The Role of the Electronic Journalism in the Political Reform Processes

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Abstract

The present study aimed to explore the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes. The researcher adopted a descriptive analytical approach. He used a questionnaire that consists from 14 items. The population consists from all the students enrolled at public universities in Jordan. A random sample was selected. It consists from 200 female and male students. It was found that the extent of following the electronic news by the university students in Jordan is high from their perspective. It was found that the electronic journalism play a very significant role in the political reform processes from the perspective of the students enrolled at public universities in Jordan. The researcher recommends increasing the engagement of students in the discussions held on news websites and blogs in order to promote political awareness.

Introduction

Electronic journalism plays a very significant role in promoting political awareness among the members of the society. That is because electronic journalism promotes much knowledge among people about facts, analysis, and political reports. The political reform processes in countries are significantly influenced by journalism. That is because journalism display the opinions of officials, and the members in right-wing parties, left-wing parties and centrist parties.

During the mid 1990s, online journalism became feasible with the creation of the World Wide Web. The previous establishment of a global communication networking and infrastructure, as well as the introduction of personal computers throughout the world, helped to popularize the Internet and made it easy to use globally (Curran and Seaton, 2003).

online journalism emerged with the introduction of the Internet. As a new means of communication, online journalism has attracted professionals and non professionals alike, in what appears to be an emerging new global media. Many leaders of governments throughout the world are realizing this transformation, and have reacted either negatively trying to control the new media through laws and technical barriers, or positively, by accepting the reality that the era of censorship has vanished (Dashti, 2009).

Peoples move towards an increasingly digital, mobile, and social media environment represent the development of a more high-choice environment in most respects—though there is less diversity in terms of original, professionally produced news on some issues and areas, especially locally. Internet users have access to more information in convenient formats and often for free, across a range of increasingly sophisticated personal and mobile devices, and in ways that enable new forms of participation (Nielsen et al, 2016).

Electronic journalism has become very popular among people. That is because electronic devices today are accessible by people of most social classes. Due to the easy access of electronic devices, broadcasting political news and information has become much easier.

Online journalism retains similar values of traditional journalism; nevertheless, it has some distinctive differences. Perhaps the most important characteristics of online journalism that distinguish it from traditional media publications are: (1) multimedia (using text, illustrations, sound, and moving images in news), (2) interactivity (interaction between the communicator and the user), (3) Hypertext (linking news with other information), and (4) immediacy (24 hour updates) (Dashti, 2009).

Electronic journalism serves as the new form of media. Electronic journalism adopt a modern approach. In the past, there weren't laws regulating the use of electronic journalism in any country. However, laws were enacted to regulate their use. The emergence of electronic journalism generated many job opportunities. It played a significant role in enacting laws that protect the rights of the journalists working online. It led to the emergence of new journalism -related issues (Ma'a'li, 2008).

Journalism plays a significant role in making political reforms. It serves as an effective and fast mean for broadcasting people's views. It serves as an effective and fast mean for broadcasting global experiences related to political reforms, the development of societies, and acquiring people's support for a specific issue.

Journalism plays an effective role in making political reforms in various societies. It promotes knowledge about the relationship between the government and the members of the society. The role of journalism in making political reforms is affected by the functions of journalism in the concerned society. It's affected by the extent of freedom given to journalism in society. It is affected by socio-cultural and political factors in the society. It's

affected by the diversity of the employees' views in the same media institution. Journalism plays a significant role in making political reforms. That is because journalism plays a significant role in promoting democracy, and encourage people to engage in politics. It is because journalism plays a significant role in the process of making the political decision. The role of journalism in making political reforms is affected by the political system in the state and amount of freedom in the state (Shelton, 2006).

Politicians turned to new media to circumvent the mainstream press' control over the news agenda. The infotainment emphasis of new media at this early stage offered political leaders and candidates a friendlier venue for presenting themselves to the public than did hard news outlets (Moy, et al., 2009).

The next phase in the development of new media unfolded in conjunction with the application of emerging digital communications technologies to politics that made possible entirely new outlets and content delivery systems. The digital environment and the platforms it supports greatly transformed the political media system in many countries (Owen, 2020).

