

Journal



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Religious curricula and their effects on Media Studies at Al Azhar University

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Abstract

We are living now in an age characterized by a flow of information and human knowledge in different intellectual fields. The link between technological, cultural, economic, social, and scientific achievements that have formed human lives has become even stronger. The future is now increasingly shaped by fast and continuous development. It has, thus, become impossible for nations and communities, whether those already developed and prospering or those forced to develop, to follow in the paths of comprehensive development as much as their capabilities and potentials permit them to. The world has become divided into several sectors identified by the levels of scientific and technological progress.

Educational policies keeping pace with contemporary international changes, technological development, and information revolution have become the main factor responsible for the success of education and scientific research. Such changes have caused the collapse of educational and administrative concepts and methods that were implemented in the second half of the 20th century.

There is a direct relation between education and scientific research on the one hand and technological development on the other as technological progress provides new horizons for education and scientific research. After world countries have been classified into developed, developing, and under-developed countries, the amount of information that a society possesses has become the source of a nation's wealth.

Al Azhar is considered the oldest Islamic university known by the world since the 4th Hijri century (the 10th AD) and it still plays its cultural, intellectual, and educational roles. It is the basis of the academic systems and traditions followed in the East and the West. In 1872, the first Azhar Statute delineating the ways of obtaining the international certificate and specifying its subjects was decreed. This law was a practical step in organizing the academic life in Azhar.

Before the 25th of January revolution, Al Azhar University included a Mass Media department for males and another for females, each with three main majors. After the revolution, however, Sheikh Al Azhar issued a decree that establishes an academically and administratively independent faculty instead of the department.

However, unfortunately, if one closely looks at the Media studies at Al Azhar University, one will find that the language, religious, and media studies at the Faculty are not complementary; they are rather going in different directions that do not really serve the media curricula. They even pose an academic burden on senior and post-graduate students because of their multitudinous topics. These topics lack the complementary framework necessary for education at the present time, especially after the 25th of January revolution.

The results of the study have shown that the curricula of Mass Communication major at Al Azhar University need to be regularly modernized and constantly developed in order to overcome the negative consequences of maintaining the same academic curricula for years without changing or developing them. Some of the most prominent negative results are repetition, overlapping, and non-conformity to reality. Moreover, results have shown that particularly in the curricula of language and religion, the study of worship rituals, transactions, and social practices are the main concern of Jurisprudence taught in the Faculty. Since there are many contemporary issues that need the efforts and contributions of Azhar scientists and jurists, religion and language studies need to be more geared to the concerns of Mass Communication in a way that serves the field.