



Education and modernity in the Arab world

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Abstract

The Arab world, with its different countries, faces major historical and destinal challenges, and the educational challenge is one of the challenges that lie at the center of the major challenges of the Arab world. The Arab education faces many dilemmas that hindered it from playing its natural role in building society, and led to its backwardness and out of this problem, modernity has emerged. This is because the relationship between education and modernity is a broad and cross-cutting topic that has aroused the appetites of thinkers, researchers and educators around the world. At a time when education is linked to the roots of reality and works to produce it, modernist thought is launched in the space of renewal. From here a relationship arose between the jaw Freestanding creates Hobos and salted breeding ground with soil flying from reality

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1. Introduction

The topic of the relationship between education and modernity requirements has preoccupied the thinkers, researchers, and the educators in all over the world because the theme of modernity imposes itself in all the intellectual patterns of modern education in a confrontational way. It has also worked on the incitement of the educational intellect for the response to the main universal mutations of human development in all its intellectual and social sides. In the center of this conflict-between the discourse of modernity which is described by its rebellion and it's fast steppings and the educational discourse that is burdened with traditions and the traditional astatic practices - a state of intellectual rifts and educational problematics has been generated. This later has led the educational researchers to an intellectual confrontation with the requirements of this collision and its needs. In the time when the education is related to the roots of the real life and works on its production and reproduction due to its nature and functional limits, the modern human itellect begins in the renewaling field. In the relation between a new way of thinking and new intellect that is shown in the horizons and between a highly rooted education in the earth dust and broken reality, educational thinkers find themselves in a hopeless chance for a new thought blips that is unreachable only in a hypothetical way .

The concept of the educational modernity

Modernity in its concept is based on two main ideas: the idea of a revolution against the traditional teaching , and the idea of the centrality of mind in applying all that is new. Therefore, modernity means the progressive research and controlling the inputs and outputs of the educational process for continuing development and improvement of the learners. It is a concept that turns around creativity which is the opposite of imitation and the mind which is the opposite of transmission. 1

In this case , we can highlight some of the modernity semblances in the educational process.

- A) The effective teaching:** that needs an effective teacher who has a huge acquaintance in the knowledge fields.
- B) Teaching as a creative process:** creation can not come out of blue. It is a reformation and crafting the existed materials in an unfamiliar form or image.
- C) The computer in the teaching process:** using computer is considered as one of the technological ways in teaching which works on enhancing the teaching process and achieving most

of the educational aims and objectives.

D) Teaching democracy: which is composed of the following:

- Providing teaching for all the society individuals without any discrimination.
- Considering the individual differences between the society members.
- Providing the principle of equal education opportunities.

Therefore, modernity plays an important role in developing education in all its fields and the development of learners and their mental abilities.

The modern manifestations of the new education

The intellectual arena has witnessed - since the second half of the nineteenth century - the appearance of many intellectual systems that are charged with a critical energy towards the educational thinking and the traditional educational practices. These new critical systems were able to overcome what have been existed and what should be existed.⁶

A) The modern education :

The utilisation of the expression “modern education” dates back to the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century knowing that some of its ideas have been existed even before

this time especially the ideas of “Montaigne” who is considered as the bearer of the standard of the French education.

From the main principles of the modern education are as follows:

- Teaching the child to teach themselves (self-learning).
- Teaching the individual child.
- Freeing the child’s personality and enhancing their creativity.

The modern education comprises a number of well-known thinkers as follows:

- The famous Italian educator “Maria Montessori” (1870_1952).
- The French educator “Édouard Claparede” (1873_1940)
- The Swiss educator “Adolphe Ferrière” (1879_1960).

