



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE, HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES**

<b>QUALIFICATION: BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION</b>	
<b>QUALIFICATION CODE:</b> 07BCMM	<b>LEVEL:</b> 7
<b>COURSE CODE:</b> COT721S	<b>COURSE NAME:</b> COMMUNICATION THEORIES
<b>SESSION:</b> NOVEMBER 2024	<b>PAPER:</b> THEORY
<b>DURATION:</b> 3 HOURS	<b>MARKS:</b> 100

<b>FIRST OPPORTUNITY EXAMINATION MEMORANDUM</b>	
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<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>
1. Answer the questions according to instructions. 2. Read all the questions carefully before answering. 3. Number the answers clearly

**THIS MEMORANDUM CONSISTS OF 5 PAGES** (Including this front page)

### Question 1

[5x4=20 marks]

Briefly explain the following broad categories of the communication models and provide examples.

- a) Transmission/linear model category
  - Referred to as the Harold Lasswell formula – based on five questions: “who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?”
  - Focuses on the message/sender’s need to be pursued with little regard for the receiver – they are regarded to be passive.
- b) Ritual/expressive model category
  - Communication is regarded as sharing, participation, association, fellowship, and the possession of a common faith.
  - Perceives communication as performative – for pleasure or entertainment.
- c) The publicity/display/attention model category
  - Here, the objective of the communication process is to capture attention to sell a physical product or a social product.
  - In this model, the aspect of catching and holding the visual or aural attention of the audience is critical.
- d) The reception model category
  - Argues that in any communication, multiple meanings can be derived by the receiver.
  - Hall argued that senders of messages “encode” what he called a “preferred reading”, but that the receivers of the message can “decode” it in their way and give the message a “variant or oppositional meaning” based on their experiences and outlook.

### Question 2

[25 marks]

Choose one kind of mass media organisation in Namibia and analyse its structure and operations.

(Students to choose any mass media organisation of their choice – marker to use discretion)

### Question 3

[10x3=30 marks]

Using relevant examples, discuss the following theories of interpersonal communication.

- a) Politeness theory
  - PT clarifies how we manage our own and others’ identities through interaction – through the use of politeness strategies.
  - PT explains how and why individuals try to promote, protect, or “save face,” especially when embarrassing or shameful situations arise unexpectedly.

### Three assumptions of Politeness Theory:

- First, PT assumes that all individuals are concerned with maintaining face.
- Two dimensions to the concept of face: positive and negative face

Positive face - includes a person's need to be liked, appreciated, and

admired by select persons. Thus, maintaining positive face includes using behaviours to ensure that these significant others continue to view you in an affirming fashion.

Negative face - includes a person's desire to act freely, without constraints or imposition from others.

- Second, PT assumes that human beings are rational and goal oriented, at least with respect to achieving face needs (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987).
- Finally, PT maintains that some behaviours are fundamentally face threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987).
- This means, you will threaten someone else's face, just as another person will, at some point, threaten yours. These face-threatening acts (FTAs) include common behaviors such as apologies, compliments, criticisms, requests, and threats (Craig, Tracy, & Spisak, 1993).

### b) Social exchange theory

- Developed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), SET clarifies when and why individuals continue and develop some personal relationships while ending others.
- It looks at personal relationships in terms of costs versus benefits. What rewards do you receive from a given relationship, and what does it cost you to obtain those rewards? Before making specific predictions, however, certain assumptions must be understood.
- The theory takes into account how satisfied you will be with the relationships that you choose to maintain.

### Three assumptions guide the SET:

- First, Thibaut and Kelley (1959) argued that personal relationships are a function of comparing benefits gained versus costs to attain those benefits.
- Second, and intrinsically tied to the first assumption, people want to make the most of the benefits while lessening the costs. This is known as the minimax principle.
- Last, Thibaut and Kelley maintained that, by nature, humans are selfish. Thus, as a human being, you tend to look out for yourself first and foremost.

c) Dialectical theory

- argued that relationships are dynamic, thus impossible for a relationship to maintain a certain level of satisfaction or reach a constant status quo.
- It believes that partners continue to develop their relationships by managing a series of opposing, yet necessary, tensions or contradictions

Four assumptions that guide DT:

- Praxis - suggests that relationship trajectories are neither linear (always moving forward) nor repetitive (cycling through the same things again and again).
- Change/motion- presumes that the only guarantee in a relationship is that it will change.
- Contradictions - within every relationship, both partners have essential, yet opposing needs.
- Totality - recognizes that without interdependence, a relationship cannot exist.

Question 4

[10x3=30 marks]

Mass media affects the audience in various ways. Discuss the three mass media effects.

a) Uses and gratification theory

- The uses and gratifications theory stands in stark contrast to the magic bullet theory of mass communication. Rather than the media infusing people's minds with ideas, this theory says that people are quite particular about choosing media content that suits their needs.
- These needs can range from the need for information, entertainment, and social interaction to the need for relaxation, escape, or arousal.
- The uses and gratifications theory suggests that audience members actively pursue particular media to satisfy their own needs. The reciprocal nature of the mass communication process no longer sees the media user as an inactive, unknowing participant but as an active, sense-making participant who chooses content and makes informed media choices.
- As the audience, we tend to avoid the media that do not agree with our values, attitudes, and beliefs. Schramm argued that we make media choices by determining how gratified we will be by consuming a particular media.
- The Uses and Gratifications Theory discusses the effects of the media on people. It explains how people use media for their own needs and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled.
- Also, this theory is in contradiction to the Magic Bullet Theory which assumes the audience is passive. This theory has a user/audience-centred approach.

b) Cultivation theory

- CT is most frequently applied to television viewing and suggests that frequent television viewers' perceptions of the real world become reflective of the most common messages advanced by fictional television.
- Cultivation research studies media effects. Cultivation theorists posit that television viewing can have long-term effects that gradually affect the audience. Their primary focus is on the effects on the attitudes of viewers as opposed to created behaviours.
- Heavy viewers of TV are thought to be 'cultivating' attitudes that seem to believe that the world created by TV is an accurate depiction of the real world.
- The theory suggests that this cultivation of attitudes is based on attitudes already present in our society and that the media take those attitudes which are already present and re-present them bundled in a different packaging to their audiences.
- Many times, the viewer is unaware of the extent to which they absorb media, many times viewing themselves as moderate viewers when, in fact, they are heavy viewers.

c) Framing theory

- The media draws the public attention to certain topics, it decides what people think about, the journalists select the topics.
- This is the original agenda-setting 'thought'.
- The way in which the news is brought, the frame in which the news is presented, is also a choice made by journalists.
- Thus, a frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers organise and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided.
- Frames are abstract notions that serve to organise or structure social meanings.
- Frames influence the perception of the news of the audience, this form of agenda-setting not only tells what to think about, but also how to think about it.

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