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Arab Media Theories (AMT)
The Value Determinism Theory of the media1 in the Digital Age

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Abstract:

This study aims to elucidate the concept of the Value determinism theory of the media (VDTM) and explore its connection with the digital virtual environment. The (VDTM) represents the initial development of a communication theory within the Arab region, dating back to the mid-1980s. This study further aims to illuminate (Shed light) the various facets of this theory and its underlying principles. Additionally, it delves into the theory's assumptions and the novel concepts it generates, along with its perspective on communication in the digital environment.

Furthermore, this study indirectly investigates the theory's relationship with other Western functional and non-functional theories in the realm of digital media, highlighting how they positively intersect with emerging developments in the communication field, differing primarily in their approach to the concept of value.

Keywords: Value media, Determinism, Digital age, Normative Theory, Communication Theory.

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1. Introduction:

The Value Determinism Theory of the Media (VDTM) is a normative communication theory that bridges the gap between reality and the ideal conduct of human behavior based on shared values. This theory, known as the Value Determinism Theory of the Media (VDTM), was developed during the mid-1980s by Abderrahmane Azzi[2]. Central to his body of work are the exploration of values and the cultural dimension of these values. Azzi's extensive research portfolio comprises over sixty studies spanning various domains such as media and Communication Sciences, as well as contemporary social and philosophical thought. He drew from diverse theoretical frameworks, including structuralism, phenomenalism, symbolic interactionism, and critical hermeneutics.

Azzi's inquiries also extended to the Khaldunian theory, where he examined the concept of "Assabiya[3]" in ancient times and its relationship to "Shurra[4]" with the advent of Islam, as well as the study of "public opinion" in contemporary contexts. He delved into the Islamic heritage of values through the examination of figures like Badie Al-Zaman al-Nursi[5] Malik ben Nabi, Hussein al-wurtilani[6], and the Chinese personality Sun Tzu[7].

Furthermore, Azzi ventured into Western moral philosophies grounded in principles, with a particular focus on Immanuel Kant's work. He also delved into the concept of positive commitment through the study of Muhammad Deraz[8]. These investigations had a profound influence on shaping various components of the ethical duty in media practice, which Azzi termed professional deontology. In addition to his extensive work, Azzi also conducted in-depth studies on Western normative media theories, including the Social Responsibility Theory and the Social Harmony Theory, etc. (Bouali, 2018, p. 4)

The VDTM has experienced substantial growth and development over the last decade, gaining a following among a new generation of scholars and students in numerous Arab and foreign universities. This expansion is evident through the hosting of seminars and scientific conferences dedicated to the broader concept of "media value thought" and, more specifically, to the VDTM. These events have taken place in various locations, further indicating the theory's increasing influence and popularity.

2. The Value Determinism Theory media: an attempt to define the theory:

The expression of value determinism theory of the media (VDTM) includes the following three concepts:

2. 1 - Determinism:

Since the nineteenth century, the term "determinism" has been used to describe theories that later evolved into independent scientific disciplines. The concept of determinism is essentially a manifestation of order or a fundamental system. It is often asserted that there exists both mathematical determinism and physical determinism in the universe. Notably, mathematical determinism relies on outcomes, while physical determinism is primarily rooted in causal factors. Furthermore, we can also refer to the determinism of chemistry, which demonstrates its validity through specific objects (Bhushan, 2003, p.14).

From this cognitive perspective, a new form of reality has emerged – virtual reality. It's important to note that virtual reality does not replace classical reality; rather, it can be seen as a lens through which we perceive reality. For the first time in human history, virtual reality has successfully transcended the constraints of time and space.

To illustrate this concept, consider the contrasting views of time proposed by Newton and Einstein. Newton's view defines time algebraically, where time remains constant everywhere. According to Newton's determinism, speed is measured as the distance traveled within a specified period. On the other hand, Einstein's theory of time portrays it as a dynamic entity, intricately linked to velocity, without negating the importance of distance. Einstein introduced a maximum speed limit, the speed of light, which cannot be exceeded.

In the context of virtual reality, time takes on a dynamic character. It aspires to attain a constancy akin to absolute reality. Virtual reality seeks to bridge the gap between the immutable aspects of classical reality and the fluid, changeable nature of digital realms. In doing so, it introduces a unique dimension to human experience, transcending the traditional boundaries of time and space.

In the realm of digital time, only two fundamental dimensions or aspects hold sway: speed and time. The traditional factor of distance is not only absent but is actually nullified. Here, the endpoint of distance converges toward zero, such that speed becomes equivalent to time, and time is reduced to a singular unit, namely one. In this digital context, the only numerical entities that hold significance are zero and one (al-Bayati, 2014, p. 101). The advent of the digital age and the concept of digital time has given rise to a novel form of society known as the digital society. In this society, its members coexist and engage with one another within the realms of virtual reality. Virtual time is intrinsically founded on the principles of digital determinism, wherein digitization serves as the fundamental cornerstone across various sectors and aspects of life. We are currently witnessing the emergence of the new economy, often referred to as the

digital economy. Alongside this economic transformation, a new realm of policy has surfaced – digital politics. Moreover, a distinct form of conflict has arisen, characterized by its severity and cruelty, known as digital wars.

Within this digital landscape, a unique culture has evolved, along with complex and intertwined human relationships, marked by emotions and dynamics that differ significantly from what occurs in the physical world. This digital realm has redefined the way we conduct economic activities, make policy decisions, engage in conflicts, and experience the multifaceted facets of human culture and relationships. In the 1990s, a groundbreaking technology emerged for transmitting communication materials through digital means. This innovation was driven by the recognition that digitalization had become an imperative and essential component of modern communication, as noted by al-Bayati (Al- Bayati, 2014, p. 102).

In the context of the VDTM, determinism refers to the practice of considering a single variable as the primary driver for explaining or comprehending any given phenomenon. The central variable or foundation within the VDTM is "**value**." This theory applies to various aspects of media, communication, and the internet, spanning different generations, including the digital age. Consequently, any element or media-related phenomenon is analyzed and understood in relation to its proximity to, contradiction with, or distance from these core values.

