

Enabling Students To Engage With Media And Communication A Field Study Of A Sample Of Primary School Teachers In Algeria

Zina Djadoaun

¹Professor Lecturer A, University Abbès Laghrour Khenchela,
Member of the Laboratory of Historical Studies and Research
on Heritage and Civilisation (Algeria).

The E-mail Author: djadoaun.zina@univ-khenchela.dz

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Abstract:

This study entitled “Empowering Students to Engage with Media and Communication” is a field study conducted on a sample of primary school teachers in Algeria. Media education has become a modern necessity aimed at developing students and enhancing their abilities to optimally engage with media, which now constitutes a cultural and cognitive background for students. With the immense development of media and communication technology, many concepts have changed, including the concept of educational media, which initially referred to learning from the media. This concept has evolved to include warnings about its dangers (“defence”) and has now shifted to include empowerment. However, the contradiction and conflict between the school system and the media system persists, leaving this concept shrouded in ambiguity. While we await a serious consideration of this concept and its adoption in our schools within a clear strategy, the importance of media literacy is widely acknowledged. Nevertheless, this concept remains largely absent in Algerian schools, resulting in a limited role for teachers, who engage in personal initiatives in the classroom, mainly focused on awareness and guidance, as the results of this study show.

Keywords: Media education, teacher’s role, students, media.

INTRODUCTION

As various media outlets increasingly compete with, and often outperform, socialisation institutions, especially as the role of family, school and mosque, among other traditional socialisation institutions, diminishes, more space has been given to media and communication channels, especially television. Several studies have shown that television leads in

attracting audiences, especially children. In view of these factors, it is essential to discuss media education in order to teach individuals how to deal with the media. Media now guide and influence individuals in different areas, making it necessary to distinguish between the use of media as learning tools and media education, which enables children to learn skills for interacting with media technologies and their content. Media have become part of the family and serve as a cultural background for children. It is therefore crucial to include educational media in the curriculum, a call that UNESCO has been making since the 1960s.

First: The methodological part of the study

The problem:

In this study we will examine the role of the teacher in the media education of students to enable them to engage appropriately with media and communication technology. The influence of the media, especially television, in shaping and standardising children's behaviour is well known. The current developments we are experiencing have changed many concepts in order to adapt them to this progress; education no longer comes only from the family and school, but has television as a competitor that often surpasses them. The role of the teacher is therefore crucial. It is essential for teachers to contribute in this area and to help create a culture of engagement with media and communication technologies. This study aims to answer the following main question:

Is there a role for the teacher in teaching students to use media and communication technologies?

This question has been broken down into the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent does the teacher contribute to teaching students how to engage with media and communication technologies?
2. What is the role of the teacher in media education?
3. Does the teacher encourage students to critique media content?

In order to answer these questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Main hypothesis:

- The teacher plays an important role in creating a culture of engagement with media and communication technology.

Sub-hypotheses:

1. The teacher contributes to media education through advice and guidance.
2. Teachers use their position to guide students in their use of media and communication technologies.
3. The teacher encourages students to critique media content.

Significance of the study:

The significance of this study lies in the contradiction between the two worlds in which the student lives, both of which attract the student to their realm. This highlights the importance of media education as a centre of balance, enabling learners to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to engage appropriately with media and communication technologies. The aim is not only to warn of the dangers of media content for morals, values and identity, but also to equip students with sufficient skills to enable them to be effective partners in the appropriate use of these media, especially in the face of the technological revolution that demands radical changes.

Aims of the study:

This study aims to reveal the extent of the teacher's contribution and role in media education as a social partner in education, with the aim of fostering a culturally aware generation capable of engaging with media rather than merely consuming what is presented.

Study population and sample:

In order for any study to produce realistic and objective results, it is essential to have a precise definition of the original study population, which will allow the type of sample to be defined and information and data to be collected from its members using appropriate research tools. In this study on the role of teachers and their contribution to the media education of students, the research population consists of all primary school teachers in Algeria.

Since it is impossible to list all the members of the research population, and given the constraints and limited time of the researcher, the researcher relied on a purposive (non-probability) sample. This type of sample consists of specific members who accurately represent the original population. The researcher can select specific areas that have statistical characteristics and advantages that represent the population, leading to results that closely resemble those that could be obtained by a complete survey of the research population¹.

¹- Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah Al-Wasel: Scientific Research: Its Steps and Stages, Methods and Approaches (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Education, 1st ed., 1999), p. 56.

The researcher deliberately selects the members of this sample on the basis of the characteristics or attributes that serve the objectives of the study².

The sample was chosen as follows:

- The researcher purposively selected 7 primary schools: El-Arabi Tebessi, Farisi Mohamed Ben Ajeroud, Chouchane Louasif, El-Alimi Ahmed, Djebali Boujemaa, Bouabida Ahmed and the Jouini Hafnawi school complex.

- The researcher prepared 102 questionnaires to be distributed to the study sample, and with the help of some students, the questionnaires were distributed to the teachers of these schools as follows 17 questionnaires for El-Arabi Tebessi School, the oldest and one of the largest schools in El-Akila Municipality, from which the researcher collected 15 completed questionnaires; 17 questionnaires for teachers of Farisi Mohamed Ben Ajeroud School, of which 15 were collected; 8 questionnaires for Chouchane Louasif School, of which 8 were collected; 15 questionnaires for teachers at Jouini Hafnawi School Complex, of which 12 were retrieved; 15 questionnaires for teachers at Djebali Boujemaa School, of which 12 were retrieved; 15 questionnaires for teachers at Bouabida Ahmed School, of which 14 were retrieved; and 17 questionnaires for teachers at El-Alimi Ahmed School, of which 16 were retrieved. The researcher retrieved a total of 92 questionnaires, excluding 10 that were invalid due to incomplete responses. Due to the lack of engagement of some teachers, an interview-based questionnaire was conducted with the sample, assisted by some students, as mentioned earlier.

Methodology and tools of the study:

This study used a survey method because such studies aim to describe a specific phenomenon or topic over a period of time in order to obtain scientific results that are interpreted objectively in accordance with the data of the phenomenon.

It is also defined as: the method based on the analysis of sufficient and accurate information about a specific phenomenon or topic, and over known periods of time, in order to obtain scientific results that are interpreted objectively and in accordance with the actual data of the phenomenon³. As already mentioned, the data collection was based on a questionnaire, which is a printed form containing a

²- Same reference, p. 138.

³- Mohamed Mahmoud Al-Dhaniyat et al.: Scientific Research Methodology: Rules, Stages, and Applications (Lebanon: Dar Wael for Publishing, 2nd ed., 1999), p. 46.

series of questions addressed to a sample of individuals on a subject or subjects related to the objectives of the study⁴.

