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The Marketing Values in News Production: a Comparative Analytical Study

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to test the proposed marketing model in news production by applying it to the content of a non-Western news organization as well as to explore the degree to which this proposed model predicts the type of media content patterns. Content analysis was used on the English (AJE) and the Arabic (AJA) versions of Al Jazeera news websites from January 1, 2014 to April 30, 2014. A systematic random sample of 358 stories from AJA news stories was selected, and the same sampling procedure yielded 234 stories constituting the AJE sample. The findings of the study revealed that Al Jazeera reflects marketing values at a moderate level (5.93 out of 11) at the marketing model. At individual level of each news website, AJE scores higher on marketing measures than AJA. AJA reflects the marketing values at the end top of the low level (3.85 out of 11), and AJE reflects the marketing values in the middle of the moderate level (5.87 out of 11). The chi square test shows that there are statistically significant differences.

Keywords: Content analysis, marketing values, Middle East, news production, Al Jazeera.

Introduction

The advent of new technologies and the pressing business environment have dramatically increased the intense competition between the world's leading news organizations (Lowrey & Gade, 2011). The competition is to reach new audiences and make news available in "different languages to numerous people" (Groshek, 2008, p. 52) on the basis of global regions.

Many leading world news organizations have targeted different audiences and designed specific content that meets their outside audiences' needs (Foote, 1995; Hart, 2008, p. 2). For example, CNN, based in the U.S., has news websites in nine different languages; the BBC, based in London, has news websites with 27 different languages; Voice of America broadcasts in "40-50 languages" (Mody, 2012, p. 103), and Al Jazeera, based in Qatar, has three news websites, one in English (AJE), the second one is in Arabic (AJA), and the third one in Turkish (CNN news website, 2012; BBC Arabic website, 2012; Al Jazeera English website,

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2012). However, this study is not interested in examining the conditions of why or how the content will/not be accepted by the readers. Rather, it seeks mainly to examine the extent to which non-Western media uses marketing values in news production.

The main logic of the professional approach in journalism is “identifying and responding to broad social or political needs” (Beam, 1996, p. 287). In other words, this approach focuses on public sphere issues such as governmental affairs and aims to provide the readers with adequate information to make informed decisions and get them involved in the political process. However, the marketing model has prevailed among news organizations that have an uncertain environment and inability to predict their readers’ needs. The marketing model is not related to public affairs issues, but it rather pays greater attention to news stories related to entertainment, sports, and celebrities (Beam, 1996). The main purpose of the marketing model is to increase the profits of the news organization by using private sphere content to attract more audiences and advertisers.

The problem of this underlines that in an era of global communication little is known, through systematic study, about the role of marketing factors in news production when the same news organization communicates to different audiences of different interests, religious, and cultural backgrounds through content in multiple languages.

This study aims to identify to what extent the marketing values prevail in the content of both AJA and AJE websites to communicate to their audiences with different cultural, language, and interest backgrounds. There is no single study that explains which norms have been more reflected in the contents of both AJE and AJA when targeting its Arab and non-Arab readers.

Also, this study seeks to test the marketing model by applying it to the content of a non-Western news organization as well as to explore the degree to which this proposed model predicts the type of media content patterns.

This study came as a response to researchers’ calls to conduct more studies to explore the main trends in news production and consumption in different regions in the world (Elarashi & Gunter, 2012). Also, other academics have urged that more studies to be conducted in order to reach a fuller understanding of multilingual news coverage in global news production (Abudl-Mageed & Herring, 2008). Besides, the study addresses the suggestion by Zeng and Tahat (2012) that future research “compare the trends of coverage between the Arabic version and English version of the same news organization” (p. 445).

Literature review: the marketing model

The term “market journalism” has appeared in the last three decades, and it suggests that media industry will “automatically produce entertainment-oriented information” (Lacy & Sohn, 2011, p.159). Entman (1989) mentioned that there is a conflict between two external forces, which impacts media content, the audience who seeks entertainment over information, and politicians who seek to disseminate serious information. These forces have remarkably brought uncertainty into the newsroom culture and news production. The “audience is everything” in the marketing model (Mody, 2012, p. 99). The last decade was “one of great potential uncertainty” in the media industry (Beam, 1996, p. 286), where journalists cannot predict the “wants and needs” of the audience. Today, many news organizations around the world are “commercial entities,” and their primary function is to create profits for owners (Croteau & Hoynes, 2006; McCann, 2009, Picard, 2005). In this new shift in the media industry where

the traditional model is replaced by the market model, “content” is the main tool to achieve the primary function of the news organizations: profits (Bennett, 2004; Lacy & Sohn, 2011). Liberalization of the media market is the main cause of this tendency in media content production (Bagdikian, 1997; McManus, 1994; Shoemaker & Reese 1996). In this approach, it is the wants and needs of the audience that decide the news content (Beam, 2003; Hamilton, 2004; McManus, 1994). News organizations are “first and foremost businesses” (Dennis & Merrill, 2006, p. 116), and the profit-driven model looks at news as “commodity” or an “economic product” (Cohen, 2002). Audiences are viewed, in this model, as consumers and clients not as citizens (Campbell, 2004). As Beam (1996) put it, the marketing model “reflects a marketing concept of journalism, which emphasizes tailoring a product – the newspaper – to customers’ informational wants and needs” (p. 285).