It's essential to note that other variables, such as socio-economic, historical, political, and technological factors, are viewed as complementary elements that influence dependent variables within this framework (Azzi, 2011, p. 9). In the VDTM, they work in conjunction with the value variable to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of media and communication phenomena.

This perspective sets the VDTM apart from other deterministic theories, such as technological determinism, often associated with Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan's theory famously asserts that "**the medium is the message**," emphasizing the profound impact of communication mediums on shaping society and culture. In contrast, the VDTM holds that "**the message is the value**," prioritizing the role of core values in shaping media and communication content.

Furthermore, we can draw a figurative distinction with digital determinism, which posits that "**the medium is digitization**." In this context, the emphasis is on the transformative power of digitization itself in redefining various aspects of human interaction and information dissemination.

So, the VDTM stands out by prioritizing the centrality of values as the driving force in media and communication, contrasting with other deterministic theories that emphasize either the medium or the process of digitization.

The study of media characteristics, including interactivity, hypertext, continuous updating, immediacy (real-time), and multimedia, and their influence and application represent a significant aspect of the Media Morphosis theory introduced by Roger Field in his book, "Understanding the New Media Morphosis" (Fielder, 1997). This theory serves to elucidate the dynamic relationship between digital media and traditional media.

Media Morphosis delves into the transformative effects of digital technology on communication and media practices. It highlights the following key characteristics:

Interactivity: Digital media encourages active engagement and participation from users, enabling two-way communication and feedback. Interactivity is a fundamental element that distinguishes digital media from traditional one-way communication channels.

Hypertext: Digital media allows for non-linear navigation through content, linking to related information through hypertext. This characteristic fosters a dynamic and exploratory approach to information consumption.

Continuous Updating: In the digital realm, content can be easily and regularly updated, ensuring that information remains current and relevant. This contrasts with traditional media, which typically has fixed publication schedules.

Immediacy (Real Time): Digital media can deliver information in real time, providing immediate access to breaking news and events. This real-time aspect is often a critical feature of digital media's appeal.

Multimedia: Digital media seamlessly integrates various media formats, including text, images, audio, and video, creating a rich and immersive user experience.

Fielder's Media Morphosis theory highlights how these characteristics have transformed the landscape of media and communication, leading to the coexistence and interaction of digital and traditional media forms. It offers a framework for understanding the evolving dynamics and interplay between these two modes of communication.

2. 2 - Value:

The word "value" has a linguistic origin that is distinct from the Arabic words. In English, "value" is derived from the Old French word "Valeur,"

which, in turn, comes from the Latin word "valorem," meaning "strength" or "worth." The term has no direct linguistic connection to the Arabic words "risen," or "resurrected," which have different etymological roots and meanings.

The Holy Qur'an contains its own set of Arabic words with specific meanings, the word "Value "is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of correct and straight laws from Allah (Surat Al- Bayyinah, 3), and the term "value" as it is understood in English does not have an equivalent linguistic connection to these Arabic terms. It's important to note that linguistic and etymological connections can vary significantly between languages.

Azzi Abderrahmane states that Value has relationships with human dignity is both spiritual and relational in Islamic ethics. As Azzi describes it, the term dignity (in Arabic Al Karama) is derived from God's attributes Al Karama, that is, the value of dignity is bestowed by the creator and mirrored in Human relations. The term Al Karama and its derivatives are mentioned fifteen times in the Quran, illustrative: we have bestowed dignity on the children of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favors, above a great part of our creation. (Christians, G, 191)

The reference to the children of Adam implies all human beings regardless of their race or beliefs. Every human being is endowed with dignity, and as jurists on the matter have explained: "Dignity is not earned by meritorious conduct; it is established as an expression of God grace; and that dignity is a natural and absolute right.(Christians, G. 192)

Azzi develops these Quranic concepts of al Karama as having special significance for the rights and duties of human relationships.

Jurists in scholastic jurisprudence have attached dignity to the concept of (inviolability) in the sense that six basic tenets must be preserved and protected for all human beings: life intellect, religion, family, property, and honor. These are a relationship with Value. (Christians, G. 192)

Philosophy has historically addressed the subject of values within the framework of various sub-disciplines, as noted by Abderrahmane Azzi. (Azzi, 1999, p.9)

Here's a brief breakdown of how values have been incorporated into different branches of philosophy:

Ontology: Philosophers have considered the concept of value within the realm of ontology, which is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of existence and reality. Within this context, questions related to the fundamental nature of values, their existence, and their relationship to the physical world have been explored.

Logic: The subject of right and wrong, often related to ethical and moral values, has found its place within the domain of logic. Philosophers have examined the logical foundations and principles underpinning moral reasoning and ethical decision-making.

Ethics: The field of ethics is dedicated to the study of moral values, principles, and codes of conduct. Philosophers have delved into ethical theories to address questions of what is considered good, just, and virtuous, as well as how individuals should behave in accordance with these values.

Aesthetics: The realm of aesthetics focuses on the study of beauty and artistic values. Philosophers within this domain have contemplated the nature of beauty, its subjectivity, and its role in art and human perception.

Each of these branches of philosophy provides a distinct perspective on values, examining them from various angles and contributing to the broader discourse on what is valuable, meaningful, and significant in human experience and existence.

In the (VDTM), the central focus is on elevating and emphasizing what holds transcendent or higher meaning. This higher meaning primarily relates to moral values. Individuals may aspire to embody these moral values in their actions and behaviors when they strive to reach a more elevated or virtuous state of being.

When examining the impact or effects of media within the framework of Value Media Determinism, it is essential to consider the perspective of value. In this approach, the study of media's influence is not conducted in isolation. Instead, it is closely tied to the content of the media and its connection to underlying values. The theory asserts that understanding media's impact necessitates analyzing how it aligns with, contradicts, or relates to these core values, thereby providing a richer and more comprehensive view of the media's role in shaping societal values and individual behavior.