B) The departing from the nihilism of the classical educational thinking

The great discovery in the modern education goes back to “Jean Jacques Rousseau” the spiritual father of the modern education directions. This discovery is represented in his said: “childhood is not just a passing stage or bridge to reach adulthood, and here lies novelty and originality in the childhood stage, and it is this originally and novelty that “Claparede” called , without

exaggeration, the (Copernican revolution in education) which is considered as the central idea that controls all the new educational forms that differentiates it from the traditional education. 9

“ Rousseau” has highly criticised the traditional education in his book. “ Emile” in which he declined the use of “ swaddle” and wondered how the child is bound from their birth with the swaddle, and bound by customs and traditions in their lives , then bound by shroud after their death. So, the human lives and dies bound while the natural education is to let the child live freely.

In this context, some of the features and peculiarities that are unique to childhood are highlighted as follows:

- The child has his own mind, and he /she is categorised by a special nature that differs from the adults ‘ nature because the child is not a young adult but he is the kid of the adult who is discriminated with unique situation unlike the adults.
- The child needs a unique a special balance.
- The child requires a childish kind of maturity.
- The children ‘s happiness and childhood are the central points in the the children education.

So, after “ Rousseau” , the modern education has discovered the humanistic and the functional value of the child.

C) The teacher’s image in the modern education

The teacher (educator) is considered as the foundation of the modern education in which he works on organising the environment that enables child (the learner) to learn and express himself in an effective and active manner. The basis of this organisation is the respect of the child ‘s spontaneity which means that the educator ‘s role does not go directly to the direct influence on the child but on the environment that surrounds them and this is what has “Maria Montessori” (1870_1952) confirmed as a sample of the modern education. 11

The teacher has a great and essential position in teaching/learning process and referring to this position that the teacher has in the educational process, he / she should have the enough care that suits his/her role. Besides his position, the teacher has different roles as follows:

- The teacher participates in educating the learner ‘s personality with its different sides. So, he provides all the teaching resources, the educational principles, and the principles of psychology to reach that.

- Also in the light of the future challenges that face the faculty of education, there is a responsibility to prepare teachers, teacher has new roles. **First of all**, his role as a planner: by working in groups and participating in selecting the particulars and the social problems of his learners, selecting the learning objectives that should be fulfilled, and choosing the suitable materials and activities that help in achieving the objectives. **Secondly**, he works as a technological person who achieves a degree in the technological knowledge for himself which he uses in the teaching and learning processes. **The third** one of the roles of the new teacher is that he works as a specialist in teaching methods by having and using modern teaching methods. **The fourth** of these roles is that he works as an organizer of the school activities. **The fifth** role is that the teacher works as an evaluator through: evaluating their performance, self-evaluation , measuring the various intelligences of learners, and preparing the evaluation files. **The sixth** role is to be a leader in the sense of a group work, supervising and directing the activities of the new teachers, accepting criticism, and accepting others. **The seventh** role is to work as a guider and adviser through helping others, providing information resources, and clarifying the problems that they may face , and train them how to solve these problems. **The eighth** of

these roles is his role as a professional in which he should have all the professional competencies and develop them to keep pace with the learner's needs. He should master the modern education thinking, participate in seminars and conferences, master a foreign language that enables him to be open to new cultures , and master a critical professional reading. **The ninth** role is to be a motivator that teaches the love of learning and school while **the tenth** role is to be a researcher that always searches for anything new that is related to teaching styles and strategies. Concerning **the eleventh** role is that should work as vicarian of the parents. So, he helps them in their school visits . He should use an open-door policy and establish good relationship between home and school, and organise the meetings between teachers and parents. In his **twelveth** role, the teacher should work as an administrator in which he participates in the school administration affairs, save the absence and presence files, and supervise the school system and the competitions in various fields. **The thirteenth** role is to be as a politician that helps in acquiring the law culture that helps him to know his rights and duties as a teacher and as a citizen. He should free himself and his learners from the fascination with the West and introduce them to their identity in the new world

system and its values freedom, tolerance, global understanding, and peace based on justice.