Beam (1996) defines the market-driven model as “the degree to which achieving organizational goals consists of determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors” (p. 289). In 2003, Beam added to the previous definition, “although audience interests have traditionally been part of the calculus used to determine “what’s news”, market-driven news organizations pay extraordinarily close attention to readers’ or viewers’ desires when making decisions about content” (p. 369). Basically, under the business pressing environment, newspaper shares of audiences and advertising spending go down. In this environment, journalists feel uncertain about their organizations’ environment as well as the increased uncertainty on how to serve readers’ wants and needs. Their uncertainty also indicates that they begin to feel pressure on their professional values and their commitment to them (Lowrey & Gade, 2011). Emery and Emery (1984) argued that news organizations, during periods of heavy competition for news audience, use a strategy of sensationalizing news as a rating booster. Therefore, in the market-driven approach the perspective of the individuals becomes the center of attention for news production (Bourdieu, 1998; Campbell, 2004; Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

The following section discusses the main assumptions of this model, and other important concepts *wants and needs*. A greater number of media outlets and increased competition between them are forcing news organizations to try relentlessly to provide gratification opportunities for their audience members (Beam, 2003; Dimmick et al., 2011; Lacy & Sohn, 2011). In other words, gratification or “wants and needs” has become the most important concept in the market model (Beam, 2003; Dennis & Merrill, 2006; Dimmick et al., 2011). Hantizsch (2007) emphasized that “when market orientation is high, journalism gives emphasis to what the audience wants to know” (p. 375). The content in this model does not respond to broad social or political needs, but it instead focuses more on the individuals’ desires (Beam, 1996, p. 287). Under this economically-driven approach, news organizations will minimize reports about public affairs and expand their reporting about the private sphere to satisfy the needs of individuals (Beam, 2003; Hamilton, 2004; Hanitzsch, 2007). At this point, Hamilton (2004) explained that the producers of news content do not intend to attract general audiences or even the largest audiences. He emphasized that news organizations seek to attract the audience demographics that advertisers are willing to pay more to reach. The market model suggests that news stories contain “less informative and less intelligible content” (McManus, 1994), and audiences do not prefer information or news stories about public affairs content “but seek to be provided with more private sphere stories such as “lifestyle, entertainment, recreation, news to use” (Beam, 2003, p. 373). In short, a strong market orientation implies

giving readers the content that they want but not necessarily the content they might need to be well-informed citizens in a democracy (Beam & Meeks, 2011, p. 236).

In other words, the market-driven approach will produce content to match the individuals' interests and their concerns (Beam, 2003, p. 372), and eventually readers "shape editorial content" (Beam, 1996, p. 285). Basically, news organizations use "surveys of news consumers," as well as "audience ratings of actual program content" by stating their demands and preferences about their wanted content (Bennett, 2004, p. 8). "The most popular news subjects reflect topics that affect people and their lifestyles," such as crime, health, entertainment, celebrities, and consumer features, and "political news and international affairs rank the lowest in news-interest surveys" (Bennett, 2004, p. 8).

Thus, the focus of the marketing model is on the private sphere content other than the public sphere content. The following section address public-sphere and private-sphere content in the marketing model.

Public and private spheres: The public sphere content reflects the democratic mission of journalism, and the private sphere reflects the commercial mission of the press. The public sphere was defined as the arena or a place where citizens come together as equals, involve in an open discussion of all issues such as general concerns, common problems, and public affairs. Moreover, citizens in the public sphere discuss, deliberate, and eventually form a public opinion on important issues (Habermas, 1989). So, the content of the public sphere encompasses topics and issues that are related to the common interest of the public. Generally, these topics or issues impact the public, the society, and quality of life; however, the content of the private sphere takes more care of the personal issues rather than to the public (Habermas, 1989). The market-driven model in journalism pays more attention to "crime and scandal, celebrities, and less attention to reports that may be less exciting but would be better serve the public interests" (Beam et al., 2009, p.734). The role of news content in this model is to attract "the right demographic audiences" (Bennett, 2004, p. 77).

Hard news and soft news: Most scholars linked the hard news concept to the professional model and soft news to the marketing model in news production. Specifically, while hard news has a democratic mission, that is, to inform the citizens about the public affairs (Bennett, 2004; Patterson, 2000), soft news has a commercial mission of attracting larger audience through employing emotional styles (Mott, 1952; Reinemann et al., 2011). There is a general trend among scholars who argue that softening the news coverage is a consequence of a market approach in the news production (Beam, 2008; Curran et al., 2010; McManus, 1994; Patterson, 2000).

Corresponding with Habermas's definition of public sphere, this study will adopt Patterson's (2000) definition of hard news and soft news. 'Hard news' refers to coverage of breaking events involving top leaders, major issues, or significant disruptions in the routines of daily life such as an earthquake or airline disaster. Information about these events is presumably important to citizens' ability to understand and respond to the world of public affairs (...). Soft news (...) has been described (...) as news that typically is more personality-centered, less time-bound, more practical, and more planned event based than other news (...). Finally, soft news has been described as a change in the vocabulary of news. The news becomes more personal and familiar in its form of presentation and less distant and institutional (Patterson, 2000, pp. 3-4).

Resource commitment: Much of the literature in the field of media organizations discusses the marketing model as providing "cheap" content, or content that takes few organization-

al resources [time, effort, and cost] to create (Bennett, 2004; McManus, 1994; Picard, 2005). Resource commitment refers to the ability of the news organization to use its different human, technical, and financial resources to produce media content. News organizations are forced to produce cheap content because of a lack of resources. These news organizations produce cheap content because they do not utilize a lot of resources in making these types of reports, and they don't pay much money to their staff who gather the information for the story. Most legacy media, that works in weak economy and witness loss of revenues, have been forced to cut their staffs, contents, and budgets (State of the News Media, 2011). This business pressure has led to the rising of the cost of operations and heavy and complex debts. Recessive economies in general have minimized many newspapers' ability to make payments, and they forced them to cut back the number of their journalists and throw out much of their most valuable content at the quality of news content by paying little attention to government coverage (Bakker, 2011a, Fiedler, 1998; Jones, 2009; Lacy, Martin & Hugh, 2004; Mutter, 2008; NOLA, 2012; State of the News Media, 2011; Rubinkam, 2006). Many studies argued that producing cheap content has evolved as a result of economic pressures. For example, McManus (1994) proposed the marketing model that he defined as: "Market norms call for maximizing return to investors; Where purely economic norms prevail, coverage would center on the least expensively gathered information likely to generate the largest audience advertisers would pay to reach" (p. 35). Furthermore, Picard (2005) argued that media contents such as public affairs, political discussions, and social commentaries "do not attract a large audience, are often costly, and are typically less profitable than producing other content" (p. 338). Picard (2005) and Lacy and Sohn (2011) assumed that profit maximization results in a low-quality journalistic content. Bennett (2004) proposed three steps to achieve profit through content. These steps include "cheapening the content, marketing directly to the audiences that were most attractive to advertisers, and allowing the less costs" (Bennett, 2004, p. 73). Effron (1996) suggested that journalists create a rubric that guides them to when and under what conditions they can produce stories of specific lengths and complexity based on the news organization's resource commitment. The length, the complexity, and the number of stories that could be produced in a week would depend on different measures that includes the amount of hours the reporters spent on gathering or traveling to collect the data (9 hours, 18 hours, etc.), where the data came from (e.g., press release, meeting, police case, cooperative sources/uncooperative sources, etc.), how many phone calls the reporters made to gather the data, and the amount of limited or extensive research that was spent on the story. Differently, by adapting Effron's (1996) rubric for capturing the manifest resources in media content, this study will measure resource commitments by designing four measures (length of the story, authorship of the story, interviewed people in the story, and the use of elements of multimedia in the story).

