The Degree Of Media Education In Jordanian Universities From The Viewpoint Of The Faculty Members

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Abstract

Globally, the ownership, production and distribution of media and media contents have been on the increase. However, since Jordanian university students spend a significant amount of time on media on a daily basis, there is a need for media education. This study was conducted to explore the various degree/levels of media education in Jordanian universities. Faculty members of Jordanian universities were used as the sample population since the basics of the study was from the viewpoint of faculty members. Notwithstanding the seemingly low motivation (41.7%), faculty members of Jordanian Universities has a relatively high perception (53.5% and 29.2%) of media literacy, as most of them tend to encounter different media and media contents on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. With continuous and established exposure of Jordanian university students to the media on a daily basis, it is expedient that they are enlightened in the utilization/distribution of media contents.

Keywords: Media education, faculty members, Jordanian universities, degree or level.

Introduction

There is a global rise in the ownership, production and distribution of media and media content. However, educational responses have not measured up to expectation with this development. There has been a lot of lecture but little study on media education. Consequently, there is a critical need for comparative research, to allow for local research to be examined in a universal perspective (Fedorov, 2007). There has been a massive expansion of media culture in the last few decades. Lately, there has been a variety of novel media including personal computers, satellite and cable television, camcorders and video recorders, video discs and online messaging platforms (Al-Madani, 2019). The transition from analogue to digital coding and the amalgamation of communications conglomerate has resulted to a increasing media interpenetration, as themes, genres and flow of contents from one to another with rising mutability. We are gradually stepping into a multimedia era which is more and more all-encompassing, involving and practiced as an interrelated whole. Statutory and technological developments have brought about notable changes in the manner in which young people relate with the media. Different kinds of liberalism have resulted to the rising availability of streamed and professional services which no longer correspond to the customary systems of information dissemination (Lohl, 1999).

Advancements in technology have aided progressively more innovative involvement in media processes and interactions with media relics. Such practices consist of the use of 'dub', 'scratch' video and mixing techniques in recorded and live music and the alteration of still images through digital manipulation. In addition, computer technology has enlarged the opportunities for relatively classy creation in sound and moving and still images (Lin et al., 201 8). These are increasingly disseminated through the Internet, thus altering the interaction among young people and commercial media industries. Optimists view these advancements as behind a more open, dynamic and participatory system of communications which will provide additional

preference for audiences, more flexible relationships between users and producers and a more conversant and dynamic population. Pessimists on the other hand dread the omission effects of differential access to prominent resources and competencies and the wearing away of borders between fiction, fantasy and reality. Many identify the challenges of regulating exposure of children and young people 'unsuitable' representations, particularly with respect to the spread of Internet access (Schorb, 1992).

Jordanians of university age make up the major social class that makes use of information, media and technology. Studies concerning the use of modern-day media sources signify that this fragment of the population, particularly in communities that are currently undergoing social, economic and political transitions, requires to be strengthened through media education to handle media practitioners, including information from the Internet (UNESCO, 2015).

Jordanians of younger age live in an information dispensation, at a time when their freedom and capabilities are limited be customary institutions who do not give them adequate attention. In order to escape this limitation, these young people resort to available online platforms, particularly social media sites for self-expression. Apart from being cost effective with little or no direct control, most social media sites offer a great deal of secrecy. This has resulted to a number of abnormalities, including verbal and cultural violence, political narrative, hate speech and religious extremism (UNESCO, 2015).

Faculty members of higher education institutions play a significant role in the society due to the fact that they serve to enhance education quality as well as develop it in accordance to the latest academic rudiments and the needs of the society. They are also significant because they are perceived as the core of scientific and academic action in the university, and they contribute significantly to individuals' ethical and intellectual development. The faculty members are considered the basic entity for achievement in the university since they are responsible for knowledge transfer among students; they assess,

develop and distribute knowledge as well as execute community service programs (Khasawneh, 2001).

Aims of the study

The main aim of the current study is to determine the extent to which media education is integrated into courses offered in Jordanian universities.

Literature Review

Media education

Media education is an idea which started with movies and television and then moved to the internet as a result of students' need to assess the function of media in their day-to-day living (Badke, 2009). Radio, computers, television as well as internet have find their way into classrooms and gradually transformed the manner in which students learn. According to Kuiper, Volman and Terwel (2009), "computers and the internet are rapidly becoming our principal traditional tools for exploring, gathering, selecting, storing, and transferring knowledge". There are both pros and cons in developing one's knowledge through media and mass communication. It is essential to avoid the bad component of this knowledge while adopting the good. The negative information circulating through different media technologies can be avoided by learning appropriate skills required to query, assess and scrutinize such information. Against this backdrop, it is highly essential for people to acquire media education in order to be able to make maximum use of the latest technology and as well properly interpret and process all sort of media information (Enochsson, 2005). Media Education, is also called Media Literacy or Media Awareness in the literature (Thoman & Jolls, 2008).

