



The Reality of Training and Practice for Journalists in the Educational Sector in Algeria

واقع التكوين و الممارسة لإعلامي المجال التربوي في الجزائر

Dr. Souhila Dahmani¹
dehmani.souhaila@univ-khenchela.dz

Dr. Hakim Boughrara²
Boughrara.hakim@univ-medea.dz

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Article abstract:

This study was conducted to explore the reality of educational media through those involved in communication, including journalists and specialists in this field. The aim was to examine the necessity of training in educational media in Algeria and the ways this specialized type of media is practiced within Algerian media institutions. After conducting a series of open interviews with a group of directors from print, audio, and audiovisual media institutions, the study reached the following conclusions: Educational media is a relatively new specialization that began in 2015 at the University of Algiers 3 as a master's degree program, later becoming a specialization in undergraduate and doctoral studies. According to media institution directors, journalists who write for specialized media are graduates of media studies in general, not specifically specialized in educational media

Key words : Educational Media ; Media Institutions ; Journalists ; Training; Specialization.

ملخص المقال :

جاءت هذه الدراسة للتعرف على واقع الإعلام التربوي من خلال القائمين بالاتصال من صحفيين ومختصين في هذا المجال، قصد التمحيص في حقيقة التكوين في الاعلام التربوي في الجزائر و طرق ممارسة هذا النوع المتخصص داخل المؤسسات الإعلامية الجزائرية فبعد اجراء مجموعة من المقابلات المفتوحة مع مجموعة من رؤساء المؤسسات الإعلامية المكتوبة و السمعية و السمعية البصرية توصلت الدراسة إلى النتائج التالية:- تخصص الإعلام التربوي تخصص حديث النشأة أين انطلقت بواده في 2015 بجامعة الجزائر 3 كتخصص لطلبة الماستر ثم كتخصص في مسار الليسانس ثم في مسار الدكتوراه- حسب رؤساء المؤسسات الإعلامية فان الصحفيين الذي يكتبون للإعلام المتخصص هم خرجوا قسم الإعلام وليسوا متخصصين بالتحديد في الإعلام التربوي.

كلمات مفتاحية: الاعلام التربوي، المؤسسات الإعلامية، الصحفي، الاعلام المتخصص، التكوين.

1. University of Abbas Laghrour, Khenchela (Algeria)
2. University of Medea (Algeria)



Introduction

Educational media fulfills a myriad of objectives, playing a crucial role in the socio-economic and cultural development of societies. It acts as a cornerstone for numerous initiatives, offering guidance, moral support, and educational counseling. This media form enriches individuals' knowledge about various life aspects and deepens their comprehension of local and global occurrences, thereby fostering well-rounded, socially responsible personalities.

Educational institutions are dedicated to enhancing the learning experience for all community members and are committed to ongoing self-improvement. Concurrently, media outlets contribute educationally by delivering diverse programs directly into homes, inadvertently influencing socialization, education, and guidance. These programs are instrumental in transmitting values, molding behaviors and habits, and shaping public opinion among targeted demographic groups.

The mission of educational media is to circulate news, information, and credible perspectives related to community-wide or school-specific events, enrich lives with educational content, and offer guidance and advice. This is achieved by facilitating dialogue and presenting varied viewpoints through media channels, thus aiding in the development of citizens who are well-equipped to undertake their societal roles.

Furthermore, educational media is intricately linked to the educational process itself; it is an essential component, wherein journalists are entrusted with the responsibility of elevating public discourse through their academically informed contributions. This study accentuates the role of specialized journalists in educational media, exploring their training and their practical application of the craft, as seen through the lens of various editors-in-chief and heads of broadcast and audiovisual institutions.

Study Questions:

- .1 What does the term "educational media" encompass?
- .2 When was the specialization in educational media first introduced at Algerian universities?
- .3 How do leaders of media institutions assess the training provided to journalists within the educational sector?
- .4 In what manner do journalists specializing in educational media practice their craft, according to media institution heads?
- .5 What professional obstacles do journalists in the educational sector face, as identified by heads of media institutions?

