



PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THEORIES RELATED TO THE STUDY OF BLOGGERS' ACTIVITIES

<https://doi.org/10.57033/mijournals-2026-3-0332>

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Abstract. *This article analyses the scientific and theoretical potential of Mark Snyder's self-monitoring theory for the psychological study of bloggers' activities. The article examines the significance of this theory in explaining the social behaviour of individuals with high and low levels of self-monitoring and highlights the distinctive characteristics associated with each level. It further considers John Suler's online disinhibition effect and Manuel Castells' network society theory as complementary explanatory frameworks, and argues that blogging should be interpreted as a complex socio-psychological phenomenon encompassing self-presentation, communicative relationships with audiences and the exercise of social influence.*

Keywords: *self-monitoring, self-observation, self-control, blogger, blogging activity, social networks, social media, self-presentation, social behaviour, audience, communicative behaviour.*

INTRODUCTION

In modern social psychology, an individual's management of their own behaviour in various social situations and their desire to create a certain impression on others are considered one of the important areas of research. One of the prominent representatives of this field is the American social psychologist Mark Snyder, who in 1974 developed self-monitoring theory (Snyder, 1974:526–537). This theory explains the degree to which an individual manages their behaviour, emotions and appearance in the process of adapting to the social environment. According to the researcher, people differ from one another in terms of their level of self-monitoring. Some individuals carefully observe the social situation and are able to change their behaviour, speech, facial expressions and appearance in accordance with the opinions and expectations of those around them. Such individuals have a high level of self-monitoring, and they strive to create a positive impression on others and to maintain their social status. In contrast, individuals with a low level of self-monitoring remain loyal to their internal views and values even in different situations. They pay less attention to external evaluations and tend to demonstrate natural and sincere behaviour.



This theory is of particular scientific importance in analysing the psychological characteristics of bloggers operating in today's digital society. This is because blogging activity is constantly based on communicating with the audience, taking followers' opinions into account and creating a positive public image. Bloggers often create content in accordance with the interests, needs and expectations of their audience, and change their speech style, dress culture, emotions and behaviour. This is a clear example of the high self-monitoring characteristic described by Snyder.

MAIN PART

In order to achieve success on social media, a blogger must not only create quality content but also form a social image that inspires trust among the audience. Therefore bloggers often manage their emotions, hide negative emotions and try to demonstrate a positive mood. Such a situation may lead to a certain difference between their personal life and their image in the virtual space. As a result, a psychological difference is formed between the blogger's real "self" and the "self" image they present to the audience (Schlosser, 2020:1–5).

Mark Snyder's theory also explains how bloggers manage their activities under the influence of the size of their audience, followers' opinions, comments and "likes". While positive feedback received from the audience can increase a blogger's motivation, negative comments and criticism may have a negative impact on their emotional state. Therefore bloggers often strive to control themselves, manage their emotions and maintain a positive image in the eyes of the public. In addition, Snyder's theory makes it possible to explain the process of bloggers' formation as a new social role. In modern society a blogger is manifested not only as a person who disseminates information, but also as a social subject who acts as an opinion leader, influences the public and promotes certain values (Audrezet, de Kerviler & Moulard, 2020:557–569). Therefore the success of a blogger's activity largely depends on their ability to communicate effectively with the audience, adapt to the situation and manage themselves.

In addition, there is a modern study that interprets this very issue from a scientific and practical perspective. John Suler's theory of the online disinhibition effect is one of them (Suler, 2004:321–326). According to him, people exhibit different behaviour in the internet environment compared with real life. In the online space they may speak more openly, express their emotions more freely and sometimes engage in actions that they



would not normally perform in their everyday lives. The main reason for this lies in the specific psychological conditions of the internet environment.

The scholar identifies several factors that contribute to the emergence of this effect. The first factor is anonymity, as internet users feel freer because they can hide their identity or operate under a pseudonym. The second factor is invisibility, as during online communication the interlocutor's facial expressions, body movements or direct reactions are not visible; this weakens a person's internal control. The third factor is the delayed character of communication in terms of time: since a response is not necessarily given immediately in communication via the internet, an individual can express their thoughts freely.