Sourcing usage: The decline in the use of official sources in the news stories is a sign of employing the marketing model in news production. There are two factors that identify the type of source used in media content that have been impacted by the marketing model. The first factor is related to the logic of economic assumption in news production (Meyer, 1987). The second factor is related to the main effects of postmodern forces on the traditional newsroom culture (Lowrey & Gade, 2011; Hermida et al., 2011). The basic assumption of using sources in the marketing model is that journalists tend not to depend heavily on using official sources in news production. They rather prefer to keep official sources away from the news content (Meyer, 1987). This market-based system, according to Meyer (1987), tends to

keep the government out of news production and reduce the potential for official propagandization. Besides the logic of the economic factor, the postmodern forces, using new technologies and business pressure, have pushed most news organizations to change their traditional routines in news production. In the postmodern era, journalists rely less on official sources in news production as a result of the change in the traditional newsroom culture (Lowrey & Gade, 2011). Today, the digital age gives the audience unlimited choices in platform and content and enables the audience to replace traditional sources of news with those who fit their tastes and confirm their beliefs (Gade & Lowrey, 2011, Hermida, et al., 2011; Singer, 2011; Umphlett, 2006). In line with Habermas's definition of public sphere, this study will adopt Carpenter's (2008) definition of official sources as people who speak on behalf of an organization. The official category includes only public sphere sources (or government elected or appointed and business people – e.g., prosecuting attorneys, representatives, police, CEO, business managers, NGOs, and others). Public sphere sources have the power to control the information that can affect people's lives. Meanwhile, these people who speak freely on their own behalves and are not likely speaking on behalf of an organization will be categorized as non-official sources or private sphere sources (Carpenter, 2008). The current study uses the sourcing usage variable, the public sphere sources and private sphere sources in particular. In line with media management and the change in newsroom literature, the non-official sources are used as an indicator of employing the marketing values in news production. In other words, the more use of non-official sources in media content, the more marketing values will prevail, and the opposite is true.

Slattery and Hakanen (1994) analyzed the content of ten local news programs in four media markets at Pennsylvania. They found that the percentage of the hard news has been declining over the time, and the news about government, education and politics had fallen from 54% in 1976 to 15 % in 1992. However, soft news (e.g., sensationalistic or human interests) has risen from 25 % to 48%. These findings prove that media organizations tend to use the market model in news production by focusing on soft news [private sphere]. Furthermore, Patterson (2000) analyzed 5331 news stories during 1980-1999 for three leading newspapers; two weekly news magazines, twenty-six local dailies, in addition to stories from two TV networks. Patterson found that news organizations publish more soft news (e.g., personal drama, scandals and social chaos) and less hard news (e.g., stories about government and politics).

In his content analysis study, Beam (2003) analyzed 13,000 items published in the display pages in twelve daily newspapers. He found that both weak and strong market news organizations publish more public sphere contents which dominate the main pages of the studied publications. More specifically, newspapers with strong market orientation kept producing reports with high levels of public affairs and even to provide more investigative reports than that of the weak market-driven newspapers. This means that possibility of adopting the marketing model is decreased with news organizations with large size and large resources. Such news organizations will be able to produce high quality news content.

Cushion and Lewis (2009) compared the news coverage of two British news organizations, namely, the BBC, which represents a public service network, and Sky News, which represents a commercial network, between 2004 and 2007. He found that although Sky and Fox both belonged to Murdoch channels, Sky News is still paying some attention to public service issues like the BBC. He found that Sky News tends to pay more attention to celebrity and entertainment news (20 percent) in 2007 compared to 9 percent in BBC in 2007. However, the majority of the news stories in both BBC and Sky News (52 percent in BBC and 46 per-

cent in Sky News in 2004) were about politics including International and foreign policy, then (16 percent in BBC and 15 percent in Sky News) about social policy. After that comes crime (11 percent in BBC and 19 percent in Sky News). In terms of their global coverage, Cushion and Lewis found that both BBC and Sky News spend more time on news related to the Middle East. For example, in 2004, BBC spent 34 percent of its total news coverage, and Sky News spent about 45 percent on the Middle East. After that, the U.S came in Sky News (28%), while Australia came next at BBC on their coverage. Asia came in the third rank with (15%) in BBC coverage and about (16%) at Sky News.

Most recently, Beam et al. (2009) surveyed 400 journalists about their performance in newspapers amid the economic and technological challenges faced by the news organizations. The majority of the respondents rated their news organizations “very good” (52%) or “outstanding” (15%), while only (7%) said their news organizations’ performance was “poor,” and over a quarter (26%) said it was “good” in general at informing the public. Also, the researchers found that public service responsibilities remain strong even in a tough time with economic pressure on news organizations. About three quarters (76%) of the participants said that serving public interests is “extremely important” and about 18 percent agreed that it is “quite important,” while 5 percent said that it is “somewhat important”. In short, Beam et al. (2009), found that serving the public interests remains a core professional value. Out of ten journalists involved in this study, nine still believe that the importance of news media to function through journalism that will serve the interests of the public.

Building on the literature review, this study asked the following questions:

RQ1: To what extent was the marketing model of news production apparent in AJA website?