Azzi Abderrahmane posits that the impact of media can be categorized based on its relation to values. According to his perspective (Azzi, 2003, p.112):

Positive Impact: When the contents of media closely align with or are strongly related to core values, the impact is considered positive. Furthermore, the more the media content reinforces these values, the more positive the impact on the audience. In other words, media that resonates with and supports established values tends to have a beneficial effect on individuals and society.

Negative Impact: Conversely, if the contents of media either do not conform to any values or directly contradict them, the impact is perceived as negative. The farther the media content deviates from or contradicts these values, the more adverse the impact. In this case, media that undermines or contradicts prevailing values can have detrimental consequences for individuals and society.

This framework suggests that the connection between media content and values plays a critical role in shaping the impact of media on its audience, highlighting the importance of media ethics and the responsible creation and dissemination of content in alignment with societal values.

The philosophical tendency you describe, which views everything in existence as a call to a higher life and asserts that value becomes apparent when our souls are aligned with it and our existence is elevated in value, shares common ground with the (VDTM) the context of media and communication. Both perspectives emphasize the significance of transcendent values and the impact of aligning with them.

In our statement, we also emphasize the central role of high values in Islam, underscoring their importance as a guiding principle in that faith. This alignment between the philosophical perspective and religious values reinforces the idea that ethical and moral considerations play a crucial role in how individuals and societies perceive and interact with media content. It suggests that values should serve as a foundation for media practices to elevate individuals and societies, reflecting a shared commitment to ethical and moral values across different philosophical and religious frameworks.

The concept of "value" within the framework of the (VDTM) is integral to the theory's definition and represents the cultural content within

media. This value comprises various aspects of meaning, essence, and interpretation, as outlined by Azzi Abderrahmane in his book *Studies in Communication Theory: Towards a Distinguished Media Thought* (Azzi, 2008, p. 113):

Structuralism: In the context of structuralism, "value" relates to the content of meaning. This means that the analysis of media content considers the underlying structures and systems of meaning embedded within the content.

Phenomenalism: In Phenomenology, "value" pertains to the essence of the phenomena presented in media. It delves into the intrinsic nature of the experiences or objects represented in media content.

Symbolic Interactionism: Value, within symbolic interactionism, encompasses the meanings attributed to symbols and signs within media. It examines how individuals interpret and interact with these symbols in the context of media communication.

Critical Hermeneutics: In the realm of critical hermeneutics, value is associated with truth and goodness within media content. This perspective places an emphasis on interpreting media contents critically, considering its ethical and moral dimensions.

In this way, the concept of "value" in the VDTM integrates various dimensions of cultural content, including the meaning, essence, interpretation, and ethical considerations, providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the role of values in media and communication.

In the Value Determinism Theory of the Media, "value" is perceived as something that transcends the tangible aspects of a subject and is connected

to the underlying meanings at the level of imagination. This definition underscores the depth and significance of value within the context of media and communication.

It's important to note that, according to this theory, the source of value is often religious in nature. In this perspective, value is closely tied to religious or moral principles. In this context, value cannot be straightforwardly categorized as either positive or negative. The value is inherently neutral, and its classification as positive or negative depends on the alignment of human behavior with that value.

Positive behavior, in this framework, is characterized by its alignment with and adherence to the underlying value, while negative behavior is marked by a deviation from or contradiction of that value. The assessment of whether an action or behavior is positive or negative is contingent upon its relationship with the core value, and this connection with values serves as a pivotal determinant in the analysis of media content and its societal impact.

Our statement highlights the distinction between value and behavior and underscores their relationship in different contexts, particularly within religious and social frameworks. Here are the key points:

Value and Behavior Relationship: Value represents the moral end or objective, while behavior signifies the means or actions taken to achieve that end. In this context, the end is singular, but the means can vary based on factors like time, place, and individual.

Religious Context: In the religious context, there is typically a single, overarching value that serves as both a reference point and a purpose. This

value guides the logical activities of the mind, including understanding, perception, and interpretation, as well as individual behaviors and actions.

Social Context: In contrast, the social context may encompass multiple values, which can include both positive and negative aspects. These values often stem from material behaviors but are transformed into values through societal norms. Such social values can encompass a range of dimensions, including social, cultural, psychological, artistic, and aesthetic aspects.

The (VDTM) posits that the core asset is the value, but it recognizes that values have diverse dimensions, spanning the social, cultural, psychological, artistic, and aesthetic domains. This comprehensive perspective acknowledges the multifaceted nature of values and their influence on media and communication.

This statement underscores the complexity of values and their interactions with behavior in various contexts, highlighting the significance of understanding how values shape human actions and media content within different societal frameworks.

The first theoretical dimension of value that we present here is the dimension of correlation, which assesses the degree to which media content is connected to values. Discrimination in media content is achieved by conveying a message that is inherently related to these values. In this context, this entails linking values to the symbols that convey the message or imbuing the message itself with value in terms of its significance, essence, goodness, truth, and authenticity. This is achieved through the media by ensuring that the symbols within the message are intricately linked to the vast and varied realms of values, both as their source and as a guiding force.

The connection with value is not primarily through the medium itself (such as digitization in the context of new media). The inevitability of the message in this framework doesn't solely depend on the technological medium (though it's still important, as emphasized by McLuhan and Fiedler). Instead, it hinges on what transcends medium technology. In other words, it lies in the extent to which media content is intricately linked to the diverse and extensive realms of values.

Value correlation and discrimination entail the alignment of media content with a broad spectrum of values. This extensive range of values forms a rich symbolic world within the broader world of values, encompassing the various dimensions and sources of value content conveyed through the media message. The depth and breadth of this association with values is central to understanding the significance and impact of media content beyond the technological medium itself.