The National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy defines media literacy as "ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms like television, video, cinema, advertisements, internet and so on" (Aufderheide, 1993). In the literature, there are various opinions and numerous definitions of media literacy.

The earliest organized definition of media education was put forward by Sirkka Minkinken in 1978 as "Media literacy aims to improve skills in cognitive, ethical, philosophical and aesthetic issues‖" (Hobbs, 1998a). İnceoğlu (2007b) reports that "Minkkinen asserts that media literacy targets to develop skills at informative, ethical, philosophical and aesthetical aspects". Media education cuts across many disciplines, hence, it involves various definitions and descriptions. Due to its content and coverage of extensive area of application, media education has also led to different approaches.

Media education can generally be defined as a blend of the different skills required to explore, select, scrutinize, assess, and communicate in the different kinds of media (Considine, Horton, and Moorman, 2009). According to Wan (2006), Media education refers to the "understanding of media and the use of it as a source of information, entertainment, enrichment, growth, empowerment, and communication". Also, as pointed out by Schaefer (2005), media education "is usually conceptualized as a set of skills related to the production of a media message".

Covington (2004) opined that media education is made up of significant viewing skills and the capability to observe, assess, and construe content. Hobbs (1998b) attracted the interest of educators and academicians to two points in Media education; the first being the critical examination of media information and the second point being the way a person learns to construct his/her own information. All research and investigations so far have shown that children who are exposed to written, visual and audio media as susceptible receivers should be made aware of media beginning at pre- school years onwards. Owing to being media literate, children will be able to receive mass media information through a decisive judgment and interpret the information of media as dynamic individuals instead of being flaccid receivers (RTUK, 2007). Media education is the only means by which individuals can be transformed into media literates.

Importance of Media education

In the past few years the transformation in global communications and media has changed the very fundamental basics of education and knowledge. It is essential to furnished present and future global citizens with the essential skills to adequately interpret and produce media contents (Hermida, 2009). The production and dissemination of information and our philosophy of education are significantly influenced by this transformation.

Creating an information society and making accurate use of the information distributed through media is one of the major challenges of 21st Century. According to İnan and Temur (2012), "Individuals in the society are heavily exposed to message overload by mass media". These information are not always objective and impartial. Thus, media education plays a critical role in mitigating these challenges. Çetinkaya (2008), states that "the key reason for being a media literate is that the media fictionalizes what is real and it can reflect it with a scenario different from what it really is". Consequently, we should be extremely cautious and mindful in this practice. The significance of media education arises from the need to shield from the harmful effects of the media and establishing a cognizant communication.

The unrestrained, exhaustive and effectual information via media particularly affects children and adolescence due to the fact that they obtain this information instinctively without making critical choice. Furthermore, television hinders kids from discovering the world from their own experience. Instead, it offers them a prearranged and fictionalized life (Ertürk and Gül 2006). The fundamental aim of media education is to equip children who are the most susceptible to the impact of media with skills to differentiate between fiction and reality. It entails the explanation of the reasons why media conveys information in certain manners so that children can be trained as mindful receivers who able to view the media from a decisive standpoint from basic school age (İnan and Temur, 2012). Kıncal and Kartal (2009) reveal that "individuals develop awareness of media and media messages and gain critical skills through media literacy education". They also add that "media literate

individuals question media texts and thus come up with their own media messages".

Experts in education deliberate on the process of education, media education, for people who actively use the media so that they can become cognizant media users. These experts stressed the significance of giving children the insight to use media (Livingstone, 2008).

Considering the fact that media has both positive and negative effect on children, adolescents and young adults, media education became an important concern in the context of education (Karaman and Karataş, 2009). Experts on communication and education support the fact that people should be able to take complete advantage of media and consciously make use them. In this regard, experts consider media education as not just a course, but also as a philosophy, and even a lifelong education process while integrating it into the education system, (İnan and Temur, 2012).

The Importance of Integrating Media Education in Jordanian Universities

Jordanians of university age make up the major social class that makes use of information, media and technology. Studies concerning the use of modern-day media sources signify that this fragment of the population, particularly in communities that are currently undergoing social, economic and political transitions, requires to be strengthened through media education to handle media practitioners, including information from the Internet.