To address these inquiries, we conducted a sequence of comprehensive interviews with key figures in the media industry:

- Mr. Salim Boufendassa, Editor-in-chief of El Nasr newspaper.
- Mrs. Amna Tabani, former Director of Algerian Radio from Constantine.
- Mr. Mohamed Tahar Masaoudi, Director of Al-Watan newspaper.
- Mr. Hussein Lakraa, Editor-in-chief of Echourouk newspaper.
- Mr. Noufel Chayta, Editor-in-chief at the Regional Station Constantine.

1. Educational Media:

Educational media encompasses various definitions, each highlighting a different aspect of this multifaceted field:

- **First Direction:** This perspective characterizes educational media as "the development that has occurred in educational information systems, and the methods of documenting, classifying, and

utilizing them." This definition, however, is critiqued for being more closely aligned with the concept of educational information systems rather than educational media itself. The fields of educational media are identical to those of the educational process, where all scientific, professional, and social knowledge can be subjects for educational processes and research, and therefore, also form the content of educational media.

• **Second Direction:** This approach broadens the scope of educational media to include the educational responsibilities of general media. Critics of this viewpoint argue that it is more opinion-based and lacks a comprehensive definition of educational media. It highlights two main issues: the criteria for evaluating general media content and the ethical and educational commitments that should underpin media practices.

• **Third Direction:** Educational media, in this framework, is seen as a committed effort to utilize communication technologies and sciences to fulfill educational objectives without undermining the integrity and gravity of education. It strives to prevent the artistic elements of communication from overpowering educational content. This definition, prevalent among some scholars in the Arab Gulf states, faces criticism for being overly conciliatory, shaped by the ongoing debate between educators and media professionals over the ownership of the term. Additionally, it blurs the lines between communication and media and neglects critical elements such as the substance of educational media messages.

• **Fourth Direction:** A perspective endorsed by the Arab Development Institute suggests that educational media is fundamentally rooted in various platforms such as educational programs on radio and television, as well as in magazines, newsletters, lectures, and seminars. This definition captures the essence of media's role in education by highlighting its diverse channels and formats. (Rifaat Aref Al Dabaa, 2009, p.33)

1.1 Objectives of Educational Media:

1. To Elucidate and illuminate educational policies, thereby enhancing their effectiveness, enrichment, and public engagement.
2. To Fulfill the aims of contemporary education, which is grounded in scientific principles and oriented towards fostering an innovative society. Media has pivoted to these goals following the inadequacies of traditional educational methods.
3. To Promote educational synergy between home and school environments, establishing robust communication channels that relay perspectives between these foundational institutions.
4. To Cultivate a sense of community, dissolve barriers of individualism and self-centeredness, and develop socially interactive individuals. This objective seeks to counteract the stagnation that has increasingly characterized school environments due to outdated teaching methods.
5. To Shape a public opinion that is unified in its goals, tendencies, and interests, fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose.
6. To Enrich cultural life and participate actively within it, fulfilling the recommendations of specialized education that advocate for a linkage between cultural and educational policies of nations.
7. To Achieve rapid and effective communication with educators in both sectors (schools and adult education) because the training sessions and informational enrichment provided by educational bodies are often insufficient, with media stepping in to bridge this competency gap.
8. To Develop artistic taste and a sense of beauty, and to hone hobbies through enrichment and practice, thereby fostering an environment where artistic endeavors can flourish.
9. To Establish ethical values such as love for freedom, sacrifice for it, self-reliance, and the right to express oneself, which are fundamental for nurturing a just society.
10. To Discover early journalistic and media talents among students and hone these skills for presentation to specialized media institutions, promoting a nurturing ground for future media professionals.