In addition, Suler also identifies factors such as solipsistic introjection, dissociative imagination and the minimisation of the influence of authority. As a result of these factors, internet users act more freely, boldly and sometimes more emotionally than in real life. This theory is of particular importance in explaining bloggers' activities. Bloggers conduct their activities mainly in the virtual space, and communication with the audience is also carried out through the internet. Therefore they may create an image in front of the camera that differs from their behaviour in real life. In some cases, even if bloggers are shy, taciturn or inclined to hide their emotions in everyday life, they behave freely, actively and confidently in front of the camera. In other cases, on the contrary, they may behave excessively boldly or aggressively through the internet (Castells, 2000:5–24).

Furthermore, John Suler's theory also explains the style of bloggers' communication with their audience. Owing to the anonymity and remote nature of communication in the internet environment, bloggers may express their opinions more openly, express emotional reactions more strongly and establish close psychological contact with their audience. Such a situation contributes to their formation as a new social role and increases their opportunities to influence public opinion. In this regard, analysing Manuel Castells' network society theory is also relevant (Castells, 2007:238–266).

In the twenty-first century, as a result of the rapid development of information and communication technologies, the social structure of society has changed significantly. The internet, social networks and digital platforms have fundamentally transformed the ways in which people communicate, exchange information and organise social



relationships (Castells, 2000:5–24). One of the scholars who has analysed these changes most deeply from a scientific perspective is the Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells. Through his network society theory he explains the main characteristics of modern society. According to Castells, the main characteristic of modern society is a system of social networks based on information and communication technologies. While society was previously governed mainly through territorial, political or economic institutions, today social relations are increasingly carried out through digital networks. As a result, information has become the most important strategic resource, while the internet has become the main communication space of society (Castells, 2010).

The researcher calls this process a “network society”. According to him, the social activity, professional success and position of a modern individual in society are largely determined by their participation in information networks. Digital platforms enable people to communicate rapidly with millions of others, exchange ideas and exert social influence regardless of geographical distance.

Today bloggers have become an important source of information alongside the traditional mass media. They maintain constant communication with their audience, discuss current social issues, promote various products and services, and in some cases exert an even stronger influence on shaping public opinion than the mass media. Therefore blogging activity can be considered a new social institution of the network society. According to Castells’ view on this matter, in a digital society power is not only in the hands of the state or large organisations, but also in the hands of subjects who have the ability to manage information and deliver it to a wide audience. Bloggers are one such group of subjects. The content they create can influence the views, behaviour and decisions of millions of people. In this regard bloggers are becoming new communicative leaders in modern society.

This theory also makes it possible to explain the psychological characteristics of bloggers. In a digital society a blogger constantly communicates with the audience, observes their feedback and develops their activities accordingly. The number of followers, comments, “likes” and shares directly influence a blogger’s motivation, self-esteem and emotional state. Therefore the psychological state of bloggers is largely related to the quality of social interactions on the internet.



Furthermore, Manuel Castells' theory also provides an explanation of the factors influencing the formation of bloggers as a new social role within society. The development of information technologies, the widespread adoption of the internet, the increasing number of mobile devices and the extensive proliferation of social networks have created the fundamental conditions for the development of blogging activity. Consequently blogging has evolved from merely a personal interest into a new form of professional activity with economic, cultural and social significance.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical analyses conducted make it possible to examine blogging activity in close connection with the individual psychological characteristics of the person, the psychological affordances of the virtual environment and social relations within the digital society. In particular, Mark Snyder's self-monitoring theory explains the mechanisms through which bloggers regulate their behaviour, emotions and external image in accordance with audience expectations and social situations. This process acquires a distinctive character under conditions of virtual communication and can be interpreted through John Suler's online disinhibition effect, which explains how individuals may express themselves more freely and differently in the internet environment than in real life. These individual and virtual processes, in turn, manifest themselves within a broader social context, namely within the framework of Manuel Castells' network society theory. This theory makes it possible to explain the position of blogging activity within the digital communication system, as well as new forms of information exchange and interaction with audiences. On this basis, blogging can be interpreted not merely as a content-creation activity, but as a complex socio-psychological phenomenon encompassing self-presentation, the establishment of communicative relationships with audiences and the exercise of social influence. Thus the logical integration of the theories of Snyder, Suler and Castells provides a theoretical foundation for comprehensively examining the formation of bloggers as a new social role based on the interaction of individual, virtual and social levels.

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