Operational concepts of the study:

Media education: In this study, media education or media literacy refers to an empowering project that enables individuals, especially children, to understand modern media and communication and to recognise how content is created, enabling them to go beyond mere fascination and to engage appropriately with its content. Therefore, media education prepares and trains students to interact effectively, to critique consciously and to act independently and responsibly in a society dominated and influenced by media and their technologies.

Role: Linguistically, role is defined as “the return of something to its original state”⁵. Ralph Linton believes that status is a set of rights and responsibilities and that role is the dynamic aspect of status. To act according to these rights and duties is to play the role. A person’s role in any situation is determined by a set of expectations held by others as well as by the individual himself; it is “the sum of behaviours associated with a particular social status”⁶.

At the group level, the role is “a model of behaviour prescribed for all individuals who share a common social position (employer, peasant, trader, etc.). This role is accepted by all and reflects common and shared values and norms”⁷.

The role referred to in this study refers to: the set of expectations that the teacher has to guide the learners and to carry out activities that reinforce these expectations. In other words, the role is the expectation that the teacher tries to instil in his/her pupils, in order to have an impact, especially in terms of media education.

Second: The theoretical part of the study

Importance and objectives of media education:

The school was the primary source of knowledge and competed with the family in education before the widespread emergence of mass media, especially television, which has become a competitor to both the family and the school in raising, socialising and educating children. Consequently, media education emerged as a necessity imposed by the need

⁴- Mohamed Abdel Hamid: Audience Study in Media Research(Cairo: Alam Al-Kutub, 1993), p. 183.

⁵- Ibn Manzur: Lisan al-Arab (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, Vol. 2, 2005), p. 310.

⁶- Atef Gheit: Sociology Dictionary (University of Alexandria: Dar Al-Ma'rifah Al-Jami'iyyah, n.d., 1996), pp. 390, 391.

⁷- Le Petit Larousse (France: Paris, 2006), p. 123.

to keep pace with media developments, which simply refers to how to deal with media.

Initially, media education aimed to use media for educational purposes, i.e. to use media as teaching tools. Over time, it evolved to focus on protecting children and young people from the dangers the media pose to their value and moral systems. It adopted the protection of children from the media and advocated the rejection of any content that was inappropriate to societal norms, values and ethics. This development led to the need to learn how to deal with the media, in line with the progress of the media and the expansion of educational concepts that have evolved with the changes brought about by media and communication technology.

Media education focuses on empowering individuals with the skills to engage with media. Empowerment serves as a means for students to reconcile what is presented on television with what they receive in school. "Intelligent nations strive to develop human minds to think, to innovate, to improve what exists and to create the new; minds are the true wealth of our age, for they are inexhaustible and never outdated. Investing in them always leads to progress"⁸. Furthermore, empowerment "depends on changing social relations towards greater balance and stability, with an emphasis on cognitive empowerment, which is a necessary precursor to empowerment in other areas"⁹.

Media literacy has been a concept since the 1960s and has been a concern of UNESCO. Heimowitz Hild, speaking at the 1960 Conference on Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility, stated: "If nothing is done to create a link between the world of the child who spends two or three hours a day watching television and the world of the teacher, the gap will widen, which is unfortunate because the child lives in two separate worlds instead of one. I believe that it is largely the responsibility of teacher training institutions to discuss with future teachers how best to achieve this"¹⁰. This is an indirect reference to the need for a link between the media world and the school world. Although Heimowitz did not specifically mention media education, the concerns that existed in

⁸- Frédéric Ma'atouq: Dictionary of Social Sciences (Lebanon: Beirut, n.d., n.d.), p. 286.

⁹- Shadia Al-Qanawi: Arab Women and Opportunities for Creativity (Cairo: Dar Qabaa for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, n.d.), p. 11.

¹⁰- Zahra Eissa: The Reality of Educational Projects Addressed to Women in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Arab Women Organization, p. 2, available at the link: http://arabwomenorg.org/Content/surveystudies/eduBahrain.pdf, accessed on October 22, 2023.

European countries in the 1960s are now being experienced in Algeria.

The importance of media literacy is underlined by its practical necessity. The media have become an integral part of people's daily lives, and it is their right to acquire practical skills to engage with these media that will accompany them throughout their lives, just as it is their right to understand the basics of their language used to communicate with members of their community or to learn the essentials of their religion. It is therefore essential to include media education in the curricula at all levels of education, in cooperation with experts in education and the media.

The following points may also be included:¹¹

- Media education has gained its importance from the authority of the media and its influence on the whole world.
- There is a need for awareness on how to deal with media after the technological revolution that has increased the importance of media. With the collapse of temporal and spatial boundaries, the existence of an empowering project to learn and teach how to interact with media has become essential.
- Media literacy is a project that accompanies individuals throughout their lives, not just a subject to be studied and forgotten. Media have permeated all aspects of our lives and all stages.
- Given the overwhelming amount of studies and research that focus on media use and warn about its dangers and content on the morals and values of our children and youth, there is an urgent need for studies, research and theories that guide us on how to engage with the media rather than just warning against it.
- It is essential to enable children and young people to use their cognitive abilities in their interaction with the media and to promote a culture of dialogue and practical participation in the media. This prevents them from being mere consumers and elevates them to the levels of processing and production that are fundamental to engaging with media.
- Cultivating a critical spirit in this target group, encouraging them not to consume and accept everything that is presented through media and communication.

Aims of media education:

¹¹- André Glucksmann: *The World of Television Between Beauty and Violence*, translated by Wajih Samaan Abd Al-Masih, 2000, p. 8.

Media education involves teaching students how to read, analyse and deconstruct media texts in a similar way to teaching any other subject, such as mathematics, civics or Arabic. It helps students to use media intelligently, to distinguish and evaluate their content, to analyse their models and to understand their uses.

Media education is a process of building and guiding students, developing their skills and abilities, and bringing them to a level of maturity in dealing with different media. The aim is to liberate students from mere fascination and passive consumption of diverse media content, enabling them to reach a level of cultural awareness that protects them from media chaos. It enables them to control their understanding of media content. A media-literate student can use media and communication tools, including the Internet and social networks, consciously and responsibly, evaluating and critiquing everything they receive from media and communication sources. This enables them to use these tools accurately and creatively, while being responsible with all information.

In this way, they achieve a positive pragmatism, if you like: they take from the media only what is useful to them, and they engage in play, culture, learning and interaction with awareness and skill. The following can also be added:

- Identify the sources of media texts and their political, social, commercial and cultural aims and the context in which they appear.
- Analyse and critically evaluate media material and produce your own media content.
- Understand and interpret the messages and values conveyed by the media.
- To access or advocate access to media for the purposes of reception and production.
- Selecting appropriate media to enable students to communicate their media messages or stories and to enable them to reach their target audience.
- To develop skills in recognising how reality is represented through media and communication and to understand how it is constructed, as well as the nature of media and its technologies.
- Identify the techniques used in the media, how to decode them, analyse their content and how to broadcast and present their messages.

