

Determining Educational Curriculum Priorities and the Role of Media in Education from the Teachers' Points of View

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Abstract: Nowadays, the world is saturated with Media. Our environment is full of information. Among mass Medias, TV and Radio have special positions regarding informal education. The present study aims was investigating Shiraz high school teachers' attitudes regarding students' educational curriculum priorities through educational TV and Radio, their ideas about the best educational media and suitable educational programs. The subjects of study (n =252) were teachers who working in Shiraz high schools. They were chosen through stratified random sampling. The average age of teachers participated in the study was 41.02 with standard deviation of 7.89 and the average years of teaching experience was (18.48±7.57). 44.4% of teachers believed that the best way for education through TV is the direct education by experienced teachers. According to teachers point of view, TV with 4.52 and magazine with 1.76 score out of 5 got the highest and the lowest credits respectively among educational Medias. Results shown that in educational curriculum, English subject has the first priority in educational Media from the teachers' points of view. Since Radio and TV play more important roles in public education, the Radio and TV producers should become familiar with new trends of making educational programs.

Key words: Media • Education • Curriculum • Teacher

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world that willingly or unwillingly, is saturated by mass media and that our surrounding environment is brimful of data and information [1]. In recent decades, the application of mass media resulted in heightening the level of education and increasing the efficiency of educational system. A successful educational system refers to a system which is able to apply new communicative and information technology and employ trained and expert teachers [2]. Among the wide diversity of mass media, radio and television, due to their wide and vast range of viewers, have had an outstanding position from informal teaching point of view and are considered as the best cultural and educational media [3]. Television has proved to be a profound means of communication and potentially capable of leaving tremendous effect on the society. Undoubtedly, television

is an influential and appealing medium, capable to draw the attention of too many viewers regardless of the literacy or illiteracy of its audience. In comparison to radio, television has a further privilege of 'seeing' rather than 'listening' only. Although the cost and expenditure of television exceeds than that of radio, it is more effective and powerful from the educational viewpoint [4]. This invention (TV) was widely used as an educational medium after World War II, so much so that Americans considered educational television equal to lesson-teaching TV.

In the United States of America many educational institutes founded television stations and more than 60 educational TV stations were established by 1961.

Educational television in America was considered to be 100% lesson-teaching. It showed programs made by taking photos from real class environment and reconstructed by the presence of teachers and students

in real classrooms. Such programs were intentionally produced to help the removal of educational problems, such as the shortage of experienced teachers, facility inadequacy and the problem of having too many students in the classrooms [3]. In Japan, the non-profitable organization of radio and television which broadcasts programs for the whole country (N.H.K.) has put great emphasis on the better and richer performance of cultural and educational programs such as displaying lesson programs for particular schools to access and enjoy direct education, showing particular programs for the handicapped, teaching foreign language programs for children as well as providing instruction on various skills and broadcasting scientific and cultural programs for the public. All radio and television programs are potentially capable of providing teaching and conveying messages including cultural issues in broad sense of meaning. Technological advancement of these two media and other contiguous media has added variety and diversity to the educational system [4]. Likewise, the educational media administration in England was centrally shaped and appeared in the form of TV public organizations such as BBC with emphasis on broadcasting educational programs [5]. Training and educational system are considered integral parts of public communication system in which great modifications are made to methodology and the ways of conveying information after the Industrial Revolution. After the rise of new mass media including radio and television, education was emancipated from the monopoly of mere books and classes and appeared to be vaster and wider. The extended use of television made a new world of education during the first three decades post-war. Obviously, this does not mean that other forms of media were extinct or inactive. They were reconstructed and remodeled, their hearts were made from vacuum lamps and their appealing face appeared in the form of television screen. Radio was decentralized but increased its expansion and flexibility. It adjusted its style and content with people's daily life rhythm [2]. Cominus was the first person who adduced and presented pictures in educational contests in the 17th century. From his point of view, media assists teachers in their teaching practices and motivates students to make their learning more practical. Any medium of instruction leaves particular psychological, cognitive, behavioral and emotional impact on its audience that needs to be detected by the producer of that medium [6]. Due to the specialized essence of Media education and its broadcast for millions of students, it is obligatory for the executive of the educational program to present the educational materials

based on an exact and detailed plan and timetable [7]. Teaching through television has both positive and negative aspects. Some of the positive features include, broadcasting live programs, producing local teaching programs, increasing the literacy of Television viewers, broadcasting the latest news, reporting scenes that are not easily accessible, removing time and place constraints in teaching purposes. Being unilateral approach and one-way communication medium, ignoring personal interests, bearing heavy expenses for producing educational programs, having too many viewers, failure in determining the exact educational needs and lacking direct experience in learning process are among the negative aspects of this media [8]. Education is potentially capable to be conveyed through different mediums such as, teachers' verbal speech, printed texts or even through more complex technical materials like Television [7]. From Gunter's viewpoint, in the process of education, media education plays a positive role in conveying the information that aids teachers to improve their teaching practices [9].