Some studies has shown that the successful teacher is the one who has certain characteristics and adjectives that enable him to play his role. They can be classified to :

A) Knowledge characteristics: which are intelligence, knowledge about his academic speciality and field, the fluency in expressing, harmonizing the transfer of ideas to be given with the mental level of the learners, classifying, organising, and choosing the learned topics.

B) Personal characteristics: that make the teacher near to his learners and they are: clearness and competence in teaching, fairness, patience and solidarity, caring about the learner's feelings and interacting with them . Having these characteristics of the teacher in the modern education, the teacher can achieve the teaching objectives. Among these objectives are the following:

- Preparing learners to become good citizens in the society.
- Making the learners have new skills that may benefit them in their future life.

The real situation of the Arab education and it's contemporary problems

The Arab world with its different diameters faces huge destinal and historical challenges, and the educational challenge is considered one of the main challenges that center the Arab countries. The Arab education faces many problematics that disorstruct it from its natural role in building the society which leads to its backwandation . 19

Concerning the educational system in the Arab countries, we have three main remarks as the following:

A) The educational institutions in all the Arab countries do not accommodate all the children that reached the school age. It is correct that the number of learners today is greater than the number before, however, the ratio of this number to the whole population in the Arab world is now less than it was few years ago. So, an increase in the rate of illiteracy is reproduced and as a consequence the number of uneducated people increases.

B) Education in all Arab countries does not have the necessary degree of unity and harmony which makes it devote the phenomenon of the schizogony of the cultural personality and its duality as there is no (Arab national school) in any Arab country. There are only the schools that copy different models: the

English or the French model, or a mixture of both. The (modern) schools that copy the European model suffer from the duality at the level of curricula and programs . This, the education system in the Arab countries remains as a strange system that floats on the surface of the society and rises it's problems.

C) Finally, we can add two phenomena that are separate and integral at the same time. The first one is the decrease in foreign languages education in most Arab countries. The second one is the lack of attention paid to the scientific research and the decline of its level and its ineffectiveness. The lack in mastering one or more foreign languages makes it impossible for students, in this time of the Arab culture, to keep pace with the scientific development.

Among the weaknesses of the Arab education there are :

- Prioritizing the quantitative side over the qualitative side . Algeria is considered as a good example because the number of schools has been doubled and the annumeration of pupils is big. However, this was not attached to a development in the teaching quality and grade despite the available financial capacities.

- Adopting outdated educational curricula and methods based on memory and paying attention on memorization and imitation without working on renewing those methods in a way that is suitable with the latest developments in the educational field.
- From the most important reasons of the backwandation of the Arab education is being the victim of the fatal political and ideological conflicts. The Algerian educational system is a clear example of that because it was under an ideological collision between the advocators of Frenchness and the advocators of Arabization which resulted in failure of this system and it's disability in doing its roles.

The starting points of the educational reformations in the Arab world and it's dimensions

First: The future dimension of the educational reformations in the Arab countries.

Second: The dimension of the scientific planning covering all the aspects of the educational life

Third: The realistic and life dimension of education.

Forth: The functional dimension of education and teaching or the attitude towards human.

Mainly the most important issue that we should focus on in our attempt to answer the previous question is the importance of extrapolating the extent of the presence of “ the heritage” in the Arab educational programs in general. At the end, as long as the education is the main way that forms the child ‘s personality and as long as the social education is one of the most essential means in advancing culture in general and the child ‘s culture in particular, we should - in our belief - work with a greatest clearness and rationality to make the child aware of the value of his heritage and acquire a critical sense, at the same time, so he can represent what is positive and constructive in the heritage. 24

The Arab education in the battle of modernity

It is not needed to confirm that the Arab education is facing a real crisis for many reasons. Some of these came from the circumstances that it has experienced throughout its development, and the other ones that are related to the attempts to modernize it and work through the concepts of modernity with a western logic and understanding that is far away from the Arab reality. 25