RQ2: To what extent was the marketing model of news production apparent in AJE website?

RQ3: Was there a significant difference between AJA and AJE website with regard to the extent to which the marketing model was apparent?

Methodology

Content analysis was used to test the proposed marketing model. This study focused on the AJE and AJA versions of the news websites: AJE (www.english.aljazeera.com) and AJA (www.aljazeera.net) These two news sites are considered the most important news websites in the Middle East with the highest readership among all news websites (Galal, Galander & Auter, 2008).

The population of the study included all content that was published on the homepages of AJA and AJE from January 1, 2014 to April 30, 2014. Only stories with links from headlines on the homepages of both websites were selected and analyzed. The study focused on the text of the stories and the multimedia elements accompanied stories including videos, graphics, photos, and charts. However, audio, opinions, shows, schedules, and trending topics were excluded from analysis.

Constructed week sampling was used in the study. The sample was stratified by day of the week, and 50 percent of the content of each day was randomly pulled by using interval systematic procedure. In the constructed week sample, all Sundays are identified, and the researcher then randomly selects one Sunday, then a Monday, and a Tuesday until all seven days of the week are represented equally. The study began on January 1, 2014 and went for

17 weeks till it ended on April 30 of the same year. Fifty percent (50%) of the total number of each day was pulled through interval systematic sample. A systematic random sample of 358 stories from AJA news stories was selected, and the same sampling procedure yielded 234 stories constituting the AJE sample

Measurements

The literature done in the area introduced many important concepts that defined the main characteristics of the marketing approach to news production. The foundational marketing values (that is, public sphere content and private sphere content, hard news and soft news, resource commitments, and sourcing usage) had been discussed in the literature, which had defined the conditions under which, or the situations when the news coverage adopts marketing norms as well. Here is how each concept will be measured:

Content: It refers to the news story, which is published in both AJE and AJA. Two nominal categories were used here. The first variable was the public sphere content, and it was coded as 0. The second variable was the private sphere content, which was coded as 1.

Content for the public sphere: Public sphere content includes topics and issues that have a common interest to the public such as information about diplomacy, government and politics, military affairs, law enforcement, health care policy, and education (Beam, 2003, p. 376).

Content for the private sphere: This was defined as information about personal development, family life, personal consumerism, personal technology, personal recreation, and personal health care (Beam, 2003, p. 377). News stories that were coded as 1 would be used as indicator of employing the marketing values. To answer questions 1 and 2, the frequencies and percentages of each variable were used.

Soft news and hard news: Hard news refers to coverage of breaking events involving top leaders, major issues, or significant disruptions in the routines of daily life such as an earthquake or a catastrophic airline incident. Information about these events is presumably important to citizens' ability to understand and respond to the world of public affairs. Soft news has been described as news that typically is more personality-centered, less time-bound, more practical, and more incident based than other news. Finally, soft news has been described as a change in the vocabulary of news. The news is said to have become more personal and familiar in its form of presentation and less distant and institutional (Patterson, 2000, pp. 3-4). The more a news organization is reporting soft news, the more it reflects the marketing values because it doesn't contribute to deepening the true understanding of the citizens to their public life.

Resource commitments refer to the particular human, technical, and financial efforts and time the news organization puts to produce its content. Simply, this study measured resource commitments by designing four measures by expanding Effron's (1996) notion of media commitment in producing stories. These four measures were the length of news story, the number of the news organization's reporters in the byline, the number of interviewed people in the news story, and the elements of multimedia in the story. The shorter the news story generally means that fewer resources were used to create it; accordingly, shorter stories reflected the marketing model. If AJ published more short stories, this means the stories reflected the marketing values of producing cheap content and the opposite was true, and the longer the story, it is assumed the more resources were required to produce it. The second variable

was the authorship of the story, which refers to the name of the author/s of the published news story. To measure authorship as a resource commitment, it is operationalized as the degree to which the news organization puts its OWN human resources (e.g., staff/journalists/correspondents) to create the news story. When a news organization commits multiple reporters to a story, then this means that the organization deems the story important enough to dedicate additional resources to get it. The fewer Al Jazeera's journalists in the byline in the news story, the more the news organization tended to produce cheap content and then employed the marketing values in the production of the news. The third variable was the interviewed sources. It refers to the people who had been exclusively given a special interview or statement in the media content. This variable is operationalized as the degree to which the news organization puts its OWN resources to create the news story through interviewing people in the news content. When a news organization commits to reach more people to include different perspectives in the story, then this means that the stories take additional time from reporters. Reporters have to contact sources, and they often need to make appointments for interviews or adjust their work to fit the schedules of the sources. Interviewing also takes time, as does trying to synthesize the information gleaned from multiple sources into creating the story. Accordingly, stories with multiple interviewed sources reflect a greater investment of time on the part of the organization in the production of the story. The fewer interviewed sources in the news story, the more the news organization tended to produce cheap content and then employed the marketing values in the production of the news. The last variable under the resource commitments was using elements of multimedia in the news story. Was the article combined with a video, graphic, photo, and charts? All these elements would reflect additional resource commitments because somebody in the news organization must spend time to produce them and these people have to be paid. In general, the less resources the news organization puts in news gathering, the more the news story reflects the marketing values, which means less pay and less time was spent to produce the story.

Sourcing usage. The decline in the use of official sources or public sphere sources in the news stories is a sign of employing the marketing model in news production. This market-based system tends to keep government away from the news production process, and reduces the potential for official propagandizing (Meyer, 1987). Moreover, journalists in the post-modern era do not rely much on official sources in news production as a result of the change in the traditional newsroom culture (Lowrey & Gade, 2011). Today, the digital age gives the audience unlimited choices in platform and content and enables them to replace traditional sources of news with those that fit to their tastes and confirm their beliefs (Gade & Lowrey, 2011; Hermida, et al., 2011; Singer, 2011; Umphlett, 2006).