In the context of the theory of Value Media Determinism, it is evident that the methodology employed draws from the ideal type of methodology, as well as the methodologies of understanding and interpretation (Interpretive). This approach is used to analyze media phenomena within the Arab and Islamic world, as well as beyond.

This approach stands in contrast to other communication theories that may adopt a more imperialist or reductionist perspective, interpreting reality solely based on observable facts and tangible aspects. In contrast, the (VDTM) embraces a deeper and more holistic form of interpretation. It necessitates a high level of intellectual and artistic subjectivity on the part of the analyst, emphasizing the importance of understanding and interpreting media content in relation to underlying values and cultural contexts. This

approach recognizes the multifaceted and intricate nature of media and its interaction with values, calling for a more nuanced and thoughtful analysis. One of the dimensions or sources of value in the (VDTM) is rooted in the perception of media as an imaginative system. This perspective does not primarily rely on an informational or consumer-driven system in the new digital environment. With this viewpoint, media is seen as an imaginative system that exists within a broader context of other imaginative systems, all of which are situated within the overarching framework of a social system and reality, often referred to as the social structure.

This approach underscores the notion that media is not just a conduit for information or consumption; it plays a significant role in shaping and participating in the creation of imagined realities within the larger social structure. It acknowledges the multifaceted nature of media in constructing and conveying meaning, narratives, and symbolic interpretations, highlighting the interplay between media and the broader social and cultural landscape (Fouad, B. 2014, P 38).

The perspective of the media as a fictional system is fundamentally a value dimension within the framework of the (VDTM). This value dimension prompts us to inquire and engage in discussions about the role of media as a moral imagination in any society, particularly in the dissemination of value within the cultural, media, and social systems.

Abdurrahman Azzi's view is encapsulated in the idea that the media, both as content and as a means of communication, belongs to a fictional system that operates within the context of other systems. This perspective emphasizes the creative and imaginative aspects of media, highlighting its role in shaping moral and cultural values within society. It recognizes

that media's influence extends beyond the transmission of information and consumption, and it underscores the significance of understanding media as a source of moral imagination and cultural value production.

Indeed, the perspective that views media as both content and a medium as an imaginary system aligns with the idea that media operates within a broader context of interconnected imaginary systems in society. These various imaginary systems are intertwined with moral formats, collectively shaping the cultural and moral landscape of a society.

What sets the media apart as an imaginary system is its unique ability to convey meaning and values through written and audiovisual messages, particularly within the context of the digital media environment. The immediacy, widespread reach, and dynamic nature of digital media distinguish it from other secondary imaginary systems, which humans construct in the form of linguistic symbols or non-linguistic symbols. These characteristics make media a powerful and influential agent in shaping and transmitting cultural and moral values, offering a distinctive mode of cultural communication in the modern age.

The distinctiveness of media as a fictional system lies in its portability and the capacity to transfer this system to other secondary fictional systems, which humans generate abundantly in the modern digital environment. This characteristic sets media apart and imparts an additional valuable dimension to it, closely associated with the means of digitization.

Furthermore, each fantasy or secondary fictional system has its unique existence and serves a distinct purpose. In Abderrahmane Azzi's examination (Study) of public opinion, "Assabia", and "Shouraa", he views the concept of public opinion as a "Media Imaginary" that is both

founded and shaped by society, particularly in the current era with the rapid proliferation of digital means. It is not solely the media that form public opinion; instead, social media networks now play a significant role in this context. This media imagination (or imaginary) can undergo three stages: first, it begins as an abstract media imaginary, then evolves into a media imaginary in the process of formation, and ultimately becomes a media imaginary materialized through traditional and new media channels (Azzi, 1991, p. 56-68). This process underscores the dynamic and transformative nature of media in shaping societal beliefs and perspectives.

The second value dimension in the (VDTM) differentiates between the appearance of value, which relates to its form, image, or dimension (often rooted in religion as a reference value), and the essence of value, which pertains to its content, meaning, and various connotations.

Abderrahmane Azzi's perspective, as mentioned in the text, asserts that the content of values is primarily derived from reporting, which is a form of communication. This viewpoint suggests that message reporting is closely linked to and related to the content of values, encompassing their essence, and meaning, more so than being linked to the image of values, their appearance, and their digital form. Consequently, reporting occupies a position closer to the source of value.

In contrast, news media is more closely aligned with the image of value, focusing on its appearance and form rather than delving into the content, essence, and meaning of value. In this framework, reporting is positioned closer to the dimension of the source of value, while media is closer to the dimension of the appearance of value.

When media is associated with the source of value, it becomes closely

linked to communication, resulting in a purposeful, disciplined, and professional approach to media. This alignment promotes media balance within the digital society, highlighting the significance of communication, content, and values in shaping the role and impact of media in contemporary society (Bouali, 2011, p. 22). This perspective emphasizes the importance of content-driven communication and media practices.

2. 3- Media:

In (VDTM), media is regarded as a means of communication that encompasses various tools, both traditional and modern. These communication tools include newspapers, magazines, radio, and television, which are part of the traditional media landscape. Additionally, new media, such as the Internet and social networking platforms, play a crucial role within the contemporary digital media environment.

This theory recognizes that the media serves as a channel for disseminating information, messages, and content to a broad audience, regardless of the specific medium or platform used. It encompasses both the established forms of media and the rapidly evolving digital tools that have become integral to modern communication. The fundamental principle underlying this perspective is the relationship between media and the transmission of values and their impact on society and individuals.

The Value determinism theory of the Media presents a distinct perspective on the relationship between culture and the media, emphasizing the priority of culture over the medium. This stands in contrast to some modern communication literature that places significant focus on the medium itself and describes the contemporary era as the "age of the medium."

In the perspective of (VDTM), culture plays a central role, as it absorbs

the media, integrating it into the broader cultural context. This approach contends that culture is the driving force in determining how the media is utilized and what impact it has. Rather than asking what the media does with culture, the central question posed by this theory is what culture does with the media.

