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Diversity, Convergence and a Balanced Media Diet in a Digital Age [Slides]

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Diversity, Convergence and a Balanced Media Diet in a Digital Age

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Definitions of Media Diversity

- Quality (Einstein, 2004)
- Pluralism (FCC & Ofcom)
- Equality of access and presence (van Cuilenburg, 2000)
- Competition (Compaine & Gomery, 2000)
- Heterogeneity, variety or disparity (van Cuilenburg 2000), Moreau & Peltier, 2004)
- Equilibrium between consumer interest and media offering (Bae, 2000; Owen & Wildman, 1992)
- Innovation (Wilstrom, 2005)

Proposed Three Levels of Media Diversity Analysis

- Diversity funneled in 3 levels from supply, to acquisition, and consumption.

- Introduces the intermediate stage of acquisition or purchase, not just supply and viewing diversity

Levels of Analysis in Media Diversity

I. Media Supply (Source Diversity)
Media Ownership and Workforce Diversity

Media Organization Product Offering
content diversity
- fictional vs. non-fictional content
- viewpoint
- program genres/formats
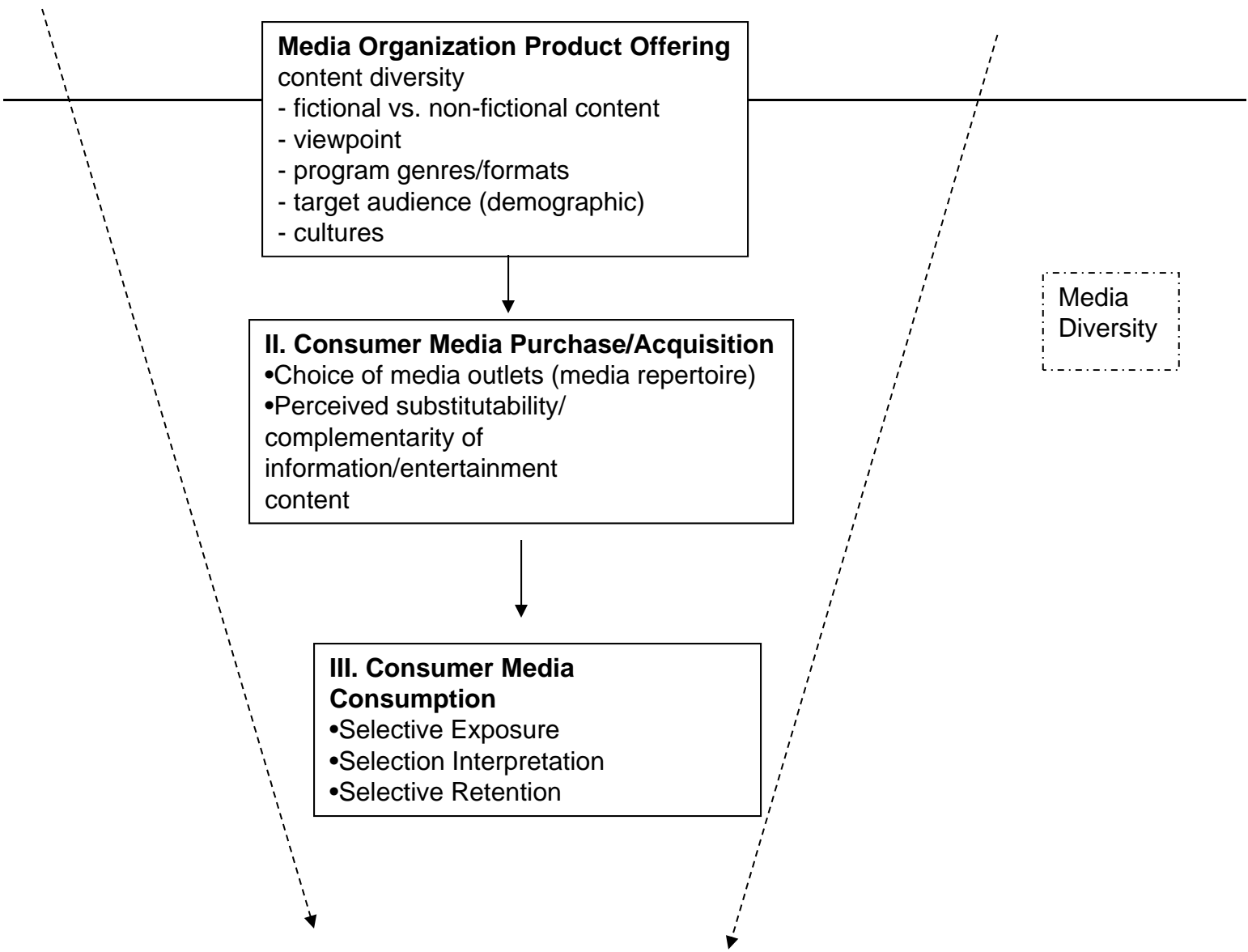- target audience (demographic)
- cultures