- .11 To Reinforce school curricula and clarify them in a simple, practical manner, steering clear of dryness and rote learning, which enhances understanding and retention.
- .12 To Support various school activities by participating in, critiquing, evaluating, and writing about them, which significantly boosts their effectiveness and becomes a fundamental factor in the success of the educational process itself.
- .13 To Habituate students to writing, encourage continuous reading, and equip them with knowledge that helps them pave their way in life, thereby broadening their horizons and opening their minds, making them more effective in public life.
- .14 To Assist educators in clarifying concepts that cannot be adequately addressed in the classroom, and to provide opportunities to discover students' inclinations and interests, which can guide their educational and career paths.
- .15 The Use of media in education allows for the utilization of as many illustrative means as possible, opening new horizons in the use of specific educational aids.
16. To Assist educators in their work and complement the efforts and cooperation of students in their homes by reinforcing the information they receive at school, creating a cohesive educational experience. (Mahyiddin Al-Lazki, 2020, p.23)

Media Training Strategy

Kawthar Kojak defined strategy in education as a general action plan established to achieve specific objectives and to prevent the realization of undesirable outcomes. Abdullah Shaqil noted that teaching strategies refer to the teacher's movements and actions within the classroom, which occur regularly, while Yaseen Qandeel indicated that teaching strategies are an interwoven set of both specialized and general teaching methods that are appropriate to the objectives of the classroom situation, using minimal resources and attaining the highest quality level.

Thus, teaching strategy consists of systematic and sequential procedural steps that are comprehensive, flexible, and considerate of the nature of the learners; it represents the actual dynamics within a lesson through the utilization of available resources to achieve desired educational outcomes (Riqad Halima, 2020, p.234).

The strategic approach begins by outlining the features and content of training processes in manners that vary with each stage the trainee experiences, ensuring that these processes are harmonious and coherent within a unified framework that ultimately channels into the predetermined and specifically defined objectives of the training (Ahmed Ghorbi, 2021, p.88).

I. 2. The Experience of Educational Media in Algeria:

Algeria's journey with educational media, although modest when compared to global standards, began by targeting school materials aimed at student audiences through educational radio and awareness programs .

This initiative saw the launch of educational television in the 1969-1970 academic year, initially focusing on Arabic literacy programs for adults and gradually expanding to encompass literary and scientific content. (Educational Radios in the Arab World, 1976). The written press's role in education is less clearly defined, but it is noteworthy that figures like Ibn Badis utilized the press to elucidate correct Islamic concepts .



This effort was part of Sheikh Ibn Badis's broader educational endeavors, which included mosque education and sermons, using the press as a tool to extend his reach and influence, particularly through educational columns in newspapers like Al-Shihab, which he began in 1925.

Under the banner "Majalis al-Tadhkir," Ibn Badis's editorials shared insights from his interpretative lessons, positioning the reformist press of his era at the forefront of educational and instructional media. This platform served as a significant conduit for battling ideological opponents and disseminating his ideas and teachings.

Following independence, the focus on media within the educational sector varied significantly. In 1964, Decree No. 64-222 organized the Ministry of National Guidance, which included a Press and News Agency department, primarily focusing on media's role in national guidance. The subsequent shift in 1965 redirected these responsibilities to the Directorate of Planning and Guidance, and by 1971, cultural affairs were allocated to the newly formed Ministry of Information and Culture, diminishing the educational roles previously held by the Ministry of Education.

In 1992, the Ministry of Education reevaluated its approach to media within schools, aiming to broaden its impact to bolster educational success. Media was reconceptualized as a critical pillar in school guidance, designed to integrate educational processes from the early stages of schooling .

This integration aimed to furnish children with a diverse array of academic and professional knowledge and skills, enhancing their capabilities, inclinations, and interests. Such efforts were directed at helping students make informed decisions when constructing their academic and future career paths. (Kahina Afrajan, 2017, p.36).

2. The Specialty of Educational Media in Algerian Universities:

Academic media training in Algeria originated in 1964 with the establishment of the National Higher School of Journalism. In 1974, it merged with the Institute of Journalism Studies, resulting in the creation of a single institution called the Institute of Political and Media Sciences. Then, in 1983, a separation took place, leading to the founding of the Institute of Media and Communication Sciences (Daoudi Widad, 2021, p.35).