The theory asserts that the message is at the core of the communication process, with the medium influencing the nature of the message in terms of both its form and content. This influence is particularly pronounced in the digital society, where the medium can significantly shape how messages are conveyed and received. By emphasizing culture and the values inherent in messages, the (VDTM) underscores the importance of understanding the role of the media in shaping cultural and moral values.

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The message plays a pivotal role in establishing the relationship between culture and the media. Culture serves as a constant and historically rooted reference point, continually evolving and being practiced within society. On the other hand, the medium is generated within the cultural context and aims to convey certain expressions or manifestations of culture.

It's crucial to recognize that while the means of communication, such as mass media, may give rise to what is often referred to as "Mass

Communication Culture," they do not transform into culture in and of themselves. Rather, mass culture is a product of mass society, influenced and shaped by societal dynamics, values, and cultural forces. In other words, culture remains the enduring and foundational reference, while the media, including mass media, function as tools for conveying and reflecting cultural elements and expressions within the context of a particular society or era (Bouali, 2018. P 28). The perspective of the (VDTM) aligns with the evolving landscape of the digital media environment while offering its own unique insights. While some proponents of the digital media environment may emphasize the medium itself as the value, the theory of Value Media Determinism underscores the importance of values as foundational elements within the media context.

The notion that "**the medium is the value**" reflects the technological imperative, emphasizing the intrinsic value of digital mediums in shaping modern communication. On the other hand, "**the message is the value**" represents the value imperative, highlighting the significance of the content, essence, and meaning embedded within messages. This perspective underscores that communication must be driven by value to maintain social balance.

These successive theories in communication, including the "**Digital is the value**" concept, indicate the ongoing evolution of communication theory as it adapts to changes in technology and culture. Each theory and phrase underscores a different aspect of the complex relationship between **medium**, **message**, and **value** in the **digital age**, collectively contributing to our understanding of contemporary communication dynamics.

The (VDTM) emphasizes that within the digital media environment,

the value variable is the primary driving force behind the media message. Regardless of technological advancement, skillful execution, or technical sophistication, it is the value that propels the digital media environment forward, not the other way around.

In this view, technical media should be embedded within a value framework within the digital communication environment. It goes beyond considering news from a perspective where it's merely a commodity subject to the law of supply and demand, built on excitement and sensationalism. Instead, it should be recognized as a material that operates within the framework of value mechanisms. The digital media landscape should support a valuable technological media system that reflects the communication environment of the society it serves, with a focus on respecting privacy and cultural identities. This approach prioritizes values over profit and commercial interests (Iman & Zawaqa, 2021, p. 671).

This perspective underscores the importance of maintaining ethical and cultural values in the digital media landscape and aligning media practices with broader societal norms and principles.Top of Form

3. The Communicative Model of the VDTM:

Abderrahmane Azzi's model of communication can be understood through a set of questions and concepts that parallel and extend various classic models of communication. These elements include:

Who Said: This corresponds to the source or sender in traditional communication models. It's the entity or individual initiating the communication.

What He Says: This refers to the message or content being conveyed. It's about the information, ideas, or values transmitted.

By What: This is like the channel or medium in classic communication models, representing the means through which the message is delivered (now in real time in the media digital).

For Whom: This corresponds to the receiver or audience, who is the intended recipient of the message (a large audience in the digital age).

And With What Effect: This is akin to feedback in communication models. It considers the impact or outcome of communication on the audience and how it influences their attitudes, behaviors, or understanding.

In essence, Azzi's model acknowledges the core components of communication and emphasizes the importance of values and cultural context in shaping the communication process. It can be seen as a holistic approach that considers the interplay of these elements in the digital media environment, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

The model of (VDTM) encompasses seven complex and interconnected elements that shape the communication process within the digital media environment. These elements include:

The Sender: This is the entity or individual who initiates and delivers the message within the communication process.

The Message: It represents the content, information, or values that are being communicated from the sender to the receiver.

The Tool: This refers to the medium or channel used to transmit the message, which can include various digital and traditional means of communication.

The Receiver: The receiver is the audience or intended recipient of the message, who processes and interprets the message.

The Effect: This element relates to the impact of the communication on the receiver, including changes in attitudes, behaviors, or understanding as a result of the message.

The Social System: It encompasses the broader societal and cultural context within which communication takes place. The social system influences how the message is received and interpreted.

The Value Dimension: This dimension is central to the theory and underscores the importance of values in shaping and guiding the communication process. It emphasizes that value is a key driver and motivation for communication in the digital media environment. (Bouali, 2005)

These seven elements are structurally interconnected, and their interactions play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of communication within the digital media landscape. This model emphasizes the significance of values, cultural context, and societal dynamics in shaping communication processes and outcomes.

The seven-element model within (VDTM) draws on various foundational concepts and theories within the field of communication. Each element reflects the contributions of different scholars and researchers, resulting in a comprehensive model that aligns with the digital media environment. Here's a breakdown of the attribution of each element: (Bouali, 2013)

The Sender, The Power of the Message, and The Effect: These aspects can be attributed to Harold Lasswell, who formulated the well-known communication model focusing on who says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect.

The Means: The notion of "the means" aligns with the ideas of Marshall McLuhan, who emphasized the role of the medium in shaping communication and culture through concepts like "the medium is the message."

The Recipient or Audience: Lazarfeld's research and various theories related to individual differences, social categories, social relations, and media flow, as well as theories like uses and gratifications, and emotional empathy, all contribute to our understanding of the audience's role and reactions in the communication process.

The Social System and The Value Dimension: These two elements are integral to the (VDTM), with significant contributions by Abderrahmane Azzi. The social system represents the broader societal and cultural context, while the value dimension underscores the importance of values in guiding and motivating the communication process.

This comprehensive model is well-suited to the digital media environment and reflects the shifting dynamics in contemporary communication. It places a greater emphasis on the environment, recognizing the diminishing influence of classical traditional theories or media doctrines, as well as the changing role of gatekeepers. In the digital era, individuals have become the primary custodians of the content they produce, which is often associated with self-censorship in this new digital landscape.