Jordanians of younger age live in an information dispensation, at a time when their freedom and capabilities are limited be customary institutions who do not give them adequate attention. In order to escape this limitation, these young people resort to available online platforms, particularly social media sites for self-expression. Apart from being cost effective with little or no direct control, most social media sites offer a great deal of secrecy. This has resulted to a number of abnormalities, including verbal and cultural violence, political narrative, hate speech and religious extremism.
A 2015 study carried out by NET-MED Youth

revealed that seventy-two percent of Jordanians aged between 18 and 29 years own laptops, seventy-two percent have an Internet connection at home and sixty-nine percent use computers at home. Ninety-five percent of Jordanian youth utilize the Internet for chatting; while eighty-three percent utilize the web for watching videos and forty-nine percent for online games (UNESCO, 2015).

Higher Education System in Jordan

The University of Jordan was established in 1962 as the country's first university. The system has extensively expanded since then. There are twelve public universities, eighteen private universities and two non-profit institutions in Jordan. Public universities' financial resources comprises of fixed fees for each semester and teaching charged for every credit hour, gifts and grants, government appropriations in the yearly national budget, and income gained form consultation and research outcomes and results. Government provides 10-15% of the total running cost of public universities. In order to be more adequate, universities have introduced a purported "Parallel Program" where students who are not admitted on a competitive basis pay higher fees. Private universities are mostly financed through students' tuition fees, however, their budget must be approved by the (European Union, 2017). The Jordanian higher education system follows the US model and is credit-based employing the three-cycle system: Bachelor's degrees generally require four years of study; master's degrees require one and a half to two years of study and students have the option to conclude the degree with a thesis or a comprehensive exam. Doctorate degrees require a minimum of three years of study and are only offered by a small number of selected universities (European Union, 2017).

There has been significant growth in the Jordanian higher education sector in the last thirty years, largely as a result of a shift in the demographic structure characterized by regional crises which led to the influx of thousands of refugees to the country and natural population growth, (Al-Hamadeen and Alsharairi, 2015). Consequently, these have resulted to notable rise

in the demand for higher education, with rates of enrollment for Bachelor's and graduate studies growing extensively, which has been met by the establishment of a growing number of higher education institutions (AlHamadeen and Alsharairi, 2015). Jordanian universities also draw numerous international students. In 2007 for instance, nearly ten percent of the total students admitted into higher education institutions in the country were international students (Kanaan et al., 2010). In response to the increasing enrollment rate, Jordan also introduced a "parallel-program", through which students, who do not meet the requirements for higher education, can still enroll in an institution by paying a higher tuition fee (El-Araby, 2011). About twenty percent of students in higher education institutions across Jordan were enrolled through this program in 2007 (El-Araby, 2011).

Research Methodology

The Method of the Study

In order to achieve the set objectives of this study, the researcher investigated the degree of media education in Jordanian universities from the view points of faculty members. A survey method was used for this study. The investigator then administered a self developed questionnaire on degree of media education in Jordanian universities.

Sample Size: 150 self-developed questionnaires were administered, 144 of them were properly completed and returned, while 6 of them were not. The researcher worked with the 144 appropriately completed questionnaires. Academics who are faculty members of media education related faculty were randomly selected from universities in Jordan.

Data Analysis: The collected were screened, collated and used to develop a frequency distribution table for analysis. Descriptive statistics of percentage was used in presenting the data for the study.

Sampling Techniques: A simple random sampling was used for this study.

Result and Discussion

One hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were administered; one hundred and forty-four, 144 (96.0%) of them were completed as it should be and returned while the remaining 6 (4.0%) of the questionnaires were not. Table 1 shows the age and gender of the respondents of the 144 (96.0%) returned questionnaires.

Table 1.1. Age and Gender of the Respondents

Age (Years)	Number	Percentage	Number of Male		Number of Female	
			Freq.	Per (%)	Freq	Per (%)
Below 29 years	15	10.4	10	11.6	5	7.7
29 - 33	19	13.2	12	14.0	7	12.8
34 - 39	30	20.8	16	18.6	14	23.1
40 - 44	37	25.7	23	26.7	14	25.6
Above 45years	43	29.9	25	29.1	18	30.8
Total	144	100.0	86	100.0	58	100.0

Table 1.2. Respondents who are Faculty Members of Jordanian Universities

Faculty Member	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Research Assistant	31	21.5
Assistant Lecturer	23	16.0
Lecturer	24	16.7
Assistant Professor	27	18.8
Associate Professor	21	14.5

Professor	18	12.5

As represented in the table 1.2 above, the majority of the respondents summing 21.5% were research assistants, followed by 18.8% who were assistant professors; 16.7% and 16.0% of the respondents were Lecturer and assistant lecturer respectively; 14.5% and 12.5% of the respondent were associate professors and professors respectively.