- Understand the principles of semiotics, the positioning of images and colours, and the psychological activities of the audience.
- Develop the ability to synthesise information and distinguish between reality and fiction.
- To recognise the different sources of media content, the forms of media messages and their different formats.
- To provide learners with results and statistics on the impact of different media on behaviour, opinions and attitudes in different segments of society.

The teacher and the duality of “education” and “media and communication”:

Media education is a project of empowerment for the behaviour of individuals who are influenced by four forces: the media, the family, the school and the street, enabling them to balance these forces.

The school is one of the main institutions of socialisation and has long been recognised as a source of knowledge. It has undergone many changes, especially in the material and technical fields, but it has maintained its status as a source of socialisation and the distribution of knowledge until the late twentieth century. This period saw the emergence of the concept of parallel schooling, which led to intense competition between media and schools. This competition has led to both clashes and a degree of convergence between the media and education systems.

The relationship between schools and the media and communications began with tension; educators often viewed the media with suspicion and disdain. Most educators did not look favourably on students’ engagement with media and consistently downplayed the knowledge and usefulness of media¹². Marshall McLuhan pointed out that “the school, because of its defensive attitude, is indifferent and unaware of ongoing developments, which widens the gap between it and the media¹³”. George Friedman warned that “students have become aware that they learn the basics through their interaction with the media. They realise that television will serve as a tool for individual integration and mutual communication, whether with others or with social systems. Therefore, they attend educational institutions only to

¹²- Fahd bin Abdul Rahman Al-Shummari: *Media Education: How to Deal with the Media?*, 1st ed. (King Fahd National Library, 1431/2010), pp. 20, 21.

¹³- Same reference, p. 83.

maintain a good relationship with the adults they are expected to obey¹⁴”.

The school turned its back on the media, considering the cultural content it disseminated and promoted as superficial and trivial. It saw media as an activity rather than as meaningful content. This lack of coherence led to the school becoming isolated from its environment. However, rapid developments have allowed media to occupy an important place in the lives of individuals, especially children. This necessitated a reconsideration of the school's attitude towards the media; the rupture was not permanent, allowing perspectives to emerge that called for a re-evaluation of the educational role of teachers and the need for schools to open up to the media.

As a result of these trends, new concepts such as “education through media” and “education about media” emerged. The separation between media and schools became unproductive as media, especially television, became a significant presence in students' daily lives, occupying a large part of their interests and contributing to the formation of their knowledge, values and behaviour. Consequently, some actors in the education sector have advocated the integration of the media in educational practices and have emphasised the need to provide teachers with the necessary skills to enable students to use these media effectively.

Today, teachers have to prepare students and provide them with sufficient guidance to help them deal with the media. Teachers cannot ignore the role and importance of media in the lives of their students. Friedman pointed out that students feel they are constantly informed about global events and believe they are knowledgeable. This is one of the main challenges for teachers and schools in general, as Friedman's concept of the “parallel school” (“L'école parallèle”)¹⁵ highlights. To avoid exclusion and maintain credibility, teachers need to integrate themselves into the world of their pupils. Patrick Mendelson stated: “Children today are born into a culture whose fundamental icon is the click, and it is the duty of teachers to integrate themselves into the world of their students”¹⁶.

The challenge for teachers today is to successfully inculcate in students a culture of media use. Many schools have succeeded in teaching students the skills to use information technology in

¹⁴ Marshall McLuhan, cited by Louis Porcher: *Towards Media Dictatorship?* (Paris: Hâtier, Profil Collection, 1976), p. 51.

¹⁵ Georges Friedmann: *School and Mass Communications: Opinions, Documents, Debates* (Communications, 2, 1963), pp. 123, 124. Available at the link: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/comm_0588-8018_1963_num_2_1_952](https://www.persee.fr/doc/comm_0588-8018_1963_num_2_1_952). Retrieved on 05 october 2023.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.(124).

line with the changes brought about by media and communication technology. The real challenge, however, is to teach students how to interact with media, rather than just focusing on the use of these tools or technologies. The criticism directed at both schools and teachers from various quarters, blaming them for the crisis and decline that society is experiencing today, is an unfair criticism. There is a need to rethink the educational curriculum and the need to adapt it to the developments that have taken place on several fronts.

The aim is not simply to introduce audiovisual media into schools, as has been promoted in the past by various experiments in different countries with educational television, school radio, newspapers and theatre. These experiments did not last long and their use as media activities in schools failed to achieve the objectives set for many reasons. One of the main reasons is that students and their parents perceive these media as an entertainment background, rather than as a source of knowledge that the school has traditionally represented without competition. Pupils spend hours in front of the media at home, only to find it waiting for them at school.

The aim is therefore not just to use them, but to educate students in how to engage with them, to understand their nature and how they work, and to teach them to understand, interpret, analyse and critique media content in a way that is comparable to the knowledge acquired by students in faculties, institutes and departments of media and communication studies. "In fact, media literacy is much more than a field or a study programme added to the educational system; it is a comprehensive educational project that reflects the new design of contemporary schools. Media literacy and the educational project it promotes are on the way to becoming one of the fundamental challenges in the reflection on the directions that modern schools should prioritise in order to meet the educational needs on the threshold of the twenty-first century"¹⁷.

The interest in media education has increased in recent years, following the emergence and development of digital technology, the contribution of the university to this field and the call for students to be involved in the production so that they do not remain mere consumers of what this technology produces. The aim is to bridge the gap between the education system and the media system. This gap can be attributed to the inadequate use of one by the other. Through optimal use and

¹⁷- Abdul Wahab Boukhenoufa: *The School, the Student, and the Teacher, and Media Technologies: Representation and Uses*, a study based on a sample of students and teachers in Algeria (Thesis for a Doctorate, Department of Media and Communication Sciences, Faculty of Political Science and Media, University of Youssef Ben Khadda, 2006/2007), p. 18.

serious engagement between the two, as well as their integration, students can bridge the gap between the media world and the school world.

