

## An Examination of Curricula in Middle Eastern Journalism Schools In light of Suggested Model Curricula

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### ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand how journalism is taught in the Middle East. A basic questionnaire was developed to solicit such information to examine the curricula of 95 journalism programs in 13 countries of the Middle East. The study examines these curricula in hopes of developing a better understanding of the needs of journalism educators in one of the fastest growing areas of the world. The data shows that about half of the journalism programs in the Middle East had been established within the last decade. It also finds that most of these programs were theoretically oriented with little attention to practical concepts. Internships are not a top priority at most schools. Admissions criteria are poorly articulated. Most programs do not have much interaction with media organizations or international partners. The data confirm much of what found in the literature. Scholars in the region say too much theory, and too little journalism practice is taught. The results show that there is a big gap between theoretical and practical concepts in most of Middle East journalism programs' curricula. Most of these programs are theoretical oriented and do not pay much attention to the practical concepts.

**Keywords:** Journalism education, Middle East, survey studies.

### INTRODUCTION

Journalism education opportunities at universities around the globe have expanded rapidly in the recent years, particularly in regions where opportunities have been limited in the past (UNESCO 2007, 2013). This expansion has followed a similar expansion and shift in journalism professional practices (Fenton, 2009; Shirky, 2008). Scholars have called for more extensive examination of the nature of these programs in order to better understand the types of approaches being used in different countries (Deuze, 2006). This call has become more urgent as changes in curricula have been made at universities in response to changing technologies and media business practices (Goodman, 2007; Ocwich & Burger, 2008; Shirky, 2008) and rapidly rising enrollments for journalism programs in many countries (Deuze, 2006; Hanna & Sanders, 2007), even as resources

have often remained constrained (Huang, 2011; Tomaselli & Nothling, 2008).

Some scholars have tried to identify best practices and examine similarities and differences in programs by geographic region (Deuze, 2006); Goodman, 2007). Others have examined how programs are changing their curricula. Some have suggested that our studies are too limited to understand journalistic approaches worldwide (Deuze, 2005). Other scholars highlighted the importance how journalism schools need to match the needs of media industry in which journalism graduates seek employment, journalism education has yet to react to that change in a comprehensive manner (Hirst and Treadwell 2011). There is an acknowledged lack of research on long-form audio journalism (McHugh 2014; Panda 2014) but there is also little recent research on how journalism programs in universities are meeting this new audio demand (Wake & Bahfen, 2016).. This paper focuses on a project that examines journalism education in the Middle East.

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### **Journalism programs in the Middle East**

The first academic teaching of journalism and mass communication in the Middle East began at the American University in Cairo in 1935 (Abu Baker, Labib & Kandil, 1985; Amin, 2012). More than 30 years later, five other journalism programs were established in Tunisia, Sudan, Algeria, Iraq, and Lebanon (Abu Baker, Labib & Kandil, 1985). However, in the 1980s, the growing numbers of journalism programs escalated and expanded. Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Libya, and the United Arab Emirates all (UAE) established similar journalism programs (Abu Baker, Labib & Kandil, 1985).

Over the last several years, the Middle East has witnessed a massive expansion and rapid strides in different media industries which has opened new opportunities and placed journalism education on the "front lines" (Melki, 2009, p.673). As a result, the number and quality of journalism programs have sharply increased (Martin, 2010).

In fact, many researchers, official reports, and academic studies have highlighted the need for understanding the basic problems that face higher education in general and journalism programs in particular in the Middle East (British Council 2005; UNESCO 2007; el-Nawawy, 2007). Before the advent of private journalism programs, which has increased the competition and enhanced the quality of journalism education (Amin, 2012), most of journalism schools in the Middle East were controlled by governments and operated within in a harsh political situation (Saleh, 2010b; Amin, 2012). They were not allowed to criticize local governments; their main goal was to prepare journalism students to promote the states' accomplishments (Amin, 2012).

