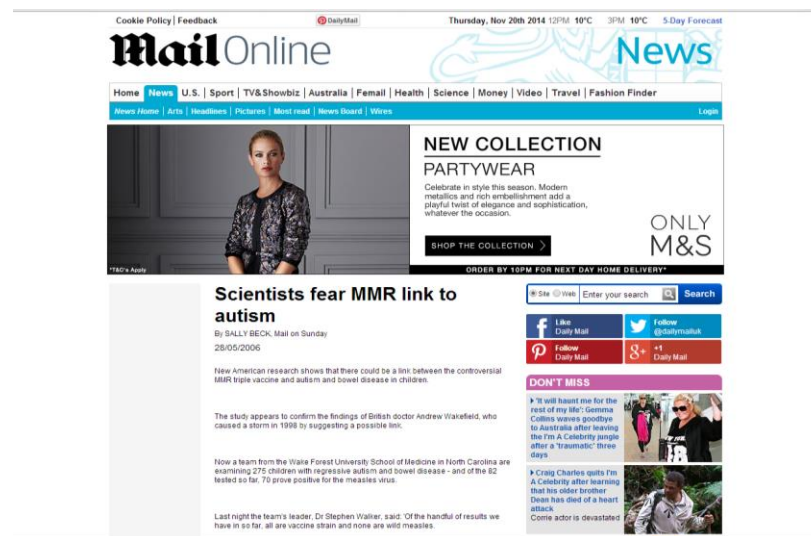
“ I think it is both positive and negative” as some children are very much interested in scientific ideas to turn to read a lot of articles mainly on an internet website which are good sources, which enable them to future careers in science. But when findings of research are altered or controversies of research get leaked, it alternates children’s point of view to negativity and in influencing them to think whether science is bad?”

This shows that after all science does change public perception but this is influenced by media with their different reporting of news. Age is a varied factor that alternates public perception as an adult may have different opinions as compared to younger audiences. Different sources to change public views, as this depends on how accurate information is reported on different sources; scientific journals are more accurate than newspaper articles. Again, all people think differently and may be a personal experience to enforce their thinking and thereby their opinions on science.

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P3 - How Public Perceive Science



When the news of MMR vaccine linking to Autism in children broke out, in a much-reported controversy, it was not well perceived by the public. It drew negative criticism from public. It created fear among parents of vaccinating their children with MMR even though the vaccine was known to be the best form of protection against measles, mumps and rubella.

Last night Dr Wakefield said: 'This new study confirms what we found in British children and again with Professor O'Leary. The only exposure these children have had to measles is through the MMR vaccine.'

'They were developing normally and then they regressed. They now suffer autism and bowel disease.'

As per the above paragraph from the article, the media advertises the words of the researcher who himself conducted the studies disclosed the results to the public. As a result, this would have shaken public confidence in MMR triple vaccine even though its previous series of medical studies and anecdotal evidence have linked to serious medical conditions like autism.

Thereby, this article influenced the parents of autistic children in believing that MMR triggered their child's condition and this further strengthened the public concern despite some other links dismissed by medical authorities and governments. As per the evidenced in the decline in vaccination coverage from 92 percent in 1995 to less than 80 percent in 2003 (a figure closer to 60 percent in some parts of London).

Now a team from the Wake Forest University School of Medicine in North Carolina are examining 275 children with regressive autism and bowel disease - and of the 82 tested so far, 70 prove positive for the measles virus