Third: The field part of the study:

In order to understand the real role of teachers in the media education of their students, the researcher, as mentioned above, selected a non-random sample of 102 people. The questionnaire was distributed in mid-December and retrieved after two weeks, with 92 questionnaires returned. Ten questionnaires were excluded as invalid because they did not answer all the questions. After examining the data from the questionnaires, the characteristics of the research community can be presented as follows:

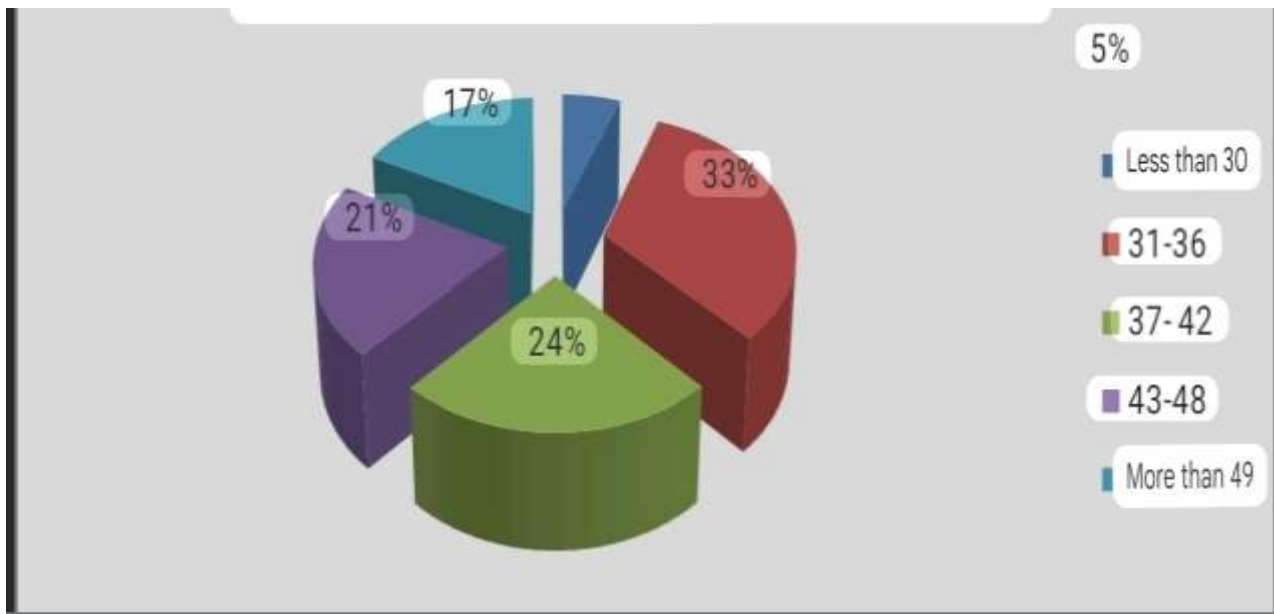
Table No. (1) shows the distribution of sample by age.

Distribution Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30	05	5.43%
31-36	30	32.60%
37-42	22	23.91%
43-48	19	20.65%
More than 48	16	17.39%
Total	92	100%

Preparation of the researcher

This table shows that the distribution of sample members by age is as follows: the age group between 31-36 years comprises 32.60%, which is the highest percentage. In second place is the 37-42 age group with 23.91%. In third place is the age group between 43-48 years with 20.65%, while those over 48 years account for 17.39%. On the other hand, the percentage of people under 30 is only 5.43%.

These percentages are in this order because the first age group did not respond to the questionnaire and because they were under-represented in the schools in the sample. Similarly, the last age group showed little response to the questionnaire, which may be due to their unfamiliarity with answering questionnaires and the nature of the questions. During interviews with some of the teachers, they expressed apprehension about interacting with the researcher, with some stating that they had never heard of the term 'media education'. As a result, the researcher had to use assistants to conduct interviews with the remaining teachers.

Graph: shows distribution of the sample by age**Table 02 : shows distribution of the sample by gender**

Distribution Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	36	39.13%
Female	56	60.86%
Total	92	100%

Preparation of the researcher

Table No. (2) illustrates the distribution of the study sample by gender and shows that more than half of the study sample consists of female teachers with a percentage of 60.86%. The second position is held by male teachers with a percentage of 39.13%.

These percentages are logical given the increasing number of women in the education sector, which exceeds that of men. Several studies have confirmed this, noting that working in the education sector in Algeria is more suitable for women for a number of reasons, including social and religious considerations.

Graph 02: shows distribution of the sample by gender

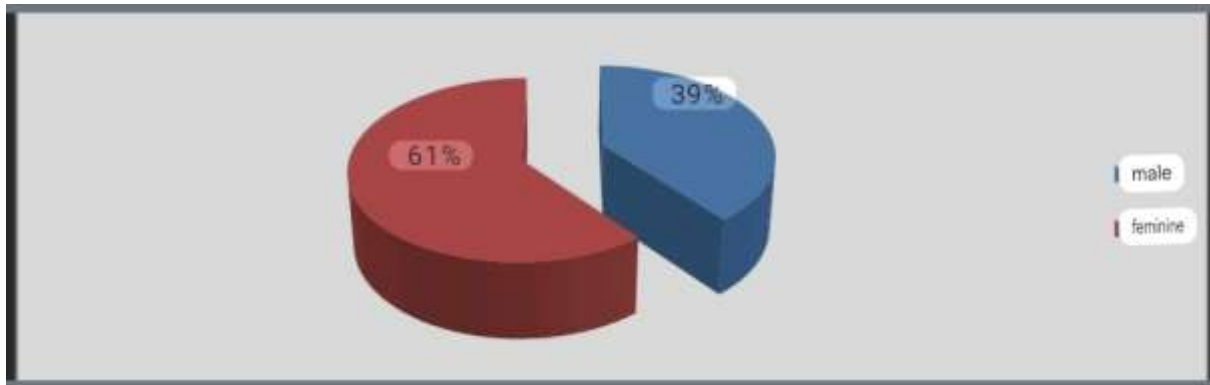


Table 03 : shows distribution of the sample according the education level

Distribution Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	81	88.04%
Postgraduate studies	11	11.95%
other	00	00
Total	92	100%

Table No. (3), which refers to the distribution of the study sample by educational level, shows that the majority of the teachers have a university degree, representing 88.04%. Meanwhile, those with higher education (including Master's, Magister and Doctorate degrees) represented 11.95% of the sample. It is important to note that these categories were combined due to the similarity in educational level and the small number of respondents, which did not allow for statistical significance when analysing the results.