4. The concept of influence within the digital age according to the (VDTM):

The (VDTM) indeed approaches the study of the impact of communication, but from a normative angle. It emphasizes the importance of linking the contents of the media to values when assessing their impact.

The central idea is that the impact of media communication is positive when the content closely aligns with values. Furthermore, the more the content supports these values, the more positive the impact on the audience. Conversely, the impact is deemed negative when the media content does not adhere to any value or contradicts the established values. The greater the divergence from these values, the more negative the impact on the audience. (Azzi, 2008, p.112)

This perspective underscores the significance of values in shaping and evaluating the effectiveness of media communication within the digital media environment. It combines normative and empirical approaches by emphasizing the importance of values in understanding and assessing the impact of media content, offering a holistic view that goes beyond the purely empirical study of the effects of communication.

The authors of the Value Determinism Theory of the media employ a normative methodology to assess the influence of communication means.

The term "norm" refers to the values or moral standards that guide human behavior, serving as a benchmark against which others are judged. Essentially, norms establish acceptable behavior and goals, guiding motives towards benign actions. (Hashim, 2007, p.21)

Within this approach, they categorize the effects into positive and negative effects. This mirrors some of the distinctions made in empirical studies, such as differentiating between latent and apparent effects, direct and indirect effects, short-term and long-term effects, and strong and limited effects. These categories help in comprehensively understanding the impact of media communication within the digital media environment.

The normative methodology used in this theory combines an ethical and evaluative perspective with elements of empirical analysis, making it a robust framework for assessing the effects of media communication while also considering the ethical and value-driven aspects of the impact. This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the consequences of media messages on individuals and society.

The (VDTM) distinguishes between the effects of positive and negative media contents within the digital media environment. Here is a breakdown of these effects:

Positive Media Contents Effects:

Strengthening values: Positive media content reinforces and promotes societal values, ethics, and morals.

Socialization: It contributes to the process of integrating individuals into society, fostering a sense of belonging.

Achieving harmony and strengthening social cohesion: Positive media content fosters a sense of unity and cooperation within society.

Expanding the circle of benefit from culture: It allows for broader access to and appreciation of various cultural aspects.

Awareness of the outside world: Positive media content helps individuals gain awareness of global events and perspectives.

Expanding the surroundings: It broadens individuals' horizons by exposing them to diverse viewpoints and experiences.

Viewing oneself from an external angle: It encourages self-reflection and self-awareness.

Experiencing multiple worlds: Media content offers journeys through time and space, enabling individuals to explore diverse settings and cultures.

Gratification: Positive content provides satisfaction, pleasure, and a sense of fulfillment.

Entertainment: It offers enjoyable and engaging experiences.

Self-criticism and change: Media content can stimulate self-reflection and personal growth.

Information, interpretation, and analysis: It provides valuable knowledge, insights, and analytical perspectives.

Negative Media Contents Effects:

Neutralizing values: Negative media content can undermine or challenge societal values and moral principles.

Simplifying and distorting culture: It may oversimplify cultural representations or misrepresent cultural diversity.

Narrowing the perimeter: Negative content may limit individuals' perspectives and understanding.

Reducing the local and expanding the global: It can shift the focus from local concerns to global issues.

Weakening the fabric of social communication: Negative content may hinder effective interpersonal communication and social cohesion.

Weakening the role of opinion and thought leaders: It can diminish the influence of intellectual and opinion leaders.

Star role-playing: Negative content might promote superficial celebrity culture.

Mass consumption: It can lead to mindless consumption and conformity.

Mixing the symbolic and the real: Negative content may blur the distinction between fiction and reality.

Weakening sensitivity to cultural taboos: It can desensitize individuals to cultural and ethical boundaries.

Media gap: Negative content can contribute to the digital divide or disparities in access.

Addiction to the medium: It may lead to media addiction or overconsumption.

Preventing the individual from self-criticism and change: Negative content can discourage self-reflection and personal growth.

Focusing on the sense of sight at the expense of other senses: It may lead to a one-dimensional sensory experience.

In the (VDTM), Abderrahmane Azzi employs a tool known as the "**binary opposition tool**" within the normative-structural approach. This tool is based on the concept that the understanding of the positive is enhanced when it is contrasted with the negative. It allows for the examination of any duality by considering both sides of an issue, as is particularly relevant when studying the impact of media.

By utilizing the binary opposition tool, Azzi can analyze and assess the effects of positive and negative media content comprehensively. This approach acknowledges that understanding the positive aspects of media

communication becomes more meaningful when contrasted with their negative counterparts. It provides a structured framework for examining the complex dynamics of media impact in the digital media environment.

The (VDTM) highlights a series of contrasts and oppositions between the effects of media communication in traditional and digital media environments. These comparisons serve to illustrate the distinctive characteristics and challenges of the digital media landscape. Here are some of these oppositions:

Strengthening vs. Neutralization of Values:

- In the traditional media environment, media content tends to reinforce and strengthen societal values.
- In the digital media environment, there is a risk of values being neutralized or undermined, potentially due to the vast and diverse content available online.

Expanding vs. Simplifying and Distorting Culture:

- Traditional media often contributes to a broader understanding and appreciation of various cultural aspects.
- In the digital realm, culture may be oversimplified or distorted due to the sheer volume of content and the potential for misrepresentations.

Achieving Harmony vs. Weakening Social Fabric:

- Traditional media can foster harmony and strengthen social cohesion, particularly within primary groups.
- In the digital media environment, there is a risk of weakening the fabric of social communication, leading to disintegration, fragmentation, isolationism, and conformity.

Self-Criticism and Change vs. Prevention of Self-Criticism and Change:

- Traditional media may encourage self-criticism and personal growth through its content.
- In the digital media environment, there is a potential for media to prevent individuals from engaging in self-criticism and embracing personal change, possibly due to the influence of certain digital content.