Classification of Degrees/Levels of Media Education

The key factor in media education (program) is the evaluation of the degree/level of students' media literacy; and this is greatly affected by the degree of the faculty member development in view of media education.

Tables 1.3. Classification of Degree of Media Education/Media Competence

Media Education/Literacy/Awareness (Indicator)	Description
Motivation	The reason for contact with media: this could be intellectual, ethical, emotional, psychological, or even subject-based
Perception	Ability to perceive different media contents
Contents	Understanding media history, theory, and terminology.
Communication (Contact)	Rate of communication/contact with media
Activity	Ability to select media and to skills to create/distribute one's own media texts; self-training information skills
Appraisal	Ability to analyze critically social effects of media and media texts of various genres and types, based on perception and critical thinking development levels
Creativity	Creative approach to different aspects of media activity

Table 1.4. Degree of Media Education Development among faulty members

Media Education/Literacy/Awareness (Indicator)	Degree/Level					
	High		Medium		Low	
	Freq	Per(%)	Freq	Per(%)	Freq	Per(%)
Motivation	30	20.8	54	37.5	60	41.7
Perception	42	29.2	77	53.5	25	17.4
Contents	21	14.6	89	61.8	34	23.6
Communication (Contact)	63	43.8	52	36.1	29	20.1
Activity	34	23.6	69	47.9	41	28.5
Appraisal	31	21.5	94	65.3	19	13.2
Creativity	46	31.9	51	35.4	47	32.6

Most of the respondents (41.7%) had low motivation in media education and thus had a narrow range kind of motivation, as motives to contact the course of media are not present; 20.8% were highly motivated depicting a broad ranged motive encompassing intellectual, psychological, emotional, and ethical motives. 37.5% of respondents reported to medium

motivation, motives (creative and intellectual) to communicate media are poorly expressed.

The respondents generally (53.5%) had a moderate perception of media awareness; 29.9% of respondents showed high sensitivity to certain basics of media contents; while a handful (17.4%) of the respondents reported low perception of the order of events of media contents, and naïve identification with the sequence of events.

14.6% of respondents had a good understanding of the history, basic terms and theories of media; a great number of the faculty member (61.8%) had some basic knowledge of the history and fundamental concepts of media; while 23.6% of respondents' knowledge of the fundamental terms and history of media was poor.

Majority of faculty members (43.8%) had contact with several types of media and media contents on a daily basis; whereas, 36.1% and 20.1% of them come in contact with different media (and contents) on weekly and monthly basis respectively.

23.6% of the respondents reported to have an active self-training ability as they had practical skills to independently choose and create various media contents; 47.9% of them claimed to have practical abilities to choose and create media contents of various kinds, but with the assistance of a teacher or consultant; while the remaining 28.5% had little or no ability to decide on the creation/distribution of media contents.

In the aspect of Appraisal (Interpretation), 13.2% of the respondents were unable to critically analyze the operation of media in the society; 65.3% of the respondents could critically analyze media operations given several most precise factors based on medium-level critical thinking; while 21.5% of the respondents can critically analyze social effects of media and media contents based on high-level of critical thinking.

The strength of their creative abilities is also reflected in the table, as 31.9% of respondents had creativity that is strongly expressed; while the creative abilities of 35.4% of them seemed not to be expressed strongly thus occurs in limited activities connected to media. The creatively

abilities expressed in the remaining 32.6% of the respondents were weak or in some cases, absent.

Conclusion

This paper has presented the degree of media education in Jordanian universities from the perspective of faculty members. Faculty members are key drivers in the higher education institutions of Jordan as the degree/level of development regarding media education would enhance or inhibit media literacy or its dogged implementation in the university curriculum; either as a major or an elective course.

Notwithstanding the seemingly low motivation, faculty members of Jordanian Universities has a relatively high perception of media literacy, as most of them tend to encounter different media and media contents on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

As it had been established that Jordanian university students spend considerable amount of time on conventional and recent media on a daily basis, it is expedient that they are enlightened in the utilization/distribution of media contents.

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