The specialty of educational media was inaugurated in 2015 at the University of Algeria 3, under the supervision of Professor Aicha Boukrisa. It was initially introduced at the master's level within the specialized media programs.

This academic offering was unique to the University of Algeria 3, from which over 200 students have since graduated with a specialization in educational media. The creation of this specialty was particularly driven by the need for media to cover and support the extensive educational processes and contribute to social development.

The program began exclusively at the master's level and later expanded to include bachelor's degree offerings, with plans to further extend into doctoral-level specializations, reflecting the university's commitment to advancing this field. ("Educational Media: Promising Ideas," Al-Ahrar Newspaper). (Abdelouahab Boukhanoufa, 2021, p.35)

3. Sample of the Study:

For this study, a selection of media institutions and their officials was strategically chosen to provide a broad perspective on the implementation and impact of educational media within Algeria. The individuals selected include:

- Mr. Salim Boufendassa, Editor-in-chief of El Nasr newspaper.
- Mrs. Amna Tabani, former Director of Algerian Radio from Constantine.
- Mr. Mohamed Tahar Masaoudi, Director of Al-Watan newspaper.
- Mr. Hussein Lakraa, Editor-in-chief of Echourouk newspaper.



Mr. Noufel Chayata, Editor-in-chief at the Regional Station Constantine.
These selections were made based on several criteria:

El Nasr and Echourouk newspapers are renowned for their long-standing reputation and popularity, maintained by a dynamic team of both seasoned and young journalists.

Al-Watan newspaper, published in French, consistently includes a section dedicated to educational topics, highlighting its commitment to educational journalism.

Algerian Radio from Constantine stands out as one of the most listened-to regional radio stations, renowned for its comprehensive coverage of events in Constantine Province.

The Regional Station from Constantine is notable for its robust team of journalists, encompassing a mix of experienced and emerging talents.

4. Data Collection Tools:

The Primary tool employed in this study was the open interview, which was selected because it allows the researcher to gather as much information as possible. this approach is particularly vital given that the topic of educational media is relatively new and has few references available. (foudhil deliou,2024, p.99).

The Method proved to be the most reliable for extracting information from media institutions. This tool was implemented through the preparation of a set of open-ended questions, followed by the identification of the media institutions involved. The locations and times for the interviews were arranged after obtaining approval from the heads of these institutions.

5. Study Results:

The Data obtained from the interviews were analyzed and categorized based on the specific characteristics of each media institution involved in the study.

5.1 The Specialist Journalist in the Educational Field in Algerian Newspapers:

In a detailed telephone interview with Mr. Mohamed Tahar Masaoudi, Director of Al-Watan newspaper, it was revealed that the newspaper allocates a special page and a dedicated corner specifically for:

- University affairs and student concerns.
- Publication of scientific research.
- Doctoral results.
- Coverage of conferences organized by various Algerian universities.
- Employment competitions and other academic-related events. (Interview with Mr. Mohamed Tahar Masaoudi, May 15, 2023, at 18:00)

Another interview was conducted with Mr. Hussein Lakraa, Editor-in-chief of Echourouk newspaper, who detailed that their coverage extends to educational news across all educational stages, including university level. While Echourouk does not have a specialized corner for educational news, it actively keeps abreast of all pertinent developments and covers a wide array of events such as university events, scientific symposiums, the national book fair, and more.

Additionally, the newspaper is keen on following decisions from the Ministry of Education and publishes the academic calendar and exam schedules, with a particular focus on crucial examinations. During the baccalaureate exams, Echourouk notably dedicates specific pages at the end of each edition to publish relevant topics and solutions, thereby engaging with its readership and providing valuable educational content.