Scholars have increasingly shown interest in non-Western countries (Melki, 2009, p.672). In fact, a small number of studies have focused on journalism education in specific countries in the Middle East including a large number about Egypt (Nassar 1999; el-Nawawy 2007;

Hamdy & Auter 2008; Saleh 2010; Amin 2012). Egypt has pioneered programs in journalism and its schools have been the strongest and most reputable journalism programs, particular Cairo University, Al Azhar University, and the American University (Pehowski, 1981; Amin, 2012), alongside Israel's Hebrew University (Pehowski, 1981, p.50). At the same time, very few studies have been done about journalism education in other Middle East countries such as Oman (O'rourke, 2011), United Arab Emirates (Yunis & Picherit-Duthler, 2011), and Lebanon (Melki, 2009). None have comprehensively examined journalism education for all Middle Eastern countries. Scholars from different parts of the world have called for more research (Morgan, 2000, 2003; Reese and Cohen, 2003) assessing the status of journalism programs in the Middle East countries (el-Nawawy, 2007, p.88).

These scholars have identified four key issues, curriculum, faculty qualifications, industry partnerships for work experience, and student support services.

#### **1. Curriculum**

Many scholars have argued that most curricula in journalism schools in the public journalism programs in the Middle East focus on theory more than practice. They have called for a better balance between those two parts to provide the basic skills to prepare students for their professional careers, and for a focus on critical thinking (Kamel & Abbasi, 1997; Nassar, 1999; el-Nawawy, 2007; Saleh, 2010b; Amin, 2012). Dealing with skills versus concepts in curricula is a challenge facing journalism educators and practitioners throughout the world (Shawna, 2003). On the other hand, in the private universities, the main problem of journalism education is that "its core curricula show a distinctive Western structure without any adaptations" (Sahleh, 2010b, p.126). Hamdy and Auter (2008) pointed out that many private and public journalism programs in Egypt (e.g., Cairo University and the American University) have begun to adapt curricula to meet media industry changes

(p. 8); however, Egyptian educators realized that they may not always have the freedom to change or modify curricula for different reasons including administration, faculty resistance, and confusion over industry directions (p. 36).

Except for the journalism program of the American University in Cairo, which is grounded in the liberal arts, the curricula of the rest of the journalism programs of the Egyptian schools offer the same curricula, which focuses largely on theory (Amin, 2012).

Surveys of faculty, practitioners, and students from journalism departments in Egypt found that the number of theoretical courses taught at most journalism programs in Egypt far exceeded that of the practical courses (Kamel & Albasi, 1997). While faculty in journalism schools called for balance between the theory and practice courses, journalism students said that these theoretical courses were not beneficial because they did not prepare them for a professional career (Kamel & Albasi, 1997).

El-Nawawy found that the gap is increasing between journalism theory classes and practice classes and between journalism education and professionalism in Jordan and Egypt (el-Nawawy, 2007, p. 69). El-Nawawy said journalism educators emphasized theoretical courses while practitioners emphasized journalism skills courses (el-Nawawy 2007, p.85).

In Lebanon, Melki (2009) found three practical programs in Lebanese journalism schools: one, liberal “focusing on theory and research”; second, a liberal–professional program “balancing theory and skills”; and third that had the most skills-focused approach (p.680).

On the other hand, Yunis and Picherit-Duthler (2011) argued that visual communication education has grown quickly in the UAE. They said these professional programs in visual communication and “film and video production” aim to prepare students to be directors and producers.

Finally, Saleh (2010b) criticized the quality of the curricula taught in Egyptian journalism programs after the

government transferred it into the public relations curriculum (p.116). He said this type of journalism education had become an “instrument of political patronage” (p.125).

## 2. Faculty

Several studies in the region have criticized the absence of criteria for how faculty members get their positions and a shortage of instructors in these programs (Kamel and Alabbasi, 1997; el-Nawaway, 2007; Saleh, 2010b; Amin, 2012).

El-Nawawy (2007) has argued that journalism faculty members should have: “extensive professional journalistic experience; doctorate degree in journalism or communication; and publications in peer-reviewed academic journals” (p.83). However, Kamel and Alabbasi (1997) found that many journalism programs in Egypt depend on professional journalists to teach student skills courses on a part time basis.

Other studies say faculty face problems that hinder efforts to develop the education process. For example, British Council (2005) found that an overwhelming majority of respondents pointed out problems of “nepotism.” Other problems included no career guidance, skills premium/technical skills, mismatched jobs, language issues, and quality of education. At the same time, Ederveen, De Groot, and Nahius (2003) argued the core illness that faces faculty in Egyptian journalism programs include a lack of media ethics (54%), cultural problems (17%), absence of premium skills (12.5%), and language problems (8%).

Melki (2009) argued that a faculty shortage is one of the most pressing problems in Lebanese schools. He said all participants in his study agreed there was a strong and urgent need for qualified journalism faculty and scholars, and for research resources (p. 686).