5. The study of the digital age, according to the VDTM, places a strong emphasis on ethical issues:

The Value Determinism Theory of the Media (VDTM) regards multimedia as a novel symbolic realm encompassing both positive and negative aspects contingent on its alignment with or deviation from values. In this novel symbolic world, ideological, commercial, and entertainment narratives typically dominate, often at the expense of value capital. Nonetheless, there are subspaces within virtual media that endeavor to preserve aspects of this capital.

Azzi said: "Virtual media, doesn't necessarily demand entirely new overarching theories; rather, it calls for the application of established media theories like functionalism, critical theory, and the VDTM to the context of new media. This is primarily because theories are shaped by cultural, social, and historical conditions, rather than being directly dictated by technology itself. Nevertheless, it's essential to recognize the close and reciprocal relationship between these conditions and communication technology". (Azzi, 2018, p 45)

Returning to the relationship between reality (or situation) and fantasy

(symbolic world), it's evident that reality has become more intertwined with the symbolic world, especially when considering the pervasive influence of technology on both personal and social spheres. In this context, social time contracts while virtual time expands, blurring the distinction between reality and the symbolic world. It's almost as if the symbolic world has taken on a reality of its own. It's important to note that while technology may alter thinking patterns and behaviors, it doesn't fundamentally change human nature and our inherent disposition toward good and evil. (Abu Asba, 2015, p. 30)

Unlike non-normative theories, the (VDTM) stands as a normative theory that places ethical considerations at the forefront of the study of new media. This focus on ethics extends to various elements of communication, including content, communicators, audiences, technology, and the broader social and cultural context. By emphasizing ethics, the VDTM seeks to address the ethical implications and responsibilities associated with the evolving digital media landscape.

The Value Determinism theory of the media posits that in the digital age, the media plays a significant role in shaping societal values and norms. This theory suggests that media content, through its pervasive influence and widespread dissemination, has the power to determine or strongly influence the values embraced by individuals and society. In essence, it asserts that the media acts as a key driver in shaping cultural attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, often reflecting, and reinforcing dominant societal values and ideologies.

6. Variations in the Methodological Approach to VDTM:

The methodology of the (VDTM) scrutinizes the reinvigoration of

enduring faith-based values in a demassified and fragmented reality, in accordance with the insights of structuralism. It seeks to reconfigure the landscape of media practice by leveraging modern tools that are well-suited to both Arab and non-Arab contexts, inextricably linked to the digital media environment. It is from this perspective that the theory finds common ground across two distinct levels:

The first level involves adopting tools from Western social thought to gain insight into the complex study of the media phenomenon, with a subsequent focus on its connection to cultural values. This approach is selective, utilizing methodological tools derived from Western social and communication theories. It includes concepts like the binary opposition tool, originating from structuralism, which underscores the idea that the distinctive characteristics of any communicative or social phenomenon are particularly noticeable in their relationship with opposing characteristics, such as good and evil, free, and restricted, hot, and cold, white, and black, positive, and negative. This tool is employed to analyze texts and relate these findings to the realities of the media phenomenon, particularly within the Arab and Islamic context.

The second level pertains to the development of novel tools designed to mirror the contemporary environment we inhabit, offering a deeper understanding of the media phenomenon within its new socio-cultural and historical framework. These tools encompass concepts like “media imagination,” “media time,” “social time,” “media space,” “value time,” “value space,” “Value Capital,” “reporting and value structure,” “value efficiency,” and “sociology of media impact and value.” (Nassir, 2013)

These concepts are integral to the VDTM and are melded with the

evolving media landscape, adhering to scientific and methodological standards in harmony with the contemporary communication environment.

7. Recommendations:

The value determinism theory of the media (VDTM) suggests that media, including digital media, play a significant role in shaping societal values and norms. Here are some recommendations for applying this theory (VDTM) in the digital age:

Media Literacy Education: Promote media literacy programs to help individuals, especially young people, critically analyze and understand the values embedded in digital media content. By empowering individuals to deconstruct media messages, they can better recognize how media shapes their perceptions and values.

Ethical Guidelines for Content Creation: Encourage content creators, whether they are journalists, filmmakers, or social media influencers, to adhere to ethical guidelines that prioritize values such as accuracy, fairness, and respect for diversity. By producing responsible and value-driven content, media professionals can contribute to positive societal outcomes.

Diverse Representation: Advocate for diverse representation in digital media content. This includes diverse portrayals of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other identities. By showcasing a range of perspectives and experiences, digital media can promote empathy, understanding, and inclusivity.

Transparency in Algorithms: Call for transparency in the algorithms used by digital platforms to curate content and personalize user experiences. By understanding how algorithms prioritize and recommend content, users

can better assess the values embedded in their media consumption and advocate for algorithmic fairness and accountability.

Promotion of Public Discourse: Foster platforms and spaces for public discourse and debate about the values reflected in digital media. Encourage dialogue among stakeholders, including media professionals, educators, and members of the public, to collectively address ethical dilemmas and challenges arising from media use in the digital age.

Regulatory Frameworks: Advocate for regulatory frameworks that uphold values such as freedom of expression, privacy, and accountability in the digital media landscape. Regulations should strike a balance between promoting innovation and protecting individuals from harmful content or practices that undermine societal values.

Corporate Social and Ethical Responsibility: Encourage media companies and digital platforms to embrace corporate social and ethical responsibility by aligning their business practices with ethical values. This may involve initiatives to combat misinformation, promote digital literacy, support marginalized communities, and foster a culture of responsible media consumption.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can harness the potential of digital media to promote positive values and contribute to a more ethical and inclusive society in the digital age.