This initiative is well recognized among the Algerian family, particularly during the baccalaureate period when the newspaper publishes varied subjects along with their solutions. Mr. Hussein Lakraa also mentioned that the newspaper collaborates with secondary school teachers who supply the topics and solutions. (Interview with Mr. Hussein Lakraa, May 2, 2023)

5.2 The Specialist Journalist in the Educational Field in Radio:

In a comprehensive telephone interview with Mrs. Amna Tabani, Director of the Regional Radio of Constantine, she highlighted that while all journalists at the station are trained in media, none are specifically educated in the educational sector. Despite this, the radio station actively engages in covering educational news through its national plan, dedicating substantial segments of its programming to educational content and additional segments specifically for students. (Interview with Mrs. Amna Tabani, February 2, 2023)

5.3 The Specialist Journalist in the Educational Field in Algerian Television:

During a detailed interview with Mr. Noufel Chayta at the Regional Station in Constantine, he noted that although many journalists at the station are graduates of media colleges, there is no specific specialization in educational media at the station.

The station's coverage is extensive and daily, with journalists covering a wide range of topics from politics and culture to economic issues, except for sports journalists who focus solely on their field. However, when events related to education arise, they make concerted efforts to cover them adequately.

Mr. Chayta also mentioned that the station does not produce specific educational programs but provides coverage that aligns with new developments in the educational sector, especially during examination periods and related activities. Additionally, the parent station, Algerian Television, consistently broadcasts announcements concerning the academic and university calendar, including holiday schedules, registration periods for exams, critical examination results, and university enrollment dates for baccalaureate graduates. (Interview with Mr. Noufel Chayta, January 4, 2023, at 9:00 AM)

5.4 Challenges Faced by Specialist Journalists in the Educational Field:

In an interview with the editor-in-chief of Al-Nasr newspaper, Mr. Salim Boufendassa, he explained several issues facing educational media in Algeria.

- First: Issues related to the ambiguity of the term "educational media."
- Second: Issues related to the planning and funding of educational media.
- Third: Issues related to the bodies responsible for educational media.
- Fourth: Problems specific to the forces implementing educational media.

Firstly, regarding the term:

Despite several years since the establishment of departments in universities and the graduation of students, there remains a lack of clarity about the real concept of educational media, with some confusion in understanding.

Secondly, Regarding planning issues:

Educational media lacks planning. Planning for educational media should be linked to the prevailing and desired educational goals. Moreover, there is no integrated system that encompasses all the devices and bodies involved in a single institution to plan, monitor its implementation, and evaluate its performance.

The control of some ruling regimes over media in some developing countries, turning them into propaganda tools, strips them of their appeal and makes them unable to deliver the developmental message convincingly.

There are no media plans that align with educational plans. The curricula need revising as they do not achieve the necessary integration between the educational and media communities.

Thirdly, Issues Related to Responsible Agencies:

Some officials do not recognize the educational potential of the media, which severely restricts the allocation of necessary material and human resources essential for the development of educational media initiatives.

Amidst significant advancements in communication technologies, there is a notable absence of a dedicated national information network for educational media, hindering effective dissemination and engagement.

There is a pronounced deficit in the material and human resources required to establish and maintain printing presses and broadcasting stations for radio and television within educational institutions like schools and universities, as well as equipping these facilities with modern technology.

Fourthly, Human Resource Challenges in Implementing Educational Media:

- **Teaching:**

There is a critical shortage of teaching staff and specialized experts in the field of educational media. Often, the faculty appointed to teach these subjects are from general media backgrounds, resulting in educational content that closely resembles general media content and diverges from specific educational objectives. This misalignment significantly impedes the effectiveness of educational media teaching. Additionally, there is a noted scarcity of scholarships for students pursuing specializations in educational media.

- **Colleges and Departments:**

There are currently no dedicated departments or colleges that focus solely on educational media. The only available specialization at the master's level under the media department is offered at the University of Algeria 3, where most trainers lack specific specialization in educational media.

Regarding the audiovisual field, Mr. Noufel Chayta, Editor-in-chief of news at the Regional Television Station in Constantine, highlighted several critical observations regarding the state of educational media in the audiovisual sector:

Despite Algeria's early independence and initial activities in the audiovisual field, its experience with educational media lags significantly behind those countries that specialize in it.