Recently, Saleh (2010b) has criticized the way journalism faculty is recruited in the Egyptian journalism programs. Except for the American University in Cairo, he noted, most faculty are selected through connections, with

no professional standards for selection (p.127). Saleh also faulted faculty working conditions. He argued that faculty members in journalism programs in Egypt have overload hours weekly, leaving little time for preparation and no time for research (p.128). At the same time, Amin (2012) indicated that rural journalism programs in Egypt suffer from the lack of quality instructors.

Finally, Amin (2012) said that research in journalism education is undeveloped with limited publications. Journals are in English rather than in Arabic and poor budgets restrict faculty from traveling to present their papers in international conferences.

### 3. Student Support Issues

Few studies have addressed students' issues such as vague admission criteria, the selection process of students, the unbalanced ratio between students to the number of faculty, and other required skills that should be available in students of journalism.

Melki (2009, p. 677) noted that the number of students enrolled in journalism programs grew in the last six years (2001-2007), and they made up around 2.5% of the total body of universities' students.

Saleh (2010b) criticized how students were chosen for journalism programs in the Egyptian universities. He argued that testing talent should be the main criteria for applicants' selection (p.128). Amin (2012) argued that the student-faculty ratio is one of the greatest problems facing journalism programs in Egypt.

Amin (2012) suggested revising the procedure for admissions by focusing on the quality of the admitted students and improving English language instruction in secondary schools and enhancing critical thinking inside the classroom.

O'rourke (2011) reported that a lack of English language skills caused Omani students to avoid joining journalism departments in private universities.

The study posed these basic questions:

RQ 1: What is the nature of the curriculum provided

at journalism programs in the Middle East?

RQ 2: What is the nature of experience that faculty members have for teaching journalism?

RQ 3: Is the ratio of students adequate to the number of faculty in these programs?

RQ 4: To what degree do these programs offer the opportunities for their students to work for an online media website?

### Methods

The study used a survey method aimed at examining all programs in the Middle East identified as part of the World Journalism Education's worldwide census of journalism programs. The surveys were administered by telephone and email. The questionnaire used in the study was adapted from an earlier instrument that had also been used in a study of journalism education in China (Huang, 2011).

**Sample.** The study aimed to conduct a census of those programs that offer journalism programs in 13 Middle Eastern countries including: Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Lebanon. The total number of journalism programs identified in these countries was 95, which makes up the study's target population. However, schools in only 12 countries responded (see Table 1). The list was drawn from World Journalism Education Counsel's website (WJEC) (<http://wjec.ou.edu/>), where all data, access, and contact information about the programs are available. Other countries in the Middle East were excluded because of lack of time and some journalism programs are in non Arabic languages including Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Morocco, Sudan, Iran, Libya, Algeria, Tunis, Mauritania, Djibouti, and Somalia. A primary email both in Arabic and English was sent to all deans and heads of journalism programs in the Middle East. Frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions. Frequencies were run for all variables. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the findings.

**Table 1 .List of the Journalism Programs that Participated**

Number	Country	Programs Responding	# Completing Questionnaire	% of Total Respondents
1	Egypt	24	13	20%
2	Syria	3	3	4.6%
3	Iraq	6	6	9.2%
4	Jordan	7	6	9.2%
5	Lebanon	14	9	13.8%
6	Saudi Arabia	7	7	10.8%
7	Qatar	2	2	3.1%
8	Oman	4	4	6.2%
9	Kuwait	3	3	4.6%
10	Yemen	3	3	4.6%
11	UAE	11	4	6.2%
12	Bahrain	5	5	7.7%
Total	12	89*	65	100%

\*This number does not include 6 Israeli journalism programs that did not respond.

## Results

The response rate for the questionnaire was 73 percent, i.e., 65 programs of the 89 programs responding actually completed the questionnaire.

**Program characteristics:** Just under half of journalism programs in the this study ( $n = 30$ , 46%) were established in the years between 2000 -2012, about a fifth of them ( $n = 13$ , 20%) were started in the 90s, and fewer than a fifth of them ( $n = 11$ , 17%) were began in the 80s, more than a tenth of them ( $n = 9$ , 14%) were established between 1951- 1979, and very few programs ( $n = 2$ , 3%) were launched between 1930 -1950.

Most journalism programs in the study ( $n = 45$ , 69%) were departments belonging to other colleges, whereas roughly the third of the programs ( $n = 20$ , 31%) were independent college within universities.

