

Media education as a mechanism to protect children from the dangers of social networks

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Abstract:

This research paper attempts to highlight the role of media education in facing the negative repercussions of social networks on the child and his upbringing, especially as it has become one of the means that compete with traditional institutions such as the family, school and places of worship.

And with the absence of a lot of ethics and morals in the contents that are circulated through social networks, especially in commenting on what is being published, as he uses obscene words, words and phrases that are completely contrary to public morals.

Here the need for media education emerged to represent a barrier that protects the child from virtual addiction, and also protects him from thoughts that distort his perceptions of his reality, and about the events he is experiencing and those he is exposed to, as it helps him to walk according to a sound approach that avoids deviation, to achieve the social goals set in the educational policy. And educational and cultural according to the privacy of each community..

Keywords: Media education, children, socialization, social networking sites, new media

Introduction:

The world today is experiencing a real revolution thanks to modern media and communication technology, which has most notably brought about a qualitative shift in the field of transmitting and producing various media messages. Perhaps the manifestations of this technology are the multiple uses of the Internet by individuals at various levels, and the most important of these uses are social networking sites, which have become of great interest to wide segments of individuals within society, through establishing relationships and friendships, publishing photos, chatting and dialogue, and others.

With the rapid development of social networking sites, education with its limited means and gradual development has lost its control, and the media and social networking sites have come to have the largest share in the process of socialization, influence and guidance, and the upbringing of children, adolescents and adults. Therefore, the need for media education has emerged to create an aware, critical audience capable of understanding and absorbing the media communication messages it is exposed to, and possessing the ability to analyze and distinguish between useful and harmful, and making it aware of the negative effects of the unconscious use of social networking sites that have dominated children's interests as a modern technology in communication.

This is what this research paper seeks to achieve by focusing on media education, its activation mechanisms, and its importance in protecting children from the dangers and negatives of social networking sites.

2 .Defining concepts

A- The concept of media education:

The concepts of media education have varied according to the different views on them. It specializes in dealing with all means of communication media, and includes words, printed graphics, sound, and still and moving images, which are presented through any type of technology. (Fahd bin Abdul Rahman Al-Shamimiri, 2010, 20)

It also means building the awareness of the masses and directing them towards selecting positive, valuable and useful content, and encouraging them to participate in presenting and developing distinguished content, and using modern technology to create innovative media content, with the aim of media control and building the general taste of society and upgrading its system of values and ethics. (Nahla Ramadan, Hind Al-Ghamry, 2022, 25)

Media education in this topic: is the process of training children on how to deal with different media, especially new media, by acquiring information, knowledge and skills that help them use these media in an organized manner, avoiding their negative repercussions.

B- The concept of social networking:

It is a system of electronic networks via the Internet that provides the subscriber with a private site, linking him to an electronic social system with other members who have the same interests and hobbies or with university or high school friends or others. (Ali Khalil Shakra, 2014, 59)

It is also known as: a term given to a group of sites on the Internet, allowing communication between individuals in a virtual community that brings them together according to interest groups or networks of affiliation (country, university, company, school... etc.) All of this is done through direct communication services, such as sending messages or viewing the personal files of others and knowing their news and information that they are looking for. (Hanan bint Sha'shou' Al-Shahri, 15)

T- The concept of childhood:

The concept of childhood carries meanings including: "The period extending from birth until the age of twelve." (Jabry Lamia, 2006, 67)

It is the stage that extends from the moment of birth until puberty, which usually occurs at the age of 12 or 13. This stage is considered by psychologists and sociologists to be one of the most important in shaping the individual's personality, referring to the role of social upbringing. (Abdul Rahman Ototah, 1998, 205)

2.The reality of the child in the twenty-first century

Today's reality is characterized by the invasion of modern information and communication technology into the world of children, which has become more prevalent in their time than any other activity, due to the factors of attraction and dazzle in addition to the economic and social changes that

the societies of the twenty-first century have witnessed and continue to witness, which have made the child besieged by these means, showering him with a torrent of content, messages and information, and childhood is increasingly saturated with technology day after day, which makes the subject of the child's relationship with these technologies a research field that is increasingly receiving interest from various branches of knowledge, and because the importance of the childhood stage and its connection to all stages of life and its influence on them, confirms the necessity of caring for this group and surrounding them with an educational climate to raise them in a peaceful environment that contributes to their care and development, as it is a sensitive stage in shaping the features of the personal personality. (Abdul Nabi Abdullah Al-Tayeb, 2014, 97)