The Arab education requires a degree of philosophising so as to be more scientific and functional which means its need a theoretical and referential frame. Abdullah Abdeldayem points that it needs an Arab theory of education that is derived

from the Arab civilizational project and based on the origin and authentic scientific research in the origins (soil) and the results (harvesting) of the global Arab experience and able to build both of the nation and the citizen and contributing in achieving the great goals of the Arab nation. However, it should be noticed that the development of the philosophy of Arab education rely on the giving of the fields of political, social, and ethical philosophy to the philosophy of education and its objectives are: How does education contribute to build the Arab human being for a time human civilization? How is the intellectual vacuum in the present created by eras of civilization and cultural margins, but rather in the depth participates in its construction? Perhaps an important and influential role is assigned to the Arab teacher in particular. Many teachers who assume that they can ignore philosophy pay a heavy price for their ignorance in a form of wasted effort and unproductive and aimless work. If the leader who enters the war seeks to know the size of the enemy, then knowing the enemy’s philosophy is no less important. There is no individual whose experience is more influenced by his philosophy than the teacher. So, his responsibility lies in arming him with a clear, directed philosophy. 26

Although modernity has an external origin and therefore it is imported and not germinated , this goes not to mean at all dealing with it and melting it in the crucible of internal rebirth. This matter constitutes a

main historical challenge that faces our Arab culture despite the burdens of the past and the traditions. 27

Arab education has remained outside the circle of renaissance projects and has not received a great attention and care from the theorists and thinkers. As a consequence of this rupture between education and renaissance, the ideas and ambitions of the renaissance remained captive to the political and social elites who were not able to form a general public awareness of the renaissance issues and its concepts . Hence, the ideas of the renaissance remained imprisoned by a narrow political and intellectual elite. As a result, there renaissance ideas were unable to exercise their role or find their great social resonance that could guarantee for them the flow of spiritual and social energy that would protect them against various historical shocks. 28

The requirements of the education modernity in the Arab world

- A) The renewal of the educational buildings and structures.
- B) The innovation in the components of education and it's content.
- C) Developing quality in Arab education.
- D) Innovations in the educational policy.

- E) Innovations in the field of teachers' preparation and training. Many techniques in preparing teachers before and during work have emerged. The most important techniques are : microlearning and distance learning.
- F) Innovations in teaching methods and curricula.
- G) Innovations in the educational administration: this can be achieved by training the educational administrators during service, establishing educational research centre , or involving students in the administration of schools, institutes, universities, and higher councils for planning educational policy. 34

We are facing a major industry that needs, among other things, the development of administrative methods that has two sides:

- 1) Educational planning side
- 2) Educational administration side

It makes it clear from the features mentioned before concerning the educational innovation that Arab educational system should pay attention to the following:

- Developing the capacity of the critical thinking through the interaction and conversation and being responsible and knowing how to solve the different problems.

- Enhancing the learners ' abilities of sharing and uploading and dealing with information technologies, mastering new global foreign languages, and being able to self-learning from cradle to grave.
- Developing the ability to understand, think clearly, analyze, deduce, and link variables.
- Renewing the teacher 's competences and roles in the age of information and knowledge economy.
- Developing the non-formal education (lifelong education).
- The presence of an educational administration that has the qualities of an educational leadership .

All of these require officials and decision - makers to develop a realistic educational policy that takes into account the analysis of the current reality and its mechanism, and make plans to face the educational changes for the future. 36

The anti-modernism in the Arab education

The success of the Arab nationib its efforts to seize a worthy position among nations depends on its ability and success in defining its societies and moving them from what they are. 36

Educational action is inseparable from its social context. Education is derived from society as a historical feature of its existence. The Arab education has implemented an ideological implementation and still play a class role that reinforces trends of tyranny and coercion in general. Through its methods and ways, it works , consciously or unconsciously, to encourage the values of paralysis, differentiation, coercion, discrimination, and selection. It also , in general, disrupt the tendencies of free action, creativity, and achieving integration in the human personality.