This study draws on Carpenter (2008) who defines official sources as people who speak on behalf of an organization. Meanwhile, these people who speak freely on their own behalfs and are not likely speaking on behalf of an organization will be categorized as non-official sources or private sphere sources (Carpenter, 2008). The unofficial source categories include, for example, average people, museum visitors, movie goers, and witnesses. This study used public sphere sources (e.g., officials) and private sphere sources (e.g., non-officials) to measure the marketing values.

Using these four concepts (public and private sphere content, hard and soft news, resources commitment, and sourcing usage) that were related to the marketing model, the researcher developed an index to measure marketing values in media content. The index of marketing was calculated from the values of the measured marketing variables. High scores in private

sphere content, soft news, and non-official sourcing usage variables mean that the story reflects the marketing model while low scores mean that the news story did not reflect the marketing value. Accordingly, the marketing index had a total score ranging from 0 point (the total number of the lowest points in all dimensions) to 11 points (the total number of the highest points in all dimensions). As an example, let us assume that a news story did hypothetically receive the following codes: 1 for the private sphere content, 1 for the soft news, 1 for unofficial sources, 2 to indicate the story is short, 1 for the authors in the byline, 1 for the interviewed sources, and 0 for using multimedia elements. In this case, when all points were summed up they count 7 points on the market index [0-11]. This total score implied that the news story reflected some of the marketing values but was lacking on others.

Inter-coder reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa. The intercoder reliability for the Arabic stories ranged from .83 to 1.0, and for the English stories from .87 to 1.0. These numbers are acceptable to collect the data. For the validity, the researcher discussed the project design with a group of researchers and academics from journalism, communication, and sociology departments at mid-south university in U.S.A to make sure that validity is preserved at every stage of the process. All notes made by five researchers on Content Analysis Form were adjusted according to their reviews before starting coding process.

Findings

Research question 1

Research question 1 asked to what extent the marketing model of news production is apparent in AJA.

The marketing model was apparent at a low moderate level. The mean value for AJA stories on the marketing index was 3.85 out of 11 points ($SD = 1.77$), closest to the moderate range (0.15 short of it). Over a half ($n = 201$, 56 percent) of the published stories in AJA reflected a moderate level of marketing values, about two fifths ($n = 149$, 42 percent) of the sample reflected a low level of marketing values and few stories ($n = 8$, 2 percent) reflected a high level of marketing values in their coverage.

Table1. The Marketing Index Values in AJA and AJE.

Index	AJA (N=358)	percent	AJE (N=234)	percent	AJE & AJE (N=592)	percent
Low values (0-3)	149	42%	58	24.8%	207	35%
Middle (4-7)	201	56%	156	66.7%	357	60%
High (8-11)	8	2%	20	8.5%	28	5%
Mean (0-11)		3.85		5.87		5.93
Total	358	100	234	100	592	

$$X^2 = 54.03, df = 4, p = .001$$

By separately examining the seven variables that comprise the marketing model (public sphere and private sphere content, hard and soft news, public sphere and private sphere sources, story length, authorship, interviewed sources, and multimedia elements usage), these variables

had a mixed picture in the AJA content. Frequencies and percentages for each of the seven individual marketing values indicated that Al Jazeera Arabic reflected some of these marketing values to a moderate degree and at the same time showed little evidence of other values. The AJA reflected low level of marketing values on public sphere content and private sphere content value. AJA preferred to focus on publishing public sphere content than private sphere content. Public sphere content focuses on public interests and responding to broader social and political issues in the society, which does not match the logic of the marketing model that pays attentions to private sphere issues and personal-centered topics.

The vast majority ($n = 338$, 94.4%) focused on public sphere topics compared to only few stories ($n = 20$, 5.6 percent) in AJA presented private sphere content. Also, presenting more hard news than soft news is another indicator that reveals how AJA reflects low level of marketing values in its news production. The data about the hard news and soft news variable showed that AJA tended to publish far more hard news ($n = 318$, 89 percent) than soft news stories ($n = 40$, 11 percent). The data suggested that AJA also reflected a low level of marketing values by citing more public sphere sources ($n = 307$, 86 percent) in its published stories, and few stories ($n = 51$, 14 percent) depended on private sphere sources. The story length is a variable in the marketing model which was found to be reflected at a moderate level in the content of AJA. While over two fifths ($n = 153$, 42.7 percent) of the content in AJA was large stories, the rest the stories in AJA were small and medium size. Particularly, about two fifths ($n = 149$, 41.6 percent) were medium size, and about a sixth ($n = 56$, 15.6 percent) of the published stories in AJA was small size. The result means that AJA, by producing more large size and medium size stories and fewer small size stories, did not tend to produce a cheap content. This finding also indicates that AJA committed some resources to present more detailed stories.

The authorship variable reflected marketing values at a low level in the content of AJA. Most of the stories in AJA were produced by one or more AJA staffers, while about quarter of these stories were not produced by AJA. In more detail, data indicated that over a half ($n = 189$, 52.8 percent) of these published stories were produced by AJA's staff or combined with other news agencies such as AP, AFP, etc., over a fifth ($n = 82$, 22.9 percent) produced by multiple authors of AJA's staff, and about a quarter of the stories were not produced by AJA ($n = 87$, 24%). These results mean that AJA is a true content creator, not a news aggregator, because it depends on its staff to produce the news.

Interviewed sources is another variable in the marketing model. In this study, only interviewed sources included in a story that produced by only AJ's staff were coded. This variable was reflected at low level in the marketing model in the AJA. While over a third ($n = 130$, 36.3 percent) of the published stories did not have any interview with any source, nearly two thirds ($n = 228$, 63.7 percent) of the published stories had interviewed sources either a single source ($n = 159$, 44.4 percent) or multiple interviews ($n = 69$, 19.3 percent).

The last variable in the marketing model is the multimedia elements. The analysis of data revealed that AJA reflected the marketing value moderately in its news production. While over a third ($n = 143$, 39.9 percent) of the stories did not have visual or informational elements, nearly two thirds of the stories ($n = 215$, 60.1 percent) presented some multimedia elements. But, out of those with multimedia elements, about two fifths ($n = 147$, 41.1 percent) of the stories presented either photos/video or graphic/chart, and only about a fifth ($n = 68$, 19 percent) of these published stories presented both photo/video and graphic/chart that were produced by AJA's staff.