The technological revolution was linked to the profound transformations that contemporary societies have known, and to the radical changes that have affected their various social systems structurally and functionally. It is noted that every scientific invention has social effects on human life. (Abdullah Zahi Al-Rashdan, 2004, 273). The increasing role of information and communication technology in the lives of modern societies has led to describing this era as the information/information age. The wheel of development of communications and information technology has been turning at an increasing, superior and continuous speed, pushing the world to move from an industrial society to a media and information society, so that the information and multimedia technology revolution has swept through all aspects of life. (Majd Hashem Al-Hashemi, 2001, 09) Technological innovations transformed European societies from feudal societies to industrial societies and then to knowledge societies, and each stage was accompanied by fundamental changes in the nature of the general structure of the economic and social system, such as the emergence of specialized places for industrial work, the change in the distribution of social roles, and the strengthening of the status of women in society and their new roles that greatly affected their basic and important educational role. (Muhammad Al-Daqs, 1996, 06), as the excessive exit of women to work has greatly affected the change in the balance of power within the family, the exchange of roles and the modification of priorities, even if this was at the expense of raising children. (Belkacem Sultania, 06, 2017)

3 .Child's needs and satisfactions of modern means of communication

Needs are considered one of the basic pillars that receive attention, and represent a focal point for scientific studies in various branches of the humanities and social sciences. A need is a being's feeling of missing something, and it may be internal or external and results in certain motives related to the subject of the goal, the motive, and the response to the subject of the goal leads to the satisfaction of the need and these goals and needs take the form of a hierarchical arrangement according to importance for the individual.

The definition of need is a state characterized by a feeling of deficiency or desire for something, and requires performing some tasks and activities to satisfy them, according to environmental conditions and innate and acquired qualifications to satisfy these needs, and achieve balance and not feel deficient. The child's needs are classified into types according to their importance. (Qanawi Muhammad Huda and Ali Quraish, 1998, 12-13):

Primary needs: These are the needs that the child cannot continue to exist without satisfying, such as the need for food, shelter and clothing.

Derived needs: These are the needs resulting from the child's presence in a group that has its own social characteristics such as language, education, upbringing and social control.

Supplementary needs: These are the needs that achieve the greatest degree of social harmony and link the members of the group such as religious beliefs and rituals and recreational and promotional activities.

The media and modern communication technologies are among the most prominent social institutions that contribute to creating needs on the one hand and satisfying them on the other. Their status and role differ according to societies, individuals, age and cultural framework. The media's roles are supposed to complement those of the family and school in educating the child, developing his knowledge, entertaining him and satisfying his desires. In terms of physical growth, for example, the media helps children by providing them with information and guiding them to benefit from health rules and methods of disease prevention, and avoiding bad habits that lead to self-destruction. As for mental and cognitive growth, the media plays an effective role in enhancing the power of reasoning, to understand problems and mechanisms of things to ensure sound thinking and employ logic, by presenting realistic or hypothetical models that simulate reality and what may obstruct the child's daily life. (Ahmed Hassan Al-Khamisi, 2009, 14)

Through the various media and modern communication technologies that the child is exposed to, in the various stages of his development, of educational values such as honesty, trustworthiness, love, solidarity and cooperation, self-esteem and other positive values, the child's emotional, affective and social needs are satisfied, and the imposition of abnormal behaviors in children and their tendency towards violence, crime or delinquency is reduced. (Hadi Noman Al-Hiti, 2011, 12).

The role of the media in satisfying the various needs of the child is not a marginal factor, but rather it should be a purposeful and planned activity, given the position that the various media and modern communication technologies have come to represent, and their impact on the values and behaviors of children on the one hand, and on the rest of the institutions of society responsible for raising and caring for the child, as the globalized modern environment in which these means arise and perform their functions has created challenges for various official and civil bodies to control the relationship between the child and the media and communication technologies.