In his regards, it could be said that the Arab education has not implemented its dynamic or renaissance role because it is still related to the narrow and limited social interests. In addition, it is still dependent to the social and political forces that maintain its existence, distinction, and dominance by ensuring the culture of idleness and beseigation of cultural advancement in Arab societies.

Arab societies are mostly dominated by social systems based on preserving aspects of the traditional existence including the absence of all the meanings and values of the democratic life in its human aspects. 37

Arab education is still incapable to keep pace with this era despite the many reformation attempts made by the Arab countries in the field of the educational development and due to the large number

of reformations, and the lack of maintaining a comprehensive evaluation process. This later makes it obtain a monotonous character that lacks a clear vision and the conveyed message.³⁸

During the last century, the Arab education played a destructive role in Arab life. This is mainly represented in three functions that oppose the principles of civilization and enlightenment. They are : the civilizational isolation, subjugating and neglecting rationality in dealing with life and self problems, and finally underestimating the value of the Arab person. This fatal trilogy is shown in the Arab curricula through the absence of the scientific intellect in dealing with life issues. They also occur in the absence of the concepts of democracy, human rights, and the role of law. All of this is also shown in the international status of Arab women, the ignorance of the values of tolerance , others' opinions, and the sense of human ³⁹

Education in most Arab countries _ despite its large numbers, the plenty of its institutes, and the high budget spent on it _ still has its traditional character. After its development, it is still close to its beginnings than to the requirements of its present and future. ⁴⁰

The past has continued in shaping the present because the emphasis remained on the data of the past until it started to convince young people that the real present

is the past that must be restored so as the nation can take its status in the present.

The used education continues to alienate children and learners, westernise them, and strip them from the human development opportunities . Education alienates Children and youngsters instead of achieving their growth and building their personalities. It alienates, oppresses , subjugates, and plays all the roles that oppose the humanistic tendencies to raise all the human 's faculties and the abilities, and develop in them the highest feelings and the brightest values.

The Arab education has failed in its work in achieving the integration and building the personality, but only an outer shell that collapses during crisis, so the personality returns to its mythical image.

Arab education is still moving in circles of darkness and playing a role that opposes the role of civilization. The Arab education _ in its actions and ways _ repels with the values of modernity and civilization. Whoever carefully considers its political function will find this image clear without any ambiguity.

Summary

If the West has achieved more than modernity in the various aspects of life and existing, then the Arab societies are required, today, to realise the hard missions of emerging from darkness of reality and backwardness to the world of light and

civilization. With all the challenges that face the Arab education that are represented in the civilizational precedence, the cultural distance recoded by the West can constitute introductions that help building our renaissance project.

The concept of educational modernity can simply be shown in the image of the human whom education wants to build. Experiments and education literature have shown consistent aspects related to describing doers and creators in economy, political and social life in a changing and explosive world.

Arab reformers in the field of education noticed that education reformations occur only in books, lessons, buildings, and laboratories. The real reformation, required in the center of the historical changes, is a civilised approach to the requirements of the historical stage, and making an effort to build the Arab people's ability to enter the cultural competition and compete other nations and peoples. The educational reformations in the Arab world have not resulted in any changes and remained partial and incomplete. This is mainly because the experiences of the educational life in the Arab world do not contain any attempts related to innovation and creativity. This later means that the educational reformation is an experience by itself that suffers from its complete failure in the different places in the Arab world. So, it is necessary to pose the issue

of the educational reformation and the Arab educational contract at the highest levels of authorities in the Arab nation. Educational reformation is not just a vision, or technical procedures, or an issue that ministries of education can , definitely, decide about . However, it is a conscious and promising political will whose final directions are made by the highest decision making authorities in this or that country.

Unless a support and blessings are gathered by the leaders of the Arab countries, this Arab contract will remain merely a document added to the number of important Arab documents that have found their easy way onto the shelves of offices and archives.

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