Khazaeli claimed educational programs of mass media are divided into three groups:

1. Programs which aims at teaching a unique lesson during an educational period, such as chemistry.
2. Programs that are produced and displayed as supplementary to the teacher's task, such as broadcasting historical films besides teaching history in a usual manner.
3. Programs which are both entertaining and didactic, such as Cartoons [10].

In teaching via television, two significant variables are noticeable; the first one is direct teaching versus indirect teaching and the second one is formal conditions versus informal conditions. By direct teaching it is meant, producing media under circumstances that enables face-to-face interaction between the teacher and the students. Indirect teaching means the implementation of supplementary teaching aids which assist teachers in their teaching practices [10]. Certain subjects such as foreign languages, mathematics and natural sciences can be taught through educational television [11]. Educational Television was more successful in teaching certain subjects like mathematics, science and social sciences and less successful in teaching history and literature. Negative attitudes of higher education students toward educational Television, teachers' resistance in implementing this medium, low standards regarding the quality of educational programs and their ineffectiveness

due to certain issues such as having ambiguous goals and objectives are among the deficiencies of this kind of education [5]. Despite of heavy expenses of producing and broadcasting educational programs, it is not yet obvious that the production of which program is more influential and which lesson(s) should be considered as the first priority.

The aim of the current study was to evaluate high school teachers' approaches in Shiraz city, Iran, in order to determine the students' priorities while presenting their lessons through educational radio and television as well as selecting the best type of educational media and the best genre of Medias programs which best assists teachers and students in their academic activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study design with multistage stratified random cluster sampling technique was carried out in Shiraz, in the South-west of Iran. The sampling frame was Shiraz Training and Educational region which is divided by four sections. From each section, seven high schools were chosen randomly and 10 teachers were selected from each high school using random sampling. The sample units were all teachers in the 28 selected high schools. The study was implemented through questionnaire survey which was containing three parts; the first section demographic characteristics of respondents and second section with 10 questions about educational media and the third section including 10 questions regarding study subjects priorities. Data were analyzed by using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15, applying Student t-test, Man-Whitney U test and correlation. *P* values < 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Of the 280 high schools' teachers enrolled in the survey from 28 selected schools, 252 teachers participated

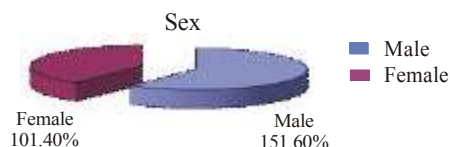


Fig. 1: Distribution of teachers by sex

in survey, giving a response rate of 90%. Results revealed that the majority of respondents (60%) were male (Fig. 1). The overall mean age was 41.02 ± 7.89 years old. The youngest was 24 years and the oldest one 56. The mean of their job experience was (18.48 ± 7.57) years. Table 1 illustrated some characteristics of respondents.

Considering the facts that the corrected amount of *P* was 0.23, based on 'Mann-Whitney' test, two groups of teachers have been selected (males and females) from the same society who has no difference in the level of their education.

Regarding the attitude of the teachers about Educational media, Likert measurement has been applied and is classified to various branches as very low, low, Medium, high and very high (very low = 1, low = 2, medium = 3, high = 4 and very high = 5) (Table 1).

The results indicate that teachers' approaches were positive to the application of educational media as study aids and that the best medium from their point of view was television (4.52 out of 5) and the least important was educational journals (1.75 out of 5). The rests were radio (3.96 out of 5), newspapers (2.33 out of 5), video (2.7 out of 5) and internet (1.83 out of 5) (Fig. 2).

74% of teachers believed that educational programs are indispensable in their teaching which can help to upgrading students' scores. 44.4% of teachers regard the structure and the type of the educational programs as the best method by experienced teachers in television, the other television programs are considered significant: fictional structures (21.8%), documentaries (13.9%), composite programs (11.9%) and contests (7.9%) respectively (Table 2 & Fig. 3).

