

Media system dependency theory essay sample

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Dependency theory, or media system dependency theory, was proposed originally by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (Dependency Theory, 2012). The core assumption of the theory suggests an essential relationship between audiences, media and the larger social system (Dependency Theory, 2012). It attempts to explain that the individual use of media is a goal oriented activity and the overall intensity of the dependency relationship between individual and media as a source of goal satisfaction (Tai, & Sun, 2007). The individual's goal satisfaction mentioned in this theoretical perspective of Media System Dependency theory are the meeting of understanding (social/self), orientation (action/interaction) and play (social/solitary) goals (Patwardhan, & Yang, 2003). Understanding goals focus on the individual need to recognize the world and themselves; where else orientation goals refer to the need for individuals to behave effectively in communicating with others and personal behavioral decisions; and lastly play goals refer to the need for entertainment and leisure activity (Patwardhan, & Yang, 2003).

However, the theory also mentioned that individual do not depend on all media with an equal manner (Dependency Theory, 2012). The intensity and goal scope may be determined by how exclusive media resources are perceived by individual to attain these goals, and the experience varies for different individuals as well as for the same individual over time (Patwardhan, & Yang, 2003). Although these goal dimensions are exhaustive, more than one kind of goal can be activate and satisfied at the same time (Patwardhan, & Yang, 2003). There are two factors which influence the degree of media dependence (Dependency Theory, 2012). First factor is that

the individuals are more likely to depend more on the media that meet most of their needs compare to the media that provide just a few (Dependency Theory, 2012). The second factor that influences the degree of media dependency is social stability (Dependency Theory, 2012). The social stability here refers that when social change and conflict are high, and when the established institutions, beliefs, and practices are challenged, it will most probably force individuals to reconsider and make new choices (Dependency Theory, 2012).

Yet, a person's need is not always personal but may also be shaped by the culture or by different social conditions (Dependency Theory, 2012). This means, individuals' needs, motives, and uses of media are dependent on the outside factors that may not be under the individuals' control (Dependency Theory, 2012).

References

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