There is an absence of a cohesive plan that integrates educational institutions with Algerian audiovisual media, which undermines potential synergies.

Educational and informative programs occupy a minimal presence on the media landscape compared to entertainment and news programs.

Unlike the recently launched Knowledge Channel, which has been added to the Algerian channel bouquet, there are no channels in Algeria exclusively dedicated to educational content.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person education was suspended, the Ministry of Education and Training collaborated with Algerian Television and a group of teachers to broadcast lessons on television. However, due to the lack of interactive features enabling communication between students and teachers on television, the effectiveness of these televised lessons in achieving educational outcomes remains uncertain.

5.5 The Reality of Training in Media Institutions

Mr. Salim Boufendassa clarified that training for journalists in the educational field is virtually non-existent compared to other specialties. Thus, El Nasr institution in its organizational plan aims to train journalists through:

On-the-job training:

El Nasr sets up a training schedule in all fields with instructors and trained journalists from both within the country and abroad.



Overseas training:

El Nasr newspaper sends its journalists abroad for short-term training to learn the nuances of media and the latest developments, whether in the educational field or other areas. (Interview with Mr. Salim Boufendassa, June 5, 2024, at 13:30)

From the interviews we conducted with various heads of written, auditory, and audiovisual media institutions, we arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Educational media is a relatively recent field that began in 2015 at the University of Algiers 3, initially offered as a specialization for master's students, and subsequently extended to bachelor's and doctoral programs.
2. According to heads of media institutions, journalists who write for specialized media typically graduate from media departments and are not specifically trained in educational media.
3. Educational media is not a consistent feature in newspapers (with the exception of Al-Watan newspaper). Publications on education are merely responses to current educational events.
4. There is a noticeable absence of specialized educational media in newspapers, television, or radio because the leaders of these media institutions prefer to focus on news and entertainment rather than educational content.
5. According to statements from heads of institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic compelled Algerian media, across all its channels and mediums, to intensify educational programs for all educational levels to compensate for the absence of physical schooling. These programs were discontinued once students returned to school.
6. The control of some media by authoritarian regimes in several underdeveloped countries, converting them into propaganda tools, reduces their attractiveness and effectiveness in delivering a persuasive developmental message.
7. There are no media plans that align with educational strategies, reflecting a misalignment between educational goals and media planning.

Conclusion:

If the renaissance of general media is primarily based on tremendous technological advancements, it becomes imperative for the leaders of educational media to keep pace with this media revolution. They must rely on its methods and technologies and enhance their practices as facilitators of educational media, thereby guiding students to elevate themselves so that they may engage in various media arts—ranging from journalism and broadcasting to debates, student parliament, and other diverse fields.

For advanced journalism, it is essential for educational media practitioners to believe that their role is both crucial and consequential, as the lofty and noble human values invariably emerge from the mantle of educational media nurtured within our universities. Educational media plays a vital role in developing students' skills during their studies, particularly in the realms of school journalism, school broadcasting, and debates, thereby identifying students with unique and outstanding innovations, which in turn prepares and harnesses their future potential.

Educational media is a process of disseminating and presenting accurate information, clear facts, truthful news, precise topics, and carefully curated documentation to the school audience—especially students—through available school media outlets such as journalism and school broadcasting. These efforts often aim to elevate students' emotions and feelings, enhance their intellectual and cultural capacities, and foster spiritual and social values, thereby building well-rounded personalities. Additionally, this process provides opportunities for participation and expression, equips them with new knowledge, and assists them in confronting current events on local, regional, and global scales.

Moreover, educational media aids students in studying, diagnosing, and addressing their academic challenges in a manner that achieves overall educational harmony, responsive to the demands of the contemporary era. It underscores the necessity for continuous and perpetual development and modernization of the educational process, in line with the modern concept of education—which centers on the student's personal growth and their cognitive, emotional, and physical maturation.

All those who follow the evolution of educational systems agree that most countries spare no effort in raising the quality of the educational process, based on the premise that human beings represent the optimal investment and that their development is attainable only through quality education.

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