Table 1: Teachers' approach toward suitable educational Media

Rank	Media	Attitude									
		Very High(5)		High(4)		Medium(3)		Low(2)		Very Low(1)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	TV	177	70.2	55	21.8	5	2.0	5	2.0	10	4.0
2	Radio	72	28.6	135	53.4	15	6.0	25	9.9	5	2.0
3	News paper	10	4.0	20	7.9	100	39.7	37	14.7	85	33.7
4	Video	0	0.0	27	10.7	75	29.8	40	15.9	110	43.7
5	Internet	5	2.0	2	0.8	65	25.8	55	21.8	125	49.6
6	Magazine	5	2.0	10	4.0	11	4.4	121	48.0	105	41.7

Table 2: Teachers' viewpoint toward the most important educational subjects

Rank	Media	Attitude									
		Very High(5)		High(4)		Medium(3)		Low(2)		Very Low(1)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	English Language	97	35.5	55	21.8	40	15.9	20	7.9	40	15.9
2	Mathematic	65	25.8	61	24.2	71	28.2	30	11.9	25	9.9
3	Persian Language	90	35.7	46	18.3	15	6.0	10	4.0	91	36.1
4	Physic	15	6.0	51	20.2	60	23.8	81	32.1	45	17.9
5	Biology	25	9.9	30	11.9	25	9.9	31	21.3	141	56.0
6	Chemistry	10	4.0	10	4.0	51	20.2	56	22.2	125	49.6

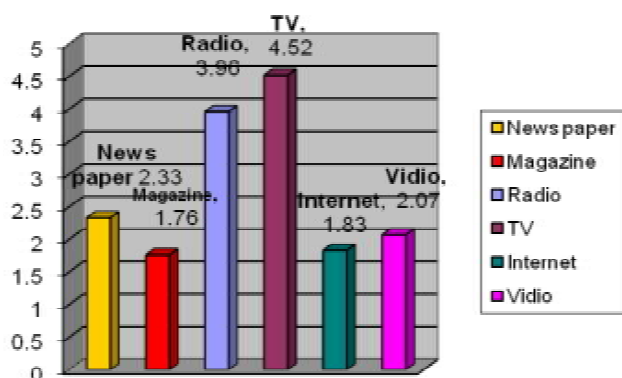


Fig. 2: Educational Media's score based on teachers' viewpoint

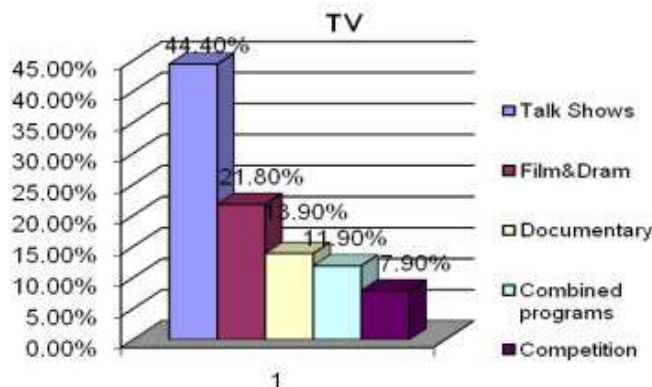


Fig. 3: Teachers' approach toward suitable educational TV program

Based on teachers' point of view the most suitable genre of radio program for educational purposes was combined program (31.7%), followed by competition (28.2%), talk show (21.8%) and drama (12.30%) and finally documentary with 6% comes at the end (Fig. 4).

The other issues under debate are the state of having too much volume of lesson-books that due to many holidays in Iran and shortage of time should be taught intensively and rapidly. In 1996, Arshadi said that teachers are responsible to teach the whole content of study lessons regardless of individual differences among

their students [12]. It is, therefore, inferred that teachers do not have sufficient time to teach the whole content of books. Some teachers prefer to use radio and television educational programs to use the class time till the last minute.

The results indicated that among various educational lessons in this research (physics, mathematic, English language, chemistry, biology and Persian literature), English language was the first priority for the teachers' viewpoint and that other lessons were regarded secondary in importance (Fig. 5).