The freedom given to media is affected by several factors. Such factors include: historical and sociological factors. Media plays a significant role in the production of new ideas and the emergence of new concepts and trends (Al-Anani, 2017).

Electronic media has been existing in the Arab World for two decades. It represents a whole industry in the digital and telecommunication environments. There are still problems associated with the freedom given to electronic media. Such problems affect the development of electronic media. They affect the organizational environment of many electronic media institutions. The extent of freedom given to electronic media represents the nature of the relationship between the government and media institutions. It is affected by the sources funding the media institution and how professional the journalists are. It is affected by the agenda of the media institution. It should be noted that media institutions play a significant role in developing people's identify and promoting a specific political culture (Al-Raji, 2019).

Today, electronic journalism is considered very important. It has been proved that electronic journalism plays a very significant role in virtual reality, recording events, and broadcasting news. It complements the role of conventional media. Contrary to conventional media, it eliminates the political and geographical limitations. It has been experiencing a significant development. Such development is related to services and websites. Due to multimedia, electronic media is considered interactive (Nabeeh, 2012).

The complexities of the new media system are reflected in the diversity of available content. The information distributed via the vast communications network runs the gamut from fact-based, investigative reporting from professional journalists to brash fabrications or "alternative facts" or alternative press (Graham, 2017).

Statement of the Problem
Electronic media is considered a very significant modern mean for broadcasting news and information immediately and directly. In fact, it made hiding news much difficult. That's because all people can access electronic news and reports through using ICT.

Electronic newspapers are capable to overcome the strict control enforced over them, especially in Arab countries. However, some electronic news websites were closed in some Arab countries. Some owners of those websites were prisoned. Electronic media provided people with new potentials. For instance, it enables people to broadcast any news regardless of the relevant control. Control can be enforced over the conventional newspapers before having them published. However, such control can't be enforced over electronic newspapers (Ma'a'li, 2008). Therefore, the problem of the present study is represented in the following question: (What is the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan?)

The Study's Questions and Objective
The present study aimed to explore the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan. To meet this goal, the following questions were answered:
Q.1. What is the reality of following up the electronic news by university students in Jordan?
Q.2 What is the reality of the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan from the perspective of the university students?

The Study's Significance
The present study is significant due to the following reasons:
-The present study sheds a light on the reality of the role of electronic journalism. It sheds a light on the effective role of electronic journalism in society. For instance, electronic journalism broadcasts news about the most significant issues in society. It's important because people can easily access electronic media through using ICT. It's important because people can interact with the content broadcasted through electronic media.
-Electronic journalism promotes awareness in society about political and national issues. It's used by the government and political parties, and bodies to display opinions and visions related to political reform.

-The present study offers recommendations and suggestions about the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan.

Definition of Terms:

The study's terms are defined below:

Electronic journalism: It refers to the broadcasting news through using the electronic environment, and information networks. It involves employing artistic and technical skills. It involves using ICTs and their features. It involves using texts, and images. It involves interaction with the reader. It involves processing and analyzing news. It involves broadcasting news on the electronic environment (Ma'a'li, 2008).

Political reform: It refers to the process of making dramatic or partial adjustments or developments to social relationships, political system or regime inside the state through using the available means (Al-Mashaqbeh, 2011: 17).

The Study's Limits:

The study's limits are presented below:

Spatial limits: The present study targets public universities in Jordan.

Temporal limits: The present study was conducted during (January-March, 2020).

Human limits: The present study targets the students enrolled in public universities located in the central province in Jordan. These universities are: (the University of Jordan, the Hashemite University and Balqa Applied University).

Review of Previous Studies

The researcher reviewed several previous studies related to the study's subject. These studies are presented below

Owen (2020) review the new media's role in politics. The study reported that new media have both expanded and undercut the traditional roles of the press in a democratic society. On the positive side, they have vastly increased the potential for political information to reach even the most disinterested citizens. They enable the creation of digital public squares where opinions can be openly shared. They have created new avenues for engagement that allow the public to connect in new ways with government, and to contribute to the flow of political information.

Al-Raji (2019) aimed to shed a light on the freedom given to the electronic journalism in Jordan in legal, political, social and economic areas. He aimed to shed a light on the factors affecting the extent of freedom given to the electronic journalism in Jordan