Conclusion:

The Value Determinism Theory of the Media (VDTM) does not sever its ties to its heritage origins, nor does it remain disconnected from the relentless technological advancements that characterize our contemporary

electronic and digital age. Its underlying principles are adaptable to a variety of contexts and capable of harmonizing with and converging within diverse social situations. The theory maintains its relevance by anchoring communication in references spanning from the bygone eras to the age of digital innovations. According to the VDTM, "value" serves as a cornerstone, a touchstone, and a central perspective for the examination of any communication or media phenomenon, regardless of whether it pertains to the past, present, or future. The Value Media Determinism Theory (VDTM) endeavors to provide comprehensive and meaningful answers to the myriad questions that have arisen since its inception in the mid-1980s. It does so in a rigorous and valuable manner, thereby unveiling novel and rejuvenated perspectives for the examination of the media's reality and its associated challenges in the Arab and Islamic region. The theory's evolution into a well-regarded school of thought, attracting a broad spectrum of enthusiasts and researchers, was not, as the theory's founder has noted, a result of chance or circumstantial factors. Rather, it is a testament to a deep-seated cultural and human affiliation that resides within individuals and engages with various communicative environments, without exaggeration or exclusion. Instead, it steers these environments toward the shores of safety, positively influencing their communicative models, be they linear or circular in nature.

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This theory (VDTM) of media was characterized in July 2012 as a BIG IDEA for the past 100 years through research competitions, conference panels, and scholarly journals by AEJMC News (aejmc.org/home/publications/aejmcnews). This new idea views "Values", whose essence is "morals", as a basis measuring media's impact on society. The theory draws on the communication theoretical heritage of both Western and non-Western contexts; thus, it claims universality. This theory (VDTM) is praised and commented on by eminent media scholars such as Prof. Christians G. Clifford. He speaks about the importance of the (VDTM) in directing his research on media in the ethical theory of media practice. Prof. Max Macomb, author of Agenda-Setting Theory, thinks that the (VDTM) offers fresh perspectives on understanding how priorities are established. Moreover, he argues that this theory doesn't solely apply to the media but extends to communication. He believes that this broader application will inspire doctoral students to delve deeper into this area of study, leading to increased dissemination and understanding of the theory of value determinism. Additionally, Prof. Griffin, I appreciate the "centrality of value" in the (VDTM), and I need further clarification. The influence of religion is a blind spot in most Western media and cultural theories, and my conviction about the connection between value and communication has led me to shift from solely focusing on social sciences to appreciating interpretative theories. I seek a deeper understanding of Islamic knowledge, which sadly remains unknown to me and my Western colleagues. (Nassir & mekki, 2021)

Abderrahmane Azzi has more than 30 years of teaching, research, and supervision experience. He has worked as a teaching assistant for three years at the University of North Texas (NTSU), where he was recognized for teaching excellence. Then he worked as a Professor at the University of Algeries (Algeria) for eleven years. After that he worked as a professor for three years at International Islamic University in Malaysia, then he worked as a professor of mass communication at King Saud University in Riyadh for four years, then as chair of the department of mass communication for four years at UAE University. Abderrahmane Azzi is the author of many books, research and studies in Media and communication in both Arabic and English. He received Ben Badis Prestigious Awards from University of Mostaganem (Algeria) for his contribution to ethical communication.

Assabiya (concept Arabic), represents "social cohesion" in Arabic. This concept is used by the Arab middle-aged philosopher Abderrahmane Ibn Khaldoun, who described Arab culture and territories. This term refers to social solidarity with an emphasis on unity, group consciousness, and social cohesion. It is, originally, a term used in a tribal or clan context, but according to certain meanings it can also refer to modern nationalism, in a way similar to communitarianism. It is a familiar concept in the pre-

Islamic era it was popularized by Ibn-Khaldun's prolegomena which describes it as the fundamental link of human society, and the main force for setting history in motion.

Al Shurra (term Islamic), consultation "council ", means the parliament of an Islamic state, the Board of Directors of a party or a religious institution. In the Muslim religious context is a council of Muslim judges.

Said Nursi (Turkish: Said Nursi) Known as "Badie Zaman Nursi ", a Kurdish Muslim scholar of the Aspartite Clan (1877 – 23 Marsh 1960), one of the most prominent religious and social reform scholars of his time. He was born in the Kurdish village of Nawras during the Ottoman Caliphate.

Sheikh Al Hussain Al _ Warthailani, Author of the Famous Tour (Travel) A Sight-seeing in the merits of history science and news. That journey includes more than 700 pages, in addition to being an art that is like News reporting in expression.

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نظرية الحتمية القيمية في الإعلام في بيئة الإعلام الرقمي

نصير بوعلي[1]

ملخص البحث:

يتناول هذا البحث بالشرح والتحليل تعريف نظرية الحتمية القيمية للإعلام من منظور البيئة الرقمية الجديدة، كما سيتناول الأبعاد الفكرية المتشعبة لهذه النظرية التي ظهرت في منتصف الثمانينيات من القرن العشرين، من خلال بعض الكتابات العربية في الفكر الإعلامي القيمي. وقد جاءت هذه النظرية التي تعتمد القيمة كمرتكز ومركز رؤية ومرجعية بديلا إعلاميا في العالم العربي للنظريات الإعلامية والاتصالية الغربية، فهي لا تلغي هذه النظريات بل تتداخل معها على بعض المستويات الواقعية والمنطقية والنظرية وإنما تفترق عنها على مستوى منظورها للقيمة، وبذلك فهي تعمل الآن على ملء الفراغ الموجود في التنظير الإعلامي العربي بواسطة القيمة. ومن هذه الزاوية نستطيع أن نقول: إنّ منطلقات هذه النظرية تجعلها في النهاية غير مبتورة عن الواقع الإعلامي العربي الذي تدفع به إلى القيمة ولا هي في نفس الوقت متروكة بعيدا عن التطور الذي يعرفه الفكر الإجتماعي والإعلامي عالميا من تنامي وتطور في بيئة الإعلام الرقمي الحالية

الكلمات الدالة: الحتمية القيمية، الإعلام القيمي، النظريات المعيارية، نظريات الاتصال.

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