4. The role of the family in supporting media education and Internet safety

The Internet is one of the modern devices that has captured the attention of family members, and some of the Internet has begun to threaten our children in moral upbringing, belief and behavior, and since the loser is the nucleus and foundation of society, it has an important role in influencing children and shaping their behaviors. Therefore, parents should be a role model and a good example for their children by performing the following roles. (Rasha Abdel Latif Muhammad, 2011, 34):

- Sitting with children when watching Internet programs.
- Choosing appropriate times to follow Internet sites.
- Choosing programs and websites appropriate for children's ages.
- Respecting points of view in accordance with the principles of religion and morality.

- Playing some online games with children and enhancing their victory in mastering interaction with play.
- Helping children expand their horizons by opening up to the outside world and learning about the civilization and culture of peoples.
- Training children to open and close electronic sites while taking responsibility for selecting programs.
- Parents should enter the websites before their children and browse their contents to avoid unwanted websites for children.
- Strengthening children's self-confidence and their good choice of websites.
- Not yelling at children when they stumble upon websites.
- Guiding and directing children not to spend long periods in front of tablets and searching websites. (Dahimi Zainab, 2008, 149)

5. Media Education Strategies:

There are many visions and viewpoints regarding the appropriate strategies or methods to activate media education programs. While some call for the necessity of students learning media education skills through a subject or course specific to media education, others call for integrating media education into the curriculum instead of presenting it in a separate subject, while a third group calls for employing both approaches in this context. The Media Culture Center has identified ten strategies for teaching media education, the most important of which are:

- Integrating media education into the curriculum or presenting a complete course in media education, employing the inductive model, teaching critical thinking skills, analyzing the media environment, studying viewpoints, and using the active learning model that begins with the stage of awareness of an issue, then analysis, then commentary, then response. The result of these four activities is the experience that the individual forms.
- Condesd Ain believes that media education is a competency and not a course, and therefore it should be integrated into the curriculum. Hobbs emphasizes the importance of including five concepts in media analysis in schools:
 - That media messages are the product of an individual or institution.
 - That media messages are produced in social, economic, and historical contexts.
 - The interpretation and construction of meaning consists of an interaction between the recipient, the text and the culture.
 - Each media has its own symbols.
 - The role of media expression in people's understanding of social life. (Rabiha Nabar, 2017, 07)

6. Features of Media Education

Media education is characterized by several characteristics, which are as follows:

Enhancing the motivation to learn: Media education has the property of enhancing the motivation to learn, due to the specificity of its subject and field, as it examines something tangible that is directly related to the learner's daily life, which is more likely to attract his attention and motivate him to discover this field and learn its secrets.

The reality of this field and the need for it: Dealing with the media takes up a large part of a person's life in the contemporary world and accompanies him throughout his life, and this arouses in the learner the feeling of the importance of possessing the skill of dealing with the media through media education.

Clarity of learning outcomes: The clarity of learning outcomes in a prominent way on the learner's personality in daily life increases motivation and effort, because media awareness can easily be observed on a person's personality in daily life, unlike his ability to solve the most complex mathematical problems, for example.

Higher thinking skills: Media education helps the learner acquire higher thinking skills or at least feel and sense their importance because the media is a very fertile field for activating thinking skills and it requires learning the following skills:

A- Critical thinking skill: It is a basic skill in media education.

B- Creative thinking skill: It is related to one of the outputs of media education, which is the production of media content.

C- Decision-making skill: It is closely related to one of the outputs of media education, which is the production of media content.

D- Problem-solving skill: It is related to the media industry in general because it suffers from many problems worldwide, and media education provides in realistic cases to be a field for using problem-solving skills, in addition to the problems of dealing with the media within the family.

Enhancing self-confidence and positive spirit: Media education provides the learner with a comprehensive picture of the media environment and reveals to him many secrets of the media industry according to the principles of media education, and helps enable the learner to use the tools and skills of dealing with the media, which leads to enhancing the learner's confidence and possession of the positive spirit to carry out positive behavior.