II. Consumer Media Purchase/Acquisition
•Choice of media outlets (media repertoire)
•Perceived substitutability/
complementarity of
information/entertainment
content

**III. Consumer Media
Consumption**
•Selective Exposure
•Selection Interpretation
•Selective Retention

Media
Diversity

Media Abundance

- Substitutability and complementarity of media use
- Media repertoire of consumers

Typical user: 15 media types daily and 58% of time involves in media consumption

Co-use of media: Internet, print and television in major news events

Media Abundance

- Different media offer different attributes to consumers
- Audience duplication: co-use and multiple media consumption
- Lack of cross media analysis in diversity research

➡️ audiences are at the mercy of one medium

Media Abundance

○ Easy access to the Internet: media access is not a problem, but whether there is enough audience for the Web page is the key to diversity

○ Too many choices bewilder consumers. They need help and guidance from portal sites (e.g., Yahoo) and relevance ranking provided by search engines

○ Search business is highly concentrated (Google 46%, Yahoo 24%)

Media Abundance

- Audience diversity at the consumption level-
- More choices, reinforce the same taste and interest or increase exposure to diverse content?
- Many are not aware of the alternative media products and not willing to break the media habit

How diversity can be achieved

- Make consumers dissatisfied with the status quo (current media offering)
- Seek out alternatives and see benefits of having alternatives
- The price factor and accessibility factor most often source of dissatisfaction, not content
- New media alternative must address to accessibility and price dissatisfaction, not content dissatisfaction
- Success is hinged upon media marketing techniques and business models chosen

Media Convergence

- Difficulty in defining the media sector with TV, Radio, Print Converged on the Internet and the Telephone
- Consumption of identical media content in different media platforms
- Competition between online presence of traditional media and native Internet Media brands (e.g., StupidVideos.com, Digital FM)
- Downloading and file-sharing (unclear media identities of burnt CD and i-pod)

Proposed Research Agenda

- New Media Diversity Metaphor: **The Balanced Media Diet**

  - Keep up with the current health trends

  - More practical to use and easier to measure diversity than other metaphors

Balanced Media Diet

- Implies consumption
- Part of a person's daily life
- Involves choice and decision-making - consequences to the well-being of consumers
- Media content is food for thought
- Participation of the various levels of the media consumption process from supply to acquisition, consumption to evaluation

Balanced Media Diet

○ Media diet affects the knowledge base and mental health of the consumers

○ Opinion bias and cultural bias will be minimized with a balanced diet by exposure to different view points, different country of origins, different sources of information, different composition of ethnic groups.

Two proposed streams of diversity research

Based on the primary function and expectation of the media content

- Fictional content diversity: entertainment.
- Non-fictional content diversity: informativeness, credibility

Assessing nutritional value of media content

- Research should compare mental well-being of consumers with a balanced media diet versus those with a skewed media diets.
- Possible indicators:
1. inclusiveness or tolerance of other cultures and races
2. Openness to new ideas

Developing Media Complementarity and Co-Use Index

- Comprehensive national media surveys by government agencies to assess degree of duplicated media use and media preference for a particular topic

- Topic areas with low number of media choices and low content diversity are warning signs for intervention7