

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN PUBLIC PROTECTION. EVALUATE IF MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY ON THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND PERCEPTION?

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Presentation Objectives

Impact of Media on Public fear or confidence:

- Explore how media coverage shapes perceptions of safety, either calming fears or exacerbating anxieties

Sensationalism in Reporting:

- Highlight examples of exaggerated reporting and its influence on public perception and behavior.

Balancing Information and Panic:

- Examine the fine line between informing the public and creating unnecessary alarm.

Ethical Responsibilities of Media

- Discuss whether media outlets should prioritize accuracy and public welfare over sensationalism.

How media coverage influences public fear or confidence regarding safety



- Media coverage significantly influences public perceptions of safety.
- Media outlets focus on sensational content, they can amplify fear and anxiety by exaggerating the scale or immediacy of a threat (Vanacore, 2021).
- Accurate and balanced reporting can foster public confidence by providing clear, factual information, offering practical guidance and emphasizing resilience (London, 2025).
- By presenting verified facts and avoiding sensationalism, media outlets can help the public make informed decisions, fostering a sense of trust and stability (Majerczak and Strzelecki, 2022).
- When journalists prioritize accuracy and neutrality, they empower society to respond effectively, reducing misinformation and building during challenging times (Bateman and Jackson, 2024).

Examine Sensationalism in Media Reporting



Ebola Outbreak (2014)

- Social media outlets used alarmist headlines and exaggerated the potential for global spread (González-Padilla and Tortolero-Blanco, 2020).
- This sensationalism led to public panic, stigmatization of African communities, and even unnecessary stockpiling of medical supplies in unaffected countries (Kamara and Essien, 2022).

Fuel shortages in the UK (2021)

- September 2021, media reports highlighted a fuel shortage due to lack of HGV drivers (Roberts, 2021).
- Sensational headlines of a nationwide fuel crisis, this led to panic buying, stockpiling of fuel and stations running dry due to increase demand (Davies, 2021).

Exaggerated or biased media coverage can lead to significant consequences, including heightened public anxiety, widespread panic and spread of misinformation (Caceres et al., 2022).

Sensationalism distorts the perception of risks, causing irrational behaviors like panic buying (Phillips et al., 2021).

Emphasize Media Responsibility

- Ethical journalism is essential in mitigating public fear and promoting informed decision-making during crises (Home Office, 2024).
- If adhered to principles of accuracy, fairness and accountability, journalists can provide the public with reliable information that fosters trust and reduces unnecessary panic.
- Empowers individuals and communities to respond rationally and effectively, rather than succumbing to fear-driven reactions.
- Additionally, ethical journalism helps combat misinformation, promoting transparency and reinforcing the role of media as a trusted source of guidance in times of uncertainty (Shahbazi and Bunker, 2024)



Conclusion

01

In Conclusion, media coverage plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions of safety, with the potential to either amplify fear or foster confidence.

02

Sensationalism can distort reality, leading to panic, misinformation, and irrational behavior, while accurate and balanced reporting helps maintain public trust and promotes informed decision-making.

03

Media outlets bear a responsibility to prioritize accuracy and public welfare, as their influence on societal behaviour and safety can have far-reaching consequences.

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