The overwhelming majority ( $n = 63$ , 97%) offered undergraduate degrees (B.A.) while fewer than half ( $n = 26$ , 40%) provided graduate program degrees (M.A.) and even fewer ( $n = 5$ , 8%) granted doctoral degrees (Ph.D.). A very few ( $n = 2$ , 3%) offered technical degrees.

Most programs in this sample ( $n= 54$ , 83%) teach print journalism in their programs; 71% ( $n = 46$ ) teach broadcast journalism; 66% ( $n = 44$ ) public relations; 35% ( $n = 23$ ) advertising; a quarter of them ( $n = 16$ ) teach general mass communication; and a very few teach new media subjects ( $n = 10$ , 16%) such as multimedia, electronic media, journalism translation, visual communication and graphic design.

These programs do not have strong cooperation with NGOs (e.g. USAID, UNESCO, IREX, etc.). Less than quarter ( $n = 16$ , 24.6%) said they had this kind of cooperation. They said the cooperation was mostly focused on support for establishing media structure ( $n = 11$ , 20%), some ( $n = 4$ , 6%) for training, and only one ( $n = 1$ , 2%) for funding.

## Theoretical and practical gap

**RQ 1** asked about the nature of the curriculum. Just under half of the programs ( $n = 29$ , 45%) reported an extensive focus on theoretical concepts in their curricula ( $M = 2.43$ ), just over quarter of them ( $n = 17$ , 26%) reported an extensive focus on practical skills ( $M = 2.2$ ),

and few of them ( $n = 11$ , 17%) reported extensive technical equipment instruction ( $M = 1.98$ ). Consistent with previous research (Kamel & Abbasi, 1997; Nassar, 1999; el-Nawawy, 2007; Sahleh, 2010b; Amin, 2012), the study indicated that curricula in journalism schools in the ME focus on theory more than practice.

Despite this finding, the data also show that there is a serious attempt to decrease the gap between theory and practice. The data revealed that almost half of these programs try to balance between theoretical, technical, and practical concepts in their curricula. For example, 53 programs (54%) stress that they include “some” theoretical concepts, 42 programs (65%) stress that they include “some” technical equipment, and 44 programs (67%) stress that they include “some” practical skills instruction in their curricula. one possible explanation of this is that most of journalism college in the Middle East belong in time of its establishment into Art colleges which focus more on conceptual than practice. The other possible explanation is that most journalism programs did not have many academic staffs that have professional background in media fields.

**Faculty media experience.** RQ 2 sought to know the nature of the professional experience of the faculty members have who teach journalism. Generally, the data show that more than a third ( $M = 37.34$ ,  $SD = 27.4$ ) of faculty members in journalism education in the Middle East have at least two years media experience. However, the data also indicated that in about two thirds ( $n = 43$ , 66%) of these programs, 45% of faculty members have media experience of less than two years, According to the collected data, eight programs (12%) reported that 30% of faculty members have media experience; another 8 programs (12%) report that 10% of faculty members have media experience; another 7 (11%) programs report that 20% of faculty members have media experience; and 5 programs (8%) report that 5% of faculty members have media experience. The possible explanation of this result might be the fact that being journalist in the Arab world has big prestigious, and most of those media

practitioners do not look at academia job as an attracted job or earn money. So, this could explain why most of academic staff in journalism programs doesn't have enough professional skills.

**Student-faculty ratio:** RQ 3 asked about the ratio of the number of students to faculty in the program. In this study, the ratio of students is 12 times that of faculty members. Data indicated that there are 13,185 students ( $M = 202.846$ ,  $SD = 146.837$ ) and 1,111 faculty members ( $M = 17.09$ ,  $SD = 15.100$ ). Surprisingly, this result is inconsistent with previous discussion (Melki, 2009; Saleh, 2010 b; Amin, 2012) as it suggests that for the most part there is no problem with the number of students in journalism programs compared to the number of faculty members in the same schools. The reasonable explanation of this result could be related to the admission policies of these universities by limiting the number of accepting students each academic year to journalism departments.

**Online Opportunities:** RQ 4 asked about the degree to which these programs offer any opportunity for their students to work for an online media website. The data showed that fewer than half of these programs ( $n = 31$ , 48%) offer the opportunity to their students to work for an online media website. Less than a third of these programs ( $n = 20$ , 31%) have their own media websites to give students online experience. Most journalism programs that belong to foreign universities reported that they had created websites and give their students the opportunity to work for online media. Those programs that belong to the public and are government-run universities do not do this. The probable explanation of this result might related to the fact that some countries require in their regulations and laws that there be an editor-in-chief responsible as a condition for the existence of news sites affiliated to the universities, even if for educational or training purposes.