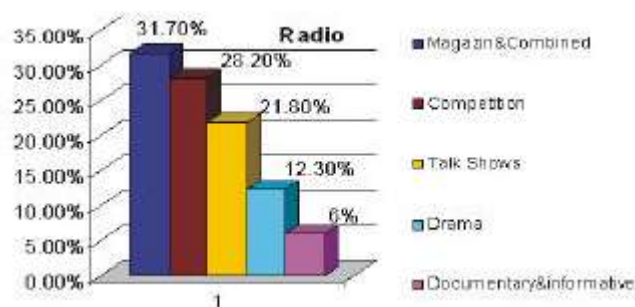


Fig. 4: Teachers' approach toward suitable educational Radio program

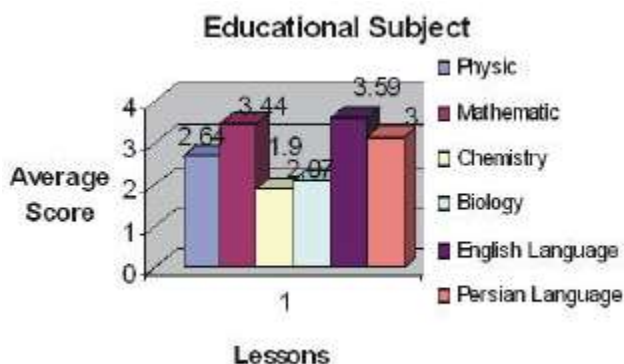


Fig. 5: Educational subjects scores based on teachers' viewpoint

Based on the research conducted by Arshadi in Shiraz, among the wide diversity of educational programs as history, English language, technique and skills, science...etc, there were some programs that students liked more. There were also less appreciated programs such as, social sciences, literature and geography [12]. Whereas, the results of the research conducted in Tehran University denote that history, science and English language had the most viewers and geography had the least [13].

CONCLUSION

In a research conducted by Mehrabi Pari has been mentioned that teachers should learn that there are some innovative and creative ways in using Information Technology (IT) such as applying multi-media in teaching. By using IT, inequalities regarding the access of resources will be removed. Undoubtedly, teachers play important roles in increasing the efficiency of IT. In the present research 74% of teachers believed educational programs a necessary complement for their regular teachings. They believed that educational programs can assist teachers in upgrading students' scores. Hence, the producers of educational programs should choose the

best educational structure for producing and making programs according to their audiences [14].

Mirza Khani believed that some times in some districts, bias between religious minorities would penetrate education system directly or indirectly. The selection of educational language is another problem of the educational system. Being unfamiliar with the medium of instruction would cause students' educational loss. With the necessary arrangements between Educating Board and Broadcasting Organization regarding the selection of teachers for teaching in educational programs, the mentioned deficiencies will be rectified [15]. Another problem of the students and IT instructors is the lack of access to suitable and standard educational resources. The language of the scientific world is English and 86% of sciences in the field of IT are in English. However, most of IT students suffer from lack of English proficiency due to weakness in understanding English basic concepts [16].

In the present study 75% of teachers believed that the first priority in educational programs is English and the people in charge should pay more attention to it.

Sarookhani mentioned that education through mass media resembles a great school and leaves tremendous influence on the entire human lives even during his/her

leisure time. He enumerated the advantages of this form of education as follows:

The age limit of school students vs the perpetually of education via media, the state of being 24 hours in this form of education vs the time limit of schools, the confinement in particular class of people in using school facilities vs having equal chance and opportunity of all groups of people in this form of education, lack of accessibility to the truth of life in school environment versus the concreteness and reality of teaching materials of mass media, the waste of time in students' commutation to school and homes versus the mobilization of this form of education at any time needed, ...all are examples in the excellence and priority of this form of education in comparison to school education [17].

The vast facilities of education through media and their capabilities in removing educational problems have encouraged the experts in the use of these facilities more than before demonstrated in radio and television programs in Iran and other countries.

It is indispensable to adjust the lesson planning based on the students' needs and leisure, culture and all dominant values in the society to be able to function effectively in achieving the goals and meeting the needs and avoiding dissipation of educated people's time and vigor and aids them getting positive approach toward science, knowledge, innovation and creativity.

Educational system assumes great responsibility in the development and conveyance of all beliefs, values, knowledge, skills and generally speaking a nation's culture. Parents alone fail to accomplish their tasks in conveying the culture, development and evaluation of values of their children. Therefore, educational organizations should assume responsibility in this regard. Since radio and television play more important role in public education, so the producers should be familiar with the latest and newest method of program structures to be able to meet the needs of students by employing appealing methods such as contests, fictional and documentary programs in television with due consideration to educational priorities.

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