Taken together, the findings suggest that AJA reflects marketing values in its news production to a moderate degree but with some individual values being less evident. The mean of the marketing model fell closest to the moderate level. The measures reveal more specifications on where the stories fell low in the marketing model: a large majority of the stories were public sphere topics and hard news; the large majority of the provided sources were public sphere sources; the large majority of the stories in AJA were produced by one or more staffers of AJA; nearly two thirds of the published stories had interviewed sources, one source or more. However, other measures reveal more marketing values and fell in the moderate level in the marketing model: over half of the stories were small and medium size, and two fifths of the stories did not have visual or informational elements.

Research question 2

Research question 2 asked to what extent the marketing model of news production is apparent in AJE.

The marketing model was apparent at a moderate level. The mean for AJE stories on the marketing index was 5.87 out of 11 points ($SD = 1.77$), placing it in the middle of the moderate level of 4 to 7. About two thirds ($n = 156$, 66.7 percent) of the published stories in AJE reflected a moderate level of marketing values, about a quarter ($n = 58$, 24.8 percent) of the sample reflected a low level of marketing values and few stories ($n = 20$, 8.5%) reflected a high level of marketing values in the coverage.

An individual examination of the seven variables that comprise the marketing model presents a mixed picture of the AJE content. Frequencies and percentages as displayed for each of the seven individual marketing values indicated that AJE reflected some of these marketing values to a moderate degree, others to a high degree, and at the same time showed little evidence of other values.

The first measure in the marketing model is the public sphere and private sphere contents. The AJE reflected a low level of marketing values on this variable. AJE as AJA preferred to focus on publishing public sphere content than private sphere content. The vast majority ($n = 187$, 79.9 percent) focused on public sphere topics compared to about a fifth of the stories ($n = 47$, 20.1 percent) in AJE presenting private sphere content.

Also, presenting hard news than soft news is another indicator that AJE reflects a low level of marketing values in its news production. The data about the hard news soft news variable showed that AJE tended to publish far more hard news ($n = 187$, 80 percent) than soft news stories ($n = 47$, 20 percent).

In addition, the data suggested that AJA also reflected a low level of marketing values by citing more officials and public sphere sources ($n = 182$, 78 percent) in its published stories, compared with a fifth of the stories ($n = 52$, 22 percent) that depended on private sphere sources.

The story length is a variable in the marketing model which was found to be reflected at a moderate level in the content of AJE. While over a third ($n = 68$, 36.8 percent) of the published stories in AJE were small size, about a third ($n = 73$, 31.2 percent) of the content in AJE was large stories and about two fifths ($n = 75$, 32.1 percent) were medium size. This result means that AJE made some resource commitment because the percentages for all three categories were close to one another.

Al Jazeera English reflected a moderate level of marketing value in the authorship variable. Over a half ($n = 130$, 55.6 percent) of these published stories were not produced by

AJE's staff, and more than two fifths (103, 44 percent) of the stories were created by one of AJE's staff or combined with other news agencies such as AP, AFP, etc., and very few stories ($n = 1$, 0.4 percent) were produced by multiple authors of AJE. AJE tended to be an aggregator news organization, not a producer news organization. It depends on news stories that are produced by other news agencies. Interviewed sources constitute another variable in the marketing model. In this study, only interviewed sources that were included in a story produced by only AJ's staff were coded. This variable was reflected at a high level in the marketing model in the AJE. While about a quarter ($n = 58$, 24.8 percent) of the published stories had interviews with one or more sources, three quarters ($n = 176$, 75.2 percent) of the published stories had no sources interviewed by AJE's staff.

The last variable in the marketing model is the multimedia elements. This variable was reflected at a high level of the marketing model in AJE content. After analyzing the data, it is revealed that the vast majority ($n = 196$, 83.8 percent) of the stories has no visual or informational elements, while about a sixth of the stories ($n = 38$, 16.2 percent) presented some multimedia elements. Specifically, about a sixth ($n = 34$, 14.5 percent) of the stories presented photos/video or graphic/ chart, and very few stories ($n = 4$, 1.7 percent) presented photo/video and graphic/ chart that were produced by AJE's staff.

Data reveal that AJE is often not investing a great deal of human resources in the content, as three fourths of the stories included are not interviewed sources, and five sixths of stories included no visual or multimedia content; they were simply text. All in all, the findings suggest that AJE reflects marketing values in its news production to a moderate degree. The mean of the marketing model put it in the moderate level. The measures reveal more specifics on where the stories fell low in the marketing model: a large majority of the stories were public sphere topics and were hard news as well. Also, a large majority of the provided sources were public sphere sources. At the same time, other measures reveal that AJE fell in the moderate level of the marketing model: nearly two thirds of the stories were small and medium size, and overall a half of the stories were not produced by AJE's staff. Finally, other measures reveal that AJE fell in the high level of the marketing model: over three quarters of the published stories had no interviewed sources by AJE's staff, and the vast majority of the stories had no visual or informational elements.

Research question 3

Research question 3 asked if there is a significant difference between AJA and AJE in the extent to which the marketing model is apparent.

At a broad level, Chi-square results show that there were significant differences between the two sites in terms of employing marketing values in their media contents ($X^2=54.029$, $df = 2$, $p = .001$), with the marketing model being more apparent on AJE. While a little more than half (56 percent) of AJA stories reflected a medium amount of marketing values, around two thirds (66.7 percent) of the published stories in AJE did. About two fifths (42%) of stories in AJA reflected a low level of marketing values, but that was true for only about a quarter (25%) of AJE stories. Finally, while only 2% reflected a high amount of marketing values in AJA, 8.5 % of the published stories in the AJE employed a high amount of marketing values. The mean for the marketing value index was 3.85 for AJA while it was 5.87 for AJE. In general, AJE reflects more marketing values in its news production than AJA does.