#### “Model Curricula”

These findings suggested a need to look further into curricular issues and how these programs compare with international recommendations about curricula. To do this

we decided to compare the curricula from a sample of these schools with two “model curricula” recommended for programs around the globe.

The first of these “model curricula” is the UNESCO “model curricula for journalism education” publicly announced during the first World Journalism Education Congress in Singapore in 2007. UNESCO announced at the 2013 WEJC meeting in Mechelen, Belgium, that schools in 70 countries had adopted the model (UNESCO, 2013).

The second ‘model curriculum’ is the ACEJMC accreditation standards curricula as revised in 2008 and used by some international consultants to promote improvements in journalism education around the world. The ACEJMC Standards are widely used in the United States and have been adopted or aspired to by many schools.

UNESCO’s model curriculum (UNESCO 2007, 2013) suggests that education about the first axis (professional practice) should make up roughly 40 percent of the curriculum; education about the second axis (journalism studies) should make up roughly 10 percent of the curriculum; and education about the third axis (arts and sciences) should make up roughly 50 percent of the curriculum. It places a further emphasis upon writing and reporting skills and content and intellectual development for the student. It also emphasizes a supervised and evaluated media placement experience such as an internship or work experience and urges partnerships with media organizations to give both students and faculty direct experience with journalism as it is practiced.

The Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) has its own set of standards for journalism education. Those standards have changed over the years and also were recently modified lowering by the number of hours required outside the JMC program. The Standards require core knowledge and competencies and 12 specific skill sets. The model acknowledges that graduates should “understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites

ACEJMC is located...” (p. 2) it specifies five indicators of success for programs:

(a) A minimum of 72 semester credit hours outside of the unit

(b) A balance among theoretical and conceptual courses, professional skills courses, and courses that integrate theory and skills

(c) Instruction, whether on-site or online, that is demanding, current, and responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies.

(d) Student-faculty classroom ratios that facilitate effective teaching and learning including a ratio in skills and laboratory sections that should not exceed 20-1.

(e) Opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom that is supervised and evaluated.

Of course, the Standards also require levels of performance in governance, diversity, faculty qualifications, scholarship, student services, facilities and equipment, professional services, and assessment of outcomes.

In order to understand how the Middle Eastern Journalism Programs were doing compared with these model curricula, we selected 13 schools from the 65 that completed the questionnaire for a more detailed examination of their curriculum. The schools were selected as a convenience sample because they are leading schools in their countries and because they post their curricula online. We examined each class and the description of the content of the class and compared those descriptions with the goals for the model curricula using the descriptions published in their literature. We grouped the classes as 1) Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes, 2) Practice/Professional classes, or 3) Outside/Liberal Arts classes. Here are the definitions we derived from the UNESCO model to describe these groups. We used these definitions to sort the classes taught in the Middle East schools into the groups as defined by the model curricula:

**Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes:** The coursework elucidates the institutional and societal contexts within which journalists function and connects the practice of journalism to related human activities. Such studies strengthen professional identity, values, and goals through an understanding of democratic functions and legal and moral constraints (e.g. Media law, journalism ethics, Media and society, and international journalism).

**Practice/Professional Classes:** The coursework prepares students to report, write and edit for the various media. It represents the core of any program designed to prepare students for careers in journalism. It should be noted, however, that the professional skills of journalism involve methods of knowing and thinking as well as recording and representing (e.g., reporting and writing, magazine design, and opinion writing).

**Outside /Arts and Sciences classes:** The coursework exposes students to modern knowledge. In this respect, journalism is not a stand-alone discipline. It should be combined with education in the disciplines of arts and sciences (e.g. Psychology, sociology, political science, economy, history, etc.)

We compared data about the percentages of classes actually taught in each category by the 13 schools with the recommended percentages of classes in each category in the models.

Table 2 shows the 13 schools with their percentages listed for comparison with the UNESCO model and with the ACEJMC model. An examination of the percentages quickly shows that most of the universities offer higher

percentages of Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes than the UNESCO model suggests; lower percentages of Practice/Professional classes; and mostly lower percentages of Outside/Arts and Sciences classes.