Self-learning and lifelong learning: Media literacy lays the foundation and the first step that allows the learner to continue learning in this field independently within self-learning and lifelong learning methodologies. (Fahd bin Abdulrahman Al-Shamimiri, 2010, 27-28) It is necessary for media literacy or media and digital literacy to focus on how to read, watch and critically enjoy media messages, decode the ideologies behind them, evaluate the propaganda, political and commercial intentions they contain, and protect media consumers from some of their hidden and harmful effects. Digital and media literacy also gives individuals the ability to manage their media habits intelligently, use digital media effectively for personal, political and commercial purposes, and participate in national and global discussions, where individuals will learn to express their opinions effectively and defend their beliefs. Digital and media literacy will also provide the knowledge and competencies that marginalized and deprived communities need. (Bushra Hussein Al-Hamdani, 2014, 116-117)

7 .Media Education Objectives:

Media education seeks to eliminate illiteracy in using media and communication through a set of mechanisms whose application ensures the existence of a recipient who is aware of how to use and interact with media, therefore media education seeks to achieve a set of objectives.

The first objective that media education can achieve is the positive impact on the skills and abilities of recipient individuals, and it generally aims to teach individuals a set of skills and abilities when dealing with media, represented by the ability to:

- Understand media, interpret it, and discover the values its content carries.
- Provide critical opinions on media content, negatively or positively.
- Conscious selection of media content and media outlets.
- Expressing opinions freely and objectively.
- Producing media content and delivering it to the target audience.
- Guiding the family to make the best use of entertainment and modern technology. (Talal bin Aqil, 26)

Despite the diversity of goals that media education seeks to achieve, it can be said that they share two basic dimensions: the first is the individual's relationship with media content in terms of choice, consumption, participation and evaluation, as this dimension is one of the most important foundations on which media education is based in achieving its goals. The second dimension is represented in activating the relationship between the media system and the educational system, in order to involve the media in the educational process on the one hand, and on the other hand, exploiting media technologies in the educational process.

8. Negative repercussions of social media networks

Among the negative repercussions of social media networks are the following:

Wasting time, as the user often forgets himself while browsing these networks, only to discover that he has wasted his time without completing his minimum duties, as he is attracted to these networks thanks to their characteristics, and over time he becomes unable to determine the duration of their use.

The use of social networks over time leads to a negative impact on individuals' communication abilities, especially since it is based on electronic communication, which is radically different from direct communication. Over time, the individual loses the ability to interact directly with others.

The unlimited use of social networks leads to the loss of Arab cultural identity and its replacement with a global identity. Many see cultural globalization as one of the reflections of the use of social networks. The culture of these sites is derived from the culture of their creators, which is the currently dominant Western culture, and the dependence of the Arab individual who has become submissive to it without awareness. All of this has led to the gradual loss of Arab cultural identity. The hybrid language of communication used through these networks is the most prominent manifestation of the influence of Arab culture.

The focus on the use of social networks in entertainment and amusement in most Arab countries increases their negative effects. Most users view them as a means of entertainment, amusement, and chatting, nothing more, ignoring their positive uses in the field of research, awareness, and obtaining knowledge.

The negative use of social networks causes many family problems in Islamic societies. The privacy of Islamic society differs radically from Western society; The negative use of social media to get to know the opposite sex outside of marital relations, or to practice fornication, or to watch

pornographic sites has contributed to the destruction of about 25% of relationships in the open West, so what if this happened in conservative Arab Islamic societies? Especially since studies have found that the main reason for this bad use was boredom and emptiness. (Khaled Ghassan Yousef Al-Maqdadi, 2013, 73-75) All these negative effects impose the importance of media education as one of the mechanisms that control the uses of social media in general, especially in light of the transformations witnessed in the process of exchanging communication and media messages due to the applications carried by the new media, which have also caused radical transformations in the media field in several aspects, and the use of these means is one of the most important of these transformations, because use is the main gateway to the various effects caused by the means of communication, so the more the individual is aware of the foundations and rules of dealing with the means, the more this contributes to reducing their psychological and social repercussions, especially since media education requires the need to learn to monitor, notice and listen carefully and cautiously. We believe that it is necessary for the family, school and society to combine efforts to protect the child from misleading and offensive information on various social media sites, through several technical tools that can help verify information, the most important of which are:

- WikiHow website for how to check false information in Arabic.
- The "News Detective" game is an interactive game that teaches children how to check the accuracy of news.
- The "Common Sense Media" website provides tips and tools for parents on how to help their children understand and avoid misleading news.
- The "Snopes" website is also an application that verifies the accuracy of news and rumors.
- Internet Heroes", a website that helps children explore the Internet safely and protects them from its dangers.