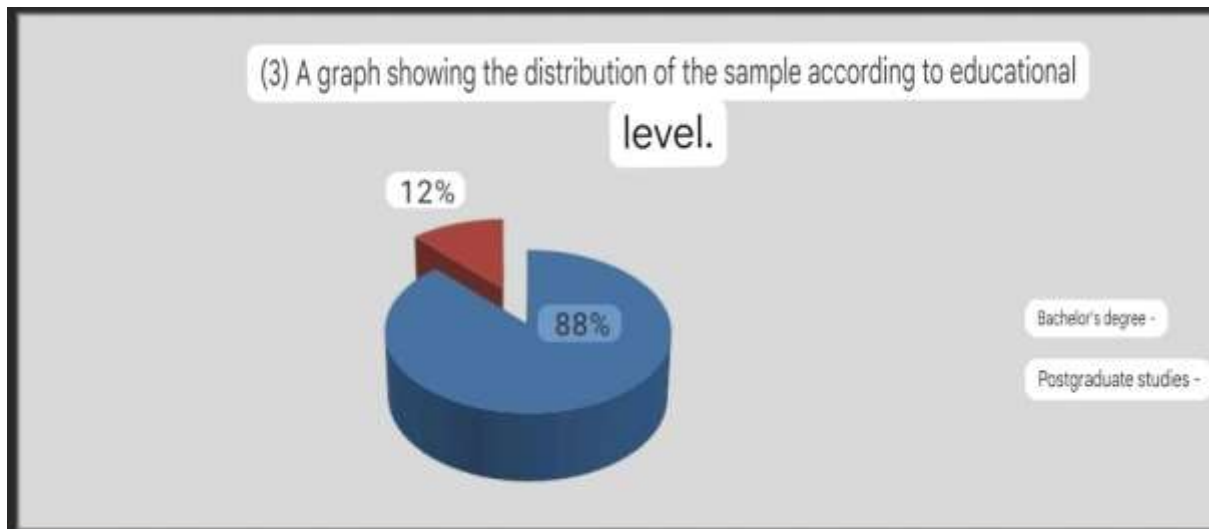


Table (4): Distribution of individuals by marital status

Distribution Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Unmarried	11	11.95%
Married	79	85.86%
Divorced	02	2.17%
Others	00	00
Total	92	100%

Researcher's Preparation

Table No. (4) illustrates the distribution of the study sample by marital status and shows that the majority of the sample members are married with a percentage of 85.86%. This is considered logical given the age range. Meanwhile, the percentage of unmarried individuals is 11.95%, while the percentage of divorced individuals does not exceed 2.17%. This may have an impact on the interpretation of the results, as we assume that unmarried individuals spend more time with the media and therefore recognise its importance for students, which may have a positive impact on media education.

We will now examine the extent of the teacher's contribution to media education, noting that we have excluded questions about the teacher's use of media and communication technology, as the sample is purposive and we have prior knowledge of the sample's engagement with media technology, particularly television.

Graph 04 shows Distribution of individuals by marital status

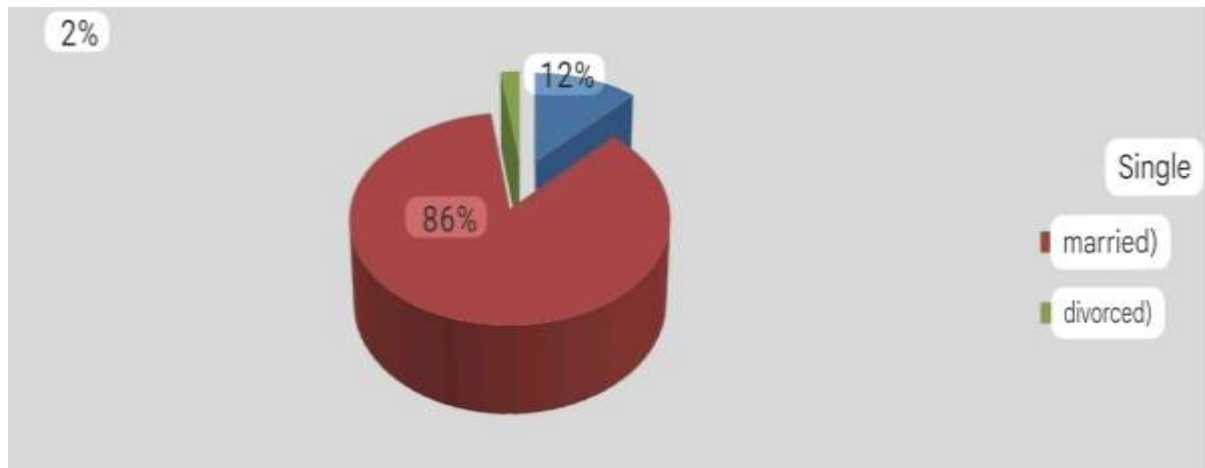


Table (5): Teachers' discussion of TV channel content with their students

Distribution Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	76.08%
No	22	23.91%
Total	92	100%

Preparation of the researcher

Table No. (5) shows the distribution of the sample members in terms of whether they discuss the content of television channels with their students. From the statements of the sample members, it can be seen that the majority, 76.08%, discuss television content and other media and communication technology issues with their students. Conversely, 23.91% of the sample refuse to discuss television content with their students, believing that the material presented on television generally does not reach a level suitable for discussion, as it carries a superficial and trivial culture. Instead, they concentrate on warning pupils about the dangers of such content for their values and morals.

Graph 05: shows Teachers' discussion of TV channel content with their students

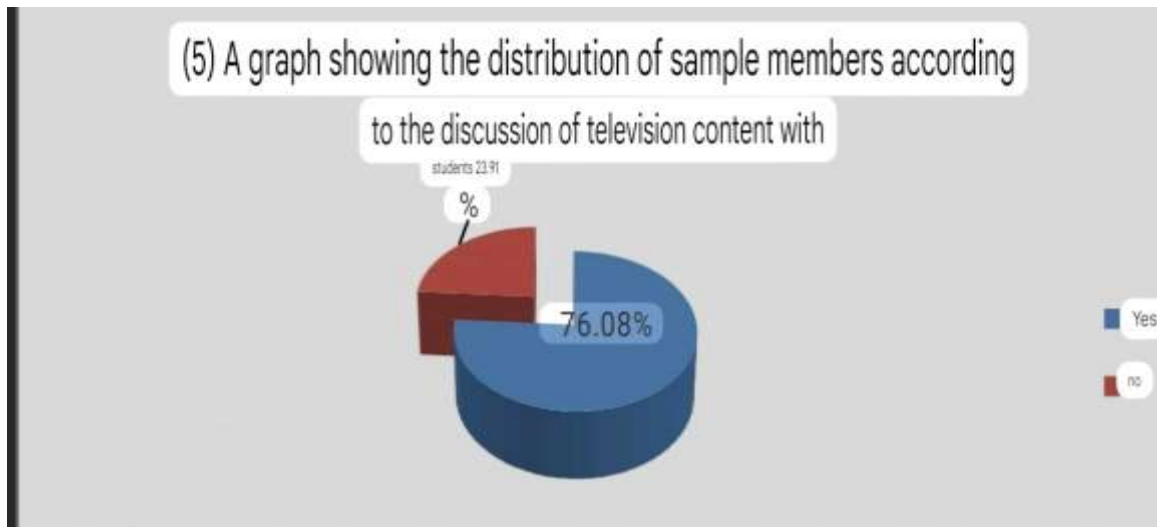


Table (6): Topics Discussed with Students

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
About clothing and hairstyles	12	13.04%
About the subject matter	15	16.30%
On customs and traditions	25	27.17%
In terms of values taught	15	16.30%
In terms of its effect on the student	16	17.39%
Other issues	09	9.78%
Total	92	100%

Preparation of the researcher

Table no. (6) shows the distribution of respondents according to the main topics discussed with students. The results are as follows:

- Traditions and customs came first with a percentage of 27.17% and a frequency of 25.
- In second place was the impact of television on society, especially on children, with a percentage of 17.39% and a frequency of 16.