At the same time, an examination of the percentages for the 13 schools listed for comparison with the ACEJMC model shows a slightly different, yet strikingly similar pattern. While these percentages are closer to the model, these universities on average offer higher percentages of Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes than the ACEJMC model recommends, higher percentages of Practice/Professional classes than the ACEJMC model recommends, and lower percentages of Outside/Liberal Arts classes than the model recommends.

Table 3 makes the pattern a bit clearer. It calculates the total number of credit hours required by these 13 schools. That total is 1,787 credits for students to graduate. Of those, 634 or 36 percent of the classes required are Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes. This is higher than the recommended distribution for both the UNESCO model (10 percent) and the ACEJMC model (25%). In addition, 584 credits or 27 percent of the required classes are Practice/Professional classes. This falls lower than the UNESCO recommendation (40%) and higher than the AEJMC recommendation (15%). Finally, 688 of the credits, or 37%, are classes outside the journalism program, primarily in Arts and Sciences. This is lower than the recommended levels of both UNESCO (50%) and ACEJMC (60%).

**Table (2) Distribution of Classes by Type  
Compared with UNESCO Model**

#	Uni.	UNESCO Model			
		credits	Press (10%)	Prof(40%)	A&S (50%)
1	AY Sharjah	124	27 (21%)	18 (15%)	79 (64%)
2	Abu Dhabi Uni.	120	48 (40%)	27 (23%)	45 (37%)
3	Qatar Uni.	126	18 (14%)	39 (31%)	69 (55%)
4	Uni of Petra Jordan	132	49 (37%)	30 (23%)	51(40%)

		UNESCO Model			
5	<i>KING SAUD UNI.</i>	128	57 (45%)	22 (17%)	49 (38%)
6	Beirut Arab Uni.	120	54 (45%)	35 (29%)	31(26%)
7	Uni. of Bahrain	126	19 (15%)	82 (65%)	25(20%)
8	Ahlia Uni./Bahrain	132	51 (39%)	30 (22%)	51(39%)
9	Um Qura/ Saudi	130	42 (32%)	12(9%)	76(59%)
10	Taibah Uni/Saudi	128	33 (26%)	50 (39%)	45 (35%)
11	Sohag Uni/Egypt	215	112 (51%)	52(24%)	51(23%)
12	Assiut Univ/Egypt	183	85(46%)	40(22%)	58(32%)
13	Bayan /Oman	123	39 (32%)	48 (39%)	36 (29%)
	Totals	1,787	634 (36%)	584 (27%)	668 (37%)

**Table (3) Distribution of Classes by Type  
ACEJMC Model Recommendations**

#	University	credits	Concept/ (25%)	Practice (15%)	Out 72 (60%)
1	AY Sharjah	124	33(27%)	18 (15%)	73 (58%)
2	Abu Dhabi Uni.	120	48 (40%)	27(23%)	45 (37%)
3	Qatar Uni.	126	7 (5%)	39 (31%)	80 (64%)
4	Uni of Petra Jordan	132	49 (37%)	30 (23%)	53 (40%)
5	<i>KING SAUD UNI.</i>	128	57 (45%)	22 (17%)	49 (38%)
6	Beirut Arab Uni.	120	54 (45%)	35 (29%)	31(26%)
7	Uni. of Bahrain	126	19 (15%)	82 (65%)	25(20%)
8	Ahlia Uni./Bahrain	132	51 (39%)	30 (22%)	51(39%)
9	Um Qura/ Saudi	130	42 (32%)	12(9%)	76(59%)
10	Taibah Uni/Saudi	128	33 (26%)	50 (39%)	45 (35%)
11	Sohag Uni/Egypt	215	112 (51%)	52(24%)	51(23%)
12	Assiut Univ/Egypt	183	85(46%)	40(22%)	58(32%)
13	Bayan /Oman	123	39 (32%)	48 (39%)	36 (29%)
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,787</b>	<b>634 (36%)</b>	<b>584 (27%)</b>	<b>668 (37%)</b>

**Table (3) Comparison Totals with Model Curricula**

		UNESCO Model			
#	Recommended	Total Credits	Journalism studies (10%)	Professional (40%)	Arts and Sciences (50%)
		ACEJMC Model			
#	Recommended	Total Credits	Concept (25%)	Practice (15%)	Outside 72 (60%)
		Middle East Average			
<b>Totals Actual</b>		<b>1787</b>	<b>634 (36%)</b>	<b>584 (27%)</b>	<b>668 (37%)</b>

Another method to see this is to examine the distribution “drift” from the recommendations for each of the two models. We looked at the departure of each percentage from the recommended allocation and ranked it “high,” “fit,” or “low.

To do this, we assumed that if the number of credit hours offered was within six semester hours, or about five

percent, of the levels recommended, we would code it as a “fit” for the model. So, if the percentage fell within 10 percent of the recommended level, we coded it a neutral, “zero.” If it were five percent above the recommended percentage, we coded it as “high” and assigned it a “plus” sign. If it were five percent below, we coded it as “low” and assigned it a “minus” sign.

**Table (4) Distribution by Fit--UNESCO Comparison**

		UNESCO Model			
#	Name of University	Total # credits	Journalism studies (10%)	Professional (40%)	Arts and Sciences (50%)
1	AY Sharjah	124	+	–	0
2	Abu Dhabi Uni.	120	+	–	–
3	Qatar Uni.	126	0	–	0
4	Uni of Petra/JOR	132	+	–	–
5	<i>KING SAUD UNI.</i>	128	+	–	–
6	Beirut Arab Uni.	120	+	–	–
7	Uni. of Bahrain	126	0	+	–
8	Ahlia Uni./Bah.	132	+	–	–
9	Um Qura/ Saudi	130	+	–	+
10	Taibah Uni	128	+	0	–
11	Sohag Uni/Egypt	215	+	–	–
12	Assiut Uni.	183	+	–	–
13	Bayan /Oman	123	+	0	–
			<b>11-+; 2-0; 0--</b>	<b>1-+; 2-0; 10--</b>	<b>1-+; 2-0; 10--</b>

Table 4 shows how the data looked for the UNESCO model when examined in this way. Most of the schools had a “plus” sign for concept/theory/journalism studies category. Most schools had a “minus” sign in the Practice/Professional category. Most schools also had a “minus” sign for the Outside/Arts & Sciences category. Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies instruction is much higher than the recommended levels for the UNESCO Model Curriculum. The other two categories are much

lower than the recommended levels for the model.

Table 5 shows how the data looked for the ACEJMC model. Both the Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies category AND the Practice/Professional category have mostly “plus” signs while the Outside/Arts and Sciences category has mostly “minus” signs. Both the Theory AND the Practice class categories are mostly higher than the ACEJMC model recommends. The Outside class category is mostly LOWER than ACEJMC recommends.

**Table (5) shows how the data looked for the ACEJMC model**

#	Name of University	AEJMC Model			
		Total credits	Concept (25%)	Practice (15%)	Outside 72 (60%)
1	AY Sharjah	124	0	0	0
2	Abu Dhabi Uni.	120	+	+	-
3	Qatar Uni.	126	-	+	0
4	Uni of Petra/JOR	132	+	+	-
5	KING SAUD UNI.	128	+	0	-
6	Beirut Arab Uni.	120	+	+	-
7	Uni. of Bahrain	126	-	+	-
8	Ahlia Uni./Bah.	132	+	+	-
9	Um Qura/ Saudi	130	+	-	0
10	Taibah Uni	128	0	+	-
11	Sohag Uni/Egypt	215	+	+	-
12	Assiut Uni.	183	+	+	-
13	Bayan /Oman	123	+	+	-
			<b>9-+; 2-0; 3--</b>	<b>10-+; 2-0; 0--</b>	<b>0-+; 3-0; 10--</b>

**Table (6) shows the same data presented as a direct comparison with UNESCO and ACEJMC Model Recommendations**

#	Recommended	UNISCO Model			
		Total Credits	Journalism studies (10%)	Professional (40%)	Arts and Sciences (50%)
			<b>11-+; 2-0; 0--</b>	<b>1-+; 2-0; 10--</b>	<b>1-+; 2-0; 10--</b>
#	Recommended	ACEJMC Model			
		Total Credits	Concept (25%)	Practice (15%)	Outside 72 (60%)
			<b>9-+; 2-0; 3--</b>	<b>10-+; 2-0; 0--</b>	<b>0-+; 3-0; 10--</b>

Finally, Table 6 shows the same data presented as a direct comparison with both models. Here the contrast in the patterns is clear. Most schools require larger numbers of Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes than either UNESCO or ACEJMC recommend. Most schools offer lower numbers of Outside/Arts and Sciences classes than both UNESCO and ACEJMC recommend. However, in a surprising twist, most of these top Middle Eastern schools offer more Practice/Professional classes than we might have expected from reading the literature. Ten programs offered lower numbers of Professional classes than UNESCO's recommended levels of classes. BUT, ten of the programs offered higher numbers of Practice classes than ACEJMC's recommended levels of such classes. This suggests that, at least among these top programs in the Middle East, significant progress has been made in increasing instruction for actually practicing journalism. These programs seem to have increased the numbers of practical reporting, writing, and editing classes they offer.

#### CONCLUSION`

The data showed that about half of the journalism programs in the Middle East had been established within the last decade. It also found that most of these programs were theoretically oriented with little attention to practical concepts. Internships were not a top priority at most schools. Admissions criteria were poorly articulated. Most programs did not have much interaction with media organizations or international partners.

The data from both phases offer more detailed information about the curricula.

Keep in mind what is obviously a cautionary tale: first, both UNESCO and ACEJMC offer flexibility in their models. The percentages, in UNESCO's core document and in the latest version of the ACEJMC standards, represent inferences and interpretations that are subject to adaptation to local circumstances. Second, the

classification of classes into these categories is based on posted class descriptions. More detailed information from course syllabi could produce changes in how the classes should be classified.

Still, the data confirm much of what we found in the literature.

**First**, scholars in the region say *too much theory*, and too little journalism *practice* is taught. We did find an emphasis on Concept/Theory/Journalism Studies classes. There is a big gap between theoretical and practical concepts in most the Middle East journalism programs' curricula. Most these programs are theoretical oriented and did not pay much attention to the practical concepts.

**Second**, scholars in the region say students don't get a strong introduction to *national and global issues* and *critical thinking*. We did find too few classes about the larger world within which these students should work.

**Third**, scholars in the region say *faculty hiring* results in staff without sufficient experience in the media industries. We did find these same concerns.

However, we also found reasons for *optimism*, too. These data imply that journalism education in the Middle East has moved closer to these models. The percentages for *Practice/Professional classes* at the top schools are *higher* than the ACEJMC model recommends although lower than UNESCO recommends. That may mean that the numbers of practice classes is growing. In addition, while these programs had weak or defective student admission criteria, in our data, the faculty-student ratios were better than we had expected based in the literature.

Nevertheless, progress depends on having the human and capital resources to support this progress. The data still show a *striking dependence* on government finding and *too little* support from *industry* and private sources. Further study will be required to explore how far progress can go and how broadly in can reach.

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## دراسة المناهج في كليات الصحافة في الشرق الأوسط في ضوء المناهج النموذجية المقترحة

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### ملخص

هذه الدراسة سعت لفهم كيف يتم تدريس الصحافة في بلدان الشرق الأوسط. وقد تم تطوير استبيان للحصول على المعلومات من خلال تحليل مضمون 95 برنامجا أكاديميا يدرس الصحافة والإعلام في 13 بلدا شرق أوسطيا . وقام هذا البحث بدراسة المناهج على أمل تطوير فهم أفضل لاحتياجات أساتذة الصحافة في واحدة من أسرع المناطق نموا في العالم . وأظهرت بيانات الدراسة أن حوالي نصف برامج الصحافة في الشرق الأوسط قد أنشئت خلال العقد الماضي . ووجد أيضا أن معظم هذه البرامج كانت موجهة نظريا مع القليل من الاهتمام للمفاهيم العملية . كما أظهرت النتائج ان التدريب الداخلي لم يكن أولوية قصوى في معظم كليات الصحافة وأقسام الإعلام الأكاديمية . وكانت معايير القبول في هذه البرامج غير واضحة . ولم يكن لمعظم البرامج تفاعل كبير مع المنظمات الإعلامية الدولية أو الشركاء الدوليين . وتؤكد نتائج هذه الدراسة الكثير مما وجد في الدراسات السابقة . أكاديميو الصحافة والإعلام في المنطقة يركزون كثيرا على النظرية وقليلًا على التطبيق في ممارسة الصحافة والإعلام . وأظهرت النتائج وجود فجوة كبيرة بين المفاهيم النظرية والعملية في معظم برامج الصحافة في الشرق الأوسط . معظم هذه البرامج هي نظرية المنحى ولم تولي اهتماما كبيرا للمفاهيم العملية .

الكلمات الدالة: تدريس صحافة، الشرق الأوسط، دراسات مسحية.

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