9. Media education as a mechanism to protect children from the negatives of social networks:

The media emerges every day in an innovative style and with amazing technology, which makes traditional education lose its control. Thus, the media has gained a great deal of socialization, influence, guidance, and education of young and old alike. One of the most important goals that media education seeks to achieve is to provide the target with skills and abilities in understanding and interpreting media outlets, discovering the values their content carries, providing critical opinions on media content, communicating with the media to express opinions, and even producing media content and delivering it to the public and directing the family to make the best use of modern means.

The media in our contemporary world is characterized by a strong and effective influence that exceeds the influence of school, family and all other institutions of society. Among the manifestations of the influence of the media are changing attitudes and behavior, shaking the thinking, values and interconnected fabric of societies, hindering their progress, reducing the ability of people to exert organized mental effort to develop and build themselves, draining the time and energy of young people, and drowning them in what does not benefit them. Here, the responsibility of the viewer in selection is evident, as he is the one who chooses the media outlet, and he is the one who chooses the content to which he is exposed, affects him and interacts with. The more aware the viewer is, the

more he chooses the positive media content, in addition to the responsibility of community institutions such as the family, school and society, as they have an important role in building awareness among members of society, especially children and youth, to refine reception skills, successfully deal with the media, and form a mature educational vision, to distinguish between useful and harmful, and to establish the concept of self-control and enhance self-confidence. (Badr bin Abdullah Al-Aqili, 2022)

Hence comes the importance of practicing media education by the family to reduce the harmful effects of the media on children through the following:

- Encouraging children to make conscious and responsible choices about what they watch, hear and receive in various media outlets and discussing them with them.
- Teaching children and adolescents the skills of criticizing what they watch.
- Determining the time allocated to the media while playing the role of a role model in dealing with the media in front of children through the optimal use of these media and determining the times for dealing with the media.
- Alternative activities for the media must be adopted.
- Creating an environment free of electronic media in bedrooms.
- Avoiding using the media as nannies for children in order to get rid of their disturbance, while emphasizing avoiding children under the age of two from watching television programs as much as possible.
- Filtering media messages and developing the skills of questioning those messages, analyzing them and evaluating them in a non-oppressive climate that allows for dialogue, transparency and frankness between the child and his parents.
- Understanding the role of the media in shaping the future of our children and raising them.
- Developing critical questioning skills for children.
- Highlighting the conscious use of media technology.
- Using technology as tools that provide useful programs.

This is what is meant by media education, when a child develops the critical ability to read, he will do the same with the moving images and sounds in front of him, as the child can learn to understand the explicit and implicit messages in all media, and once children learn media education skills, they will ask questions and think about the messages they watch, read or hear, and thus they will enjoy doing so and reduce the negative effects of the media among them. (Masouma Suhail Abdullah Al-Mutairi, 2010)

Conclusion:

Media education is one of the most important mechanisms that control the use of social media sites, especially in light of the transformations witnessed in the process of exchanging communication and media messages. The more the individual is aware of the foundations and rules of these means, the more this contributes to reducing their psychological and social repercussions. (Qarnadi and Ben Zarrouk, 2020)

Considering that social media networks, in all their forms, have opened the way for users to contribute to shaping their content through various publications with complete freedom and without censorship or restrictions, which has led to the spread of false news, rumors, cybercrimes, and other

negative uses of these spaces, this calls for instilling the values and ethics of media practice within the virtual space, which would help users to properly employ media content and enable them to sift and select information in a manner consistent with their social and moral values, and media education focuses primarily on the latter, which the individual in general and the child in particular can adhere to when using these communication platforms, and these are ethics derived from the teachings of our religion and its values, making him not affected by negative repercussions when using them, and this awareness and providing the recipient with skills to deal with social media networks represents the goal of media education.

Recommendations

Through this research paper, we decided to present some recommendations that would better clarify and consolidate the concept of media education and encourage the adoption of the concept to protect children from the dangers of social media networks, namely:

- Activating parental control over children when they use social media networks, through rational and regular use of these networks, and ensuring that they do not reach the level of addiction.

- Programming media education as an educational subject in school curricula.

- Establishing the concept of media education and raising awareness of the danger of communication platforms and applications on children.

- Holding seminars and lectures for children, educators and teachers in schools on the subject.

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