- Recreational, cultural and scientific topics came third, while discussions about values (both positive and negative) portrayed in television programmes came fourth with a percentage of 16.30% each.
- Discussions about hairstyles and fashion trends and their influence on students based on what is shown on television ranked fifth with 13.04% and a frequency of 12.
- Finally, the lowest percentage (9.78%) was for various issues related to specific programmes or events that have come to the fore.

The prominence of 'traditions and customs' highlights teachers' concern for students' identities, seeing these traditions as the last line of defence against a threatened identity, often compromised by content from television and other information technologies, especially social media, which broadcast customs that are in stark contrast to local traditions. This concern leads teachers to discuss these issues with their students.

Closely related to traditions and customs are discussions about fashion and hairstyles, which reflect the extent of the influence of media content. According to some teachers, students often emulate the styles of prominent media figures, such as athletes or musicians, despite schools introducing uniforms and banning certain hairstyles for both sexes.

Moreover, students' values are often influenced by their experiences in different socialisation institutions, and television is one of these parallel institutions to school. Many teachers see television as a threat to both school and society as a whole. Most of the discussions among the interviewees revolved around entertainment programmes and cartoons, which often convey values contrary to those of the local culture.

Finally, various programmes and topical issues that tend to impose themselves, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Gaza and Palestine since 7 October 2023, were at the bottom of the list.

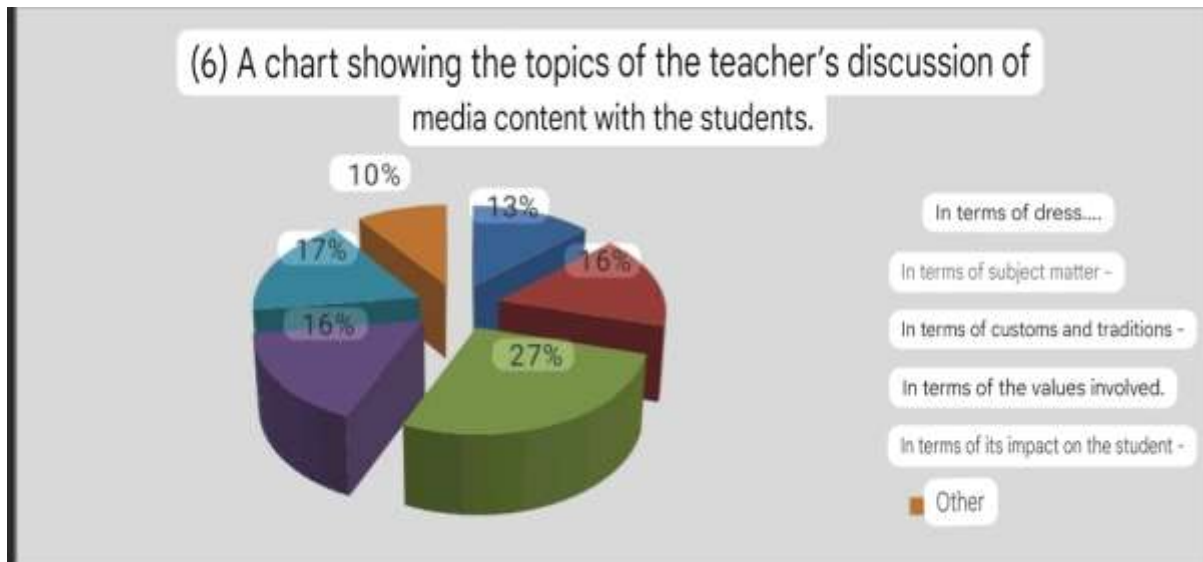


Table (7): Teachers' perceptions of their role in the spread of media and communication technology

Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
The role		
Imparting knowledge only	04	4.34%
Education with instruction	86	93.47%
No longer just a teacher of knowledge or an educator	02	2.17%
Total	92	100%

Preparation of the researcher

Table No. (7) illustrates the distribution of teachers in the study sample regarding their role in the context of the spread of media and communication technology. The data shows that 93.47% of the teachers stated that their role is to educate and impart knowledge and information, which is the majority. This is indeed the true role of teachers as they contribute to the education of students who, according to several psychological studies, are malleable and easily influenced. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to fulfil their role and not just teach by rote, especially in this era characterised by the dominance of the media, which has become an integral part of everyone's life, especially in this demographic group.

Conversely, 4.34% said that they only impart knowledge without focusing on education. This means that four out of 92 teachers do not fulfil their educational role, which is fundamental in the first stage of education, especially in primary school, where pupils are usually under 10 years old and need education more than anything else. Although this percentage is low, it is significant when one considers that education is crucial for the formation of the learner's personality.

In addition, two out of 92 teachers in the study sample said that they no longer had a role in the students' school life. We hypothesise that this may be due to a lack of experience, as these teachers may be new to the profession, or they may be close to retirement. Whatever the reason, it is illogical for a teacher to have no influence or role in a pupil's life, especially at such a vulnerable psychological and emotional stage. If the teacher withdraws, an alternative must be found.

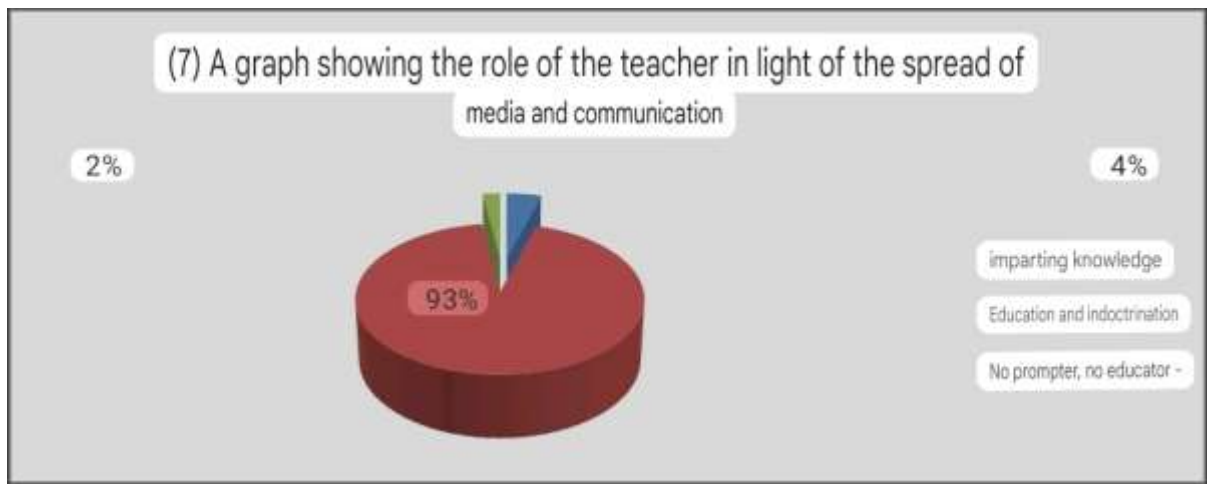


Table (8): Teachers' Contribution to Media Education for Students

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
General advice	35	38.04%
Highlighting its negative effects on values and morals	15	16.30%
Explain their damage to health and academic performance	14	15.21%
Explain how these media work	05	5.43%

Explain the purpose of these media	07	7.60%
Encourage rational use of these media	11	11.95%
Guide them in understanding these media and how to create media messages.	05	5.43%
Total	92	100%

Researcher's preparation

Table No. (8) illustrates how teachers in the study sample contribute to the media education of students. The data show that 38.04% of the teachers only give general advice on media content, while 16.30% of the teachers focus on highlighting the negative effects of media and communication technology on students' values and morals. Close on the heels of this percentage are 15.21% of teachers who explain the harmful effects of this technology on pupils' physical and mental health, as well as its impact on academic performance.

In third place, with 11.95%, are teachers who encourage their pupils to use media and communication technologies rationally and to avoid excessive use. Meanwhile, 7.60% of teachers try to explain that the goals of these media are often disconnected from the reality experienced by students. In addition, 5.43% represent teachers who try to explain how these media work and the main principles underlying them. The same percentage applies to teachers who direct their students to specific media references in order to understand the nature of these media and how media messages are created, thus ensuring that students do not remain in awe of this technology.

Despite the low percentages associated with the last two roles, they should not be underestimated, as they reflect teachers' personal initiative and sense of responsibility towards students for whom media and communication technologies have become an integral part of everyday life. Such initiatives require encouragement and political will to include media education in the school curriculum and to train teachers in how to teach students to use media and communication technologies effectively.

Furthermore, it can be seen from the figures in the table above that they are consistent with those in Table No. (6). In addition,

it can be seen that teachers' contribution to media education consists of timid personal initiatives that do not exceed 5%.

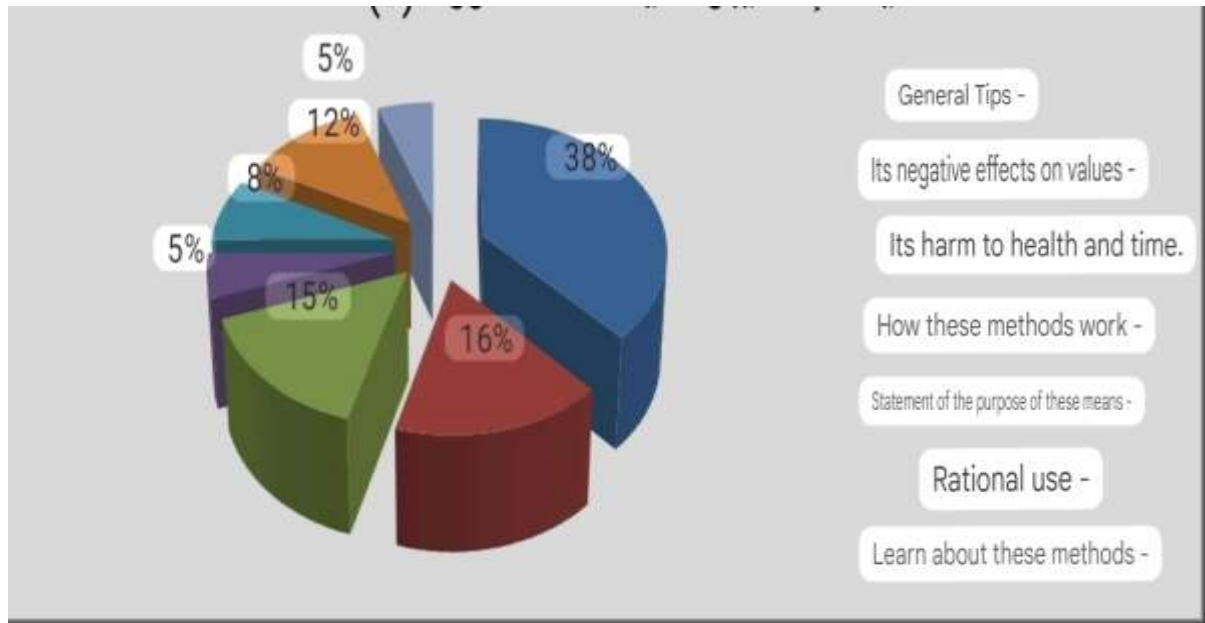


Table no. (9): Responses of sample members regarding the importance of media education (in order of importance)

Importance		The need to include it in the educational curriculum	It is not of great importance	Teaches students the skills to deal with the media	It is not beneficial for the student.
Suggestions					
Strongly agree	Frequency	15	14	27	09
	Percentage	16.30%	15.21%	29.34%	9.78%
Agree	Frequency	25	16	39	07
	Percentage	27.17%	17.39%	42.39%	7.60%
Neutral	Frequency	23	09	11	10
	Percentage	25%	9.78%	11.95%	10.86%
Disagree	Frequency	13	27	07	34
	Percentage	14.13%	29.34%	7.60%	36.95%
Strongly Disagree	Frequency	16	26	08	32

	Percentage	17.39%	28.26%	8.69%	%34.78
Total	Frequency	92	92	92	92
	Percentage	100%	100%	100%	100%

Researcher's Preparation

Table No. (9) illustrates the distribution of the study sample based on the importance of media education as perceived by teachers. The results show the following:

- The percentage of respondents who strongly agree with the need to include media education in the educational curriculum is 16.30%.
- The percentage of those who agree with this statement is 27.17%.
- A significant percentage of 25% responded neutrally, which is significant.
- The percentage of those who disagree is 14.13%.
- Meanwhile, 17.39% strongly disagree, claiming that media education is not important and that it is unnecessary to include it in the educational curriculum.

If we combine the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses, the total percentage is over 43.47%. Conversely, if we combine 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree', the percentage is over 31.52%. This indicates that more than a third of the sample believes that media literacy is not essential to be included in the educational curriculum.