Another way to examine the differences in the marketing model is to look at the Chi-square tests of each variable comparing AJA and AJE. The Chi-square test was run because it includes and reveals the patterns by individual variables that comprise the index to give a precise picture. The Chi square tests showed statistically significant differences for each variable. For each one, AJE scores higher on marketing measures than AJA. There is a clear pattern, and in some cases the differences are pronounced and stark.

The data showed that there were significant differences in types of content between AJA and AJE ($X^2=29.638$, $df=1$, $p=.001$). Although the vast majority of the published stories on both sites were public sphere content, the percentage was lower on AJE. Data show that AJE published more private sphere content (20.1%) compared to AJA (5.6%). In short, AJA was responding more to the broader social and political issues in the society compared to AJE, which paid more attention to report fewer pressing issues to the public.

The data in this analysis indicated that there are significant differences in the hard and soft news variable between the sites were identified ($X^2=14.744$, $df=1$, $p=.001$). Although the vast majority of the stories on both sites were hard news, the percentage was lower on AJE. AJE tended to publish more soft news (20 percent) compared to AJA (11 percent).

When it comes to the third variable in the marketing model, public sphere and private sphere sources, the Chi-square test revealed that there was also a significant difference between AJA and AJE ($X^2=8.635$, $df=1$, $p=.003$). Although the vast majority of the published stories on both sites cited more public sphere sources, the percentage was lower on AJE. AJE tended to cite more private sphere sources (22 percent) compared to AJA (14 percent). In short, AJA provided more official views in its content compared to AJE, which tried to vary its news sources other than the official ones.

The fourth marketing variable is the story length and the Chi-square test. Data indicated that there were also significant differences between AJA and AJE ($X^2=34.650$, $df=2$, $p=.001$). AJE tended to publish mixed sizes of stories ranging between short size stories (36.8 percent), medium (32.1 percent), and long (31.2 percent) while AJA tended mostly to publish large size stories (42.7 percent), and then moderate size (41.6 percent). In general, AJA invests more in its human and financial resources to produce more detailed stories for the public compared to AJE, which made less resource commitment.

The data of these findings explains the authorship variable in the marketing model. The Chi-square test indicated that there were significant differences in authorship of stories between AJA and AJE ($X^2=95.421$, $df=2$, $p=.001$). The data analysis revealed that over a half (55.6%) of news stories for English content were not reported by Al Jazeera journalists, compared with only 24.3 percent for AJA with almost no stories from AJE had multiple authors from Al Jazeera versus nearly a quarter for the Arabic website. AJA tended to publish news stories that were reported by a single author belonging to AJA's staff (52.8 percent). In general, AJA produced more content by its staff than AJE, which depended heavily on publishing news stories produced by other news agencies. Thus, AJA is a true content creator for news compared to AJE, which could be described as an aggregator news organization. Also, the data analysis shown that there were significant differences in interviewing sources between AJA and AJE ($X^2=95.421$, $df=2$, $p=.001$). Three fourths of news stories (75.2 percent) in AJE did not have any interviewed sources by AJE's staff, while that was the case for only about a third (36%) of AJA stories. This difference means that AJE is often not investing a great deal of human resources into the content, as 3 of 4 stories included no interviewed

sources compared to AJA, which was investing more including more interviewed sources in its content.

The final variable in the marketing model is using multimedia elements in the news stories. As appeared in findings, there was a significant difference in using multimedia elements between AJA and AJE ($X^2=114.785$, $df=2$, $p=.001$). While the huge majority (83.8 percent) of the stories in AJE had no visual or informational elements, it was a much smaller percentage for AJA (39.9%). Also, while AJA tended to present more multimedia elements, in particular, using photo/video and graphic/chart used (19%), AJE paid less attention to these elements (1.7 percent). In general, AJE is often not investing a great deal of human and technological resources in the content by providing simply a pure text without multimedia compared with AJA, which provided mixed content (multimedia with text).

All in all, Al Jazeera reflects marketing values at a moderate level (5.93) at the marketing model. At individual level of each news website, AJE scores higher on marketing measures than AJA. AJA reflects the marketing values at the end top of the low level (3.85 out of 11), and AJE reflects the marketing values in the middle of the moderate level (5.87 out of 11). The Chi-square test shows that there are statistically significant differences. For example, AJA tended to be a content creator news organization by depending on its staff producing its media content compared to AJE which played the role of aggregator news organization by depending heavily on news produced by other news organizations. Another important difference is that AJ invests far fewer resources into the production of AJE than it does in AJA. What is important, AJE focused on reporting news that may interest its Western readers by providing more private sphere content and soft news compared to AJA which paid high attention to issues that are related to the public and the society in broader sense.

Discussion

The analysis of the data shows that Al Jazeera's news production reflects marketing values to a lesser extent than professional values. AJE was in the middle range of the marketing model, and AJA was just under the middle range for the marketing model. This conclusion shows that only a moderate level of marketing values is prevalent in Al Jazeera content supports the fact that Al Jazeera follows the professional model.

Al Jazeera's online products free of charge

First, Al Jazeera offers some of its products for free online in English and operates with vast resources, with relative independence from the market and geopolitical forces (El Nawawy & Powers, 2008, p. 25). Al Jazeera for Android provides all the latest news and live broadcast of Al Jazeera English, free of charge. Al Jazeera has no strong motivation to adopt marketing model because it does not sell its products online. It "provides distribution oftentimes free of charges" (El Nawawy & Powers, 2008, p. 31). This means that the main goal of Al Jazeera as a news organization is not to make a profit but to produce professional news.

The Saudi advertising boycott and the Qatari financial support

Second, Al Jazeera's financial management has depended heavily on annual subsidies from the Qatari government that reach over \$100 million (El Nawawy & Powers, 2008; Fahmy & Johnson, 2011), and the Qatari government devoted an "open budget," (Al -Najjar, 2009, p. 2) reaching up to \$1 billion (El-Nawawy & Powers, 2008) to support Al Jazeera English. Advertising was limited on both its English and Arabic version. This kind of financial support from the Qatari government makes Al Jazeera free from any kind of business pressures that have forced most of news organizations around the world to adopt strong marketing model in the news production (Beam, 2003) at the expense of the professionalism. The Qatari annual fund has enabled Al Jazeera network to cover the cost of its expensive operations, thousands of staff, bureaus, hundreds of foreign correspondents around the world. Also, this fund has enabled Al Jazeera to survive and face the Gulf advertising boycott which was led by Saudi Arabia in response to Al Jazeera's editorial policy that is critical of these governments (Sakr, 2007).