Regarding the statement: "Media education provides students with the skills to engage with media and communication", the percentage of those who strongly agree reached 29.34%, while those who agree reached 42.39%. This indicates a consensus that media education does indeed provide students with the skills to interact with media. When the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses are combined, the total percentage rises to 71.73%. Compared to previous results, Algerian teachers in this study consider media literacy important, but not necessarily essential to include in the curriculum.

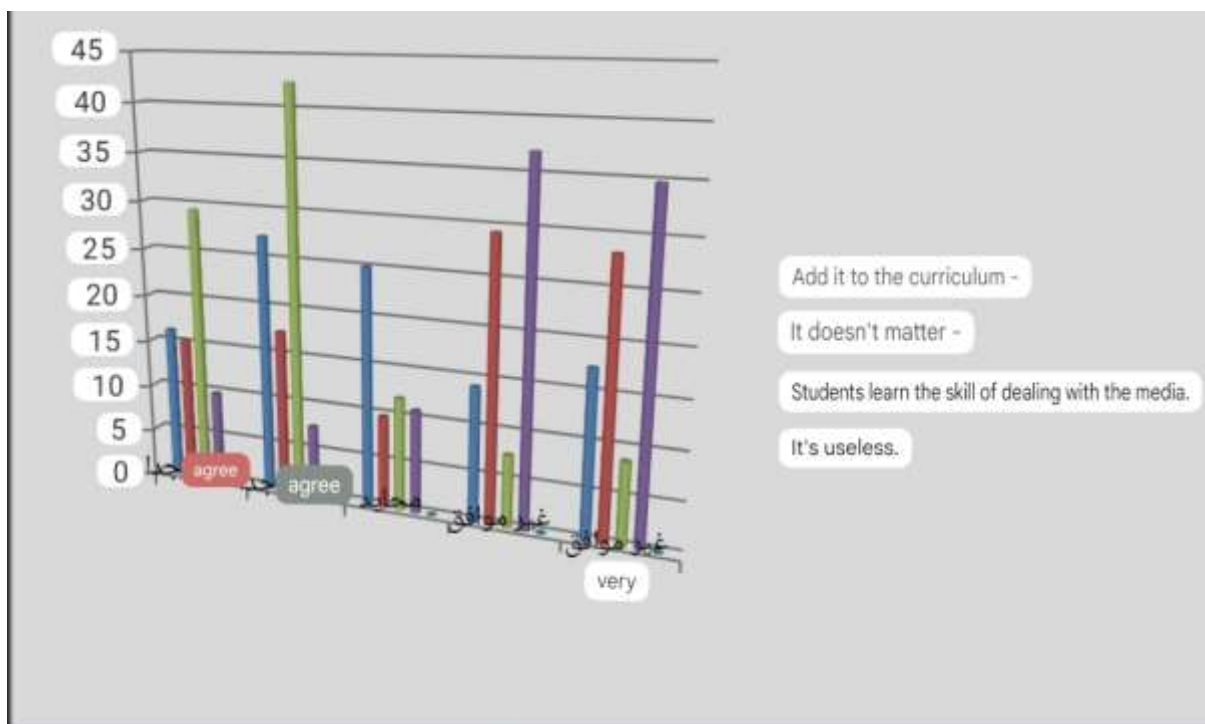
The percentage of neutral responses is 25%. Meanwhile, those who disagree - who believe that media education does not teach students how to deal with media and communication - account for 7.6% and 8.69% of those who strongly disagree and disagree respectively. If we combine these two categories, the total is about 16.29%, which means that about 15 teachers out of 92 believe that media education does not equip students

with the necessary skills to engage with media and communication. This result was unexpected and can generally be attributed to a lack of information literacy on the part of these teachers or to their superficial perception of the media.

Regarding the statement: “Media education is not of great importance”, the responses were as follows: the percentage of those who strongly agreed was 15.21%, while those who agreed reached 17.39%. If we combine the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ responses, the total percentage is 32.60%. Neutral responses accounted for 11.95%, which are generally high percentages, possibly due to the sample’s lack of understanding of the nature of media literacy. The percentage of those who disagreed was 29.34%, while those who strongly disagreed reached 28.26%.

Regarding the statement: “Media education does not benefit the student”, the percentage of those who strongly agreed was 9.78%, while those who agreed were 7.60%. The percentage of neutral responses was 10.86%. Conversely, the percentage of those who disagreed was 36.95% and those who strongly disagreed was 34.78%. These percentages are quite close, and if we combine ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’, the total is 71.73%. Thus, the majority of the sample believes that media education is beneficial for students.

Figure (9): A graph illustrating the importance of media education according to the opinions of the study sample.



Study findings:

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analytical reading of the tables, the following results can be summarised:

- The relationship between the school and the media is one of conflict, often unclear due to the ambiguity of the directions and objectives of both fields, especially with the emergence of globalisation, which has confused many concepts, especially those related to the media.
- The school remains the most productive and recognised institution for the creation and dissemination of knowledge.
- The knowledge that students acquire from the media, especially television, is not recognised by teachers, who consider it trivial and superficial.
- The study data showed that teachers discuss media content with their students.
- The study also found that most teachers advise students on how to use media and communication technologies, while warning them of the dangers. According to the study, teachers continue to adopt a defensive approach, warning about the risks of media and communication to values and morals. Meanwhile, this understanding has evolved into an empowering approach, which this study sought to explore. This empowering approach is largely absent, relying on personal initiatives rather than a clear strategy or established educational framework.

Regarding the importance of media literacy, if we go back to the results and combine the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses, we would find that half of the responses indicate agreement with the importance of media literacy, which is in line with our initial hypothesis. The 'neutral' responses also received significant percentages. We conclude that media education in Algeria still depends on the personal initiatives of some teachers and requires a strategy adopted by the ministry in charge of the education sector in Algeria. This is essential for teachers to raise awareness among students, especially since they are "children", and to enable them to deal appropriately with media and communication technologies, especially since these technologies have become an integral part of their daily lives. It is impossible to regulate their use by families or other social institutions alone, nor is it feasible to isolate them from this fascinating world. Instead, we can provide them with a culture in this area that enables them to engage with it consciously.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study reaffirms that media education is of great importance in this era, given the increasing dominance of the media. As the Algerian school is considered the heart of the

educational process, attracting millions of children, it has the responsibility to provide media and communication education. This involves enabling school-age children to engage effectively with the media and to understand media messages, moving from a discourse of fear and threat to one of evaluation, criticism and renewal. This study shows that media education in this context remains a timid personal initiative of some teachers. Therefore, a call is made to the relevant ministry to link educational institutions with other related institutions and integrate media education into the educational curriculum, while equipping teachers to do so.

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