Al Jazeera favors content over revenues

Third, in its mission statement Al Jazeera stresses that it gives no priority to the commercial or political interests over professional consideration. Al Jazeera in its mission statement emphasizes adoption of the Western professional standards in its news production and assures audiences that it "adheres to the journalistic values of honesty, courage, fairness, balance, independence, credibility and diversity, giving no priority to commercial or political interests over professional consideration" (Al Jazeera English website, 2012). This means that Al Jazeera's strategy to achieve its business goal is not to get its profits right away but to make itself continuous for the future by building up a trusted brand for its audience. The mission statement of Al Jazeera leads us to understand its main goal in this way: Al Jazeera's long-term plan is to focus on connecting with its audience rather than just producing income.

Al Jazeera promotes its original brand in various forms

Fourth, Al Jazeera's business model that keeps depending on Qatar's funds and political stability will be at risk at any time if, for one reason or another, the conditions that support launching Al Jazeera might change. Al Jazeera found itself obligated to look for other sources of revenue to support its operations. Al Jazeera adopts a long-term business strategy to attract advertisers and increase its revenues by promoting its original brand in various forms and targets specific markets and audiences.

The lack of advertising revenues because of the Gulf advertising boycott for approximately seven years on Al Jazeera Arabic news channel was fair enough to force Al Jazeera to look at other best alternatives to compensate for the lack of revenues by expanding its financial resources. Prior to Al Jazeera's decision of expanding its financial resources, Al Jazeera's advertising revenue could not meet its rising expenses of the operations.

No layoffs amid business pressure

Opposing the marketing model that assumes that media organizations under the financial pressure were forced to cut back the number of their journalists (Bakker, 2011a; Jones, 2009;

NOLA, 2012; State of the News Media, 2011), Al Jazeera, since it was established in 1996, has never laid off any of its employees or journalists for economic difficulties. Contrary to the marketing model assumption, Al Jazeera has expanded the size of its staff and reporters to meet its organizational vision (Al Jazeera English website, 2014).

The studies have found that under the decline of advertising revenues, most new organizations control the cost of news production through laying off employees (Lacy et al., 2004), throwing out much of their most valuable content (e.g., international news and investigative reporting), and reducing publication at the expense of the quality of news content by paying little attention to government coverage (Bakker, 2011a; Jones, 2009; NOLA, 2012; State of the News Media, 2011). These kinds of procedures, in the logic of the marketing model, push news organizations to produce cheap content because the news organization does not put a lot of its resources commitments to produce a detailed content.

The large numbers of reporters, staff, different headquarters, correspondents, and bureaus prove AJ's capabilities in news gathering and global news production and reflect its organizational commitment to news coverage.

Overall the patterns show significant statistical differences. For example, AJA tended to be a content creator news organization by depending on its staff producing its media content compared to AJE, which played the role of an aggregator news organization by depending heavily on news produced by other news organizations. AJ invests far fewer resources into the production of AJE than it does in AJA. AJE did not provide as much multimedia as AJA did, and did not prefer to produce detailed content as AJA did by producing medium and large size stories. This could reflect AJ thinking that AJE is a secondary audience, or that AJ thinks its AJE content fits better to its English audience by adhering to marketing values. AJA may be responding to the broader social and political issues compared to AJE, which pays more attention to reporting fewer pressing issues to the public. This could be related to the fact that AJE's Western journalists reflect in the production of the news more individualistic culture values compared to AJA's Arabic journalists, who reflect more collectivist cultural values.

Conclusions

Al Jazeera pays some attention to marketing values but not at the same level of the professional values. Many indicators support this analysis including these facts: Al Jazeera offers its online products for free (El Nawawy & Powers, 2008). Also, Al Jazeera's financial management has depended heavily on annual subsidies from the Qatari government (El Nawawy & Powers, 2008; Fahmy & Johnson, 2011). In addition, Al Jazeera's mission is based on giving no priority to the commercial interests (Al Jazeera English website, 2012), or to be more specific AJ has no duality purpose so this is why it focus on public service in reporting. Besides, Al Jazeera's strategy does not aim to get its profits right away but to increase it and make it continuous for the future by building up a trusted brand for its audience. What is important here is that Al Jazeera is not driven to produce private sphere content production; and quite the contrary of the marketing model assumption. Finally, Al Jazeera has expanded the size of its staff and reporters to meet its organizational vision. Considering why Al Jazeera moderately reflects marketing values leads to the discussion of why Al Jazeera is interested at differing levels to employ cultural values in its news production.

A long with research done in the field, this research does have some shortcomings. This study faced several limitations. First, the study focused on the content drawn from one influential global news producer with the highest readership. Other websites may display different features and follow different patterns when reporting on different issues. For example, Al Arabiya, in addition to the Arabic version, has other three websites in Urdu, Persian, and English languages to communicate its audiences outside the Arab region. The findings of studying contents that produced by the same news organization to target four different audiences who completely vary in their cultural, languages, religious, and social norms and values might produce different findings from studying contents of two websites that target only two different audiences and are produced by the same news organization. Future studies can incorporate more news websites in the Arab world or international news websites, to better identify the similarities and differences between them in terms of which values are most prevalent in different newsrooms around the world.

Another limitation is related to the time frame of the study. The study analyzed Al Jazeera coverage from January 1, 2014 to April 30, 2014. Therefore, the coverage may reflect media reaction to unique events during the period, such as Arab Spring. Future studies can expand the time to include more weeks from different months of the year. Therefore, the generalization of this sample is limited to the extent to the four months from where the sample was drawn. Another limitation is related to using content analysis as an indicator of the influence of professional, marketing, and culture values without directly seeking the perspectives of Al Jazeera journalists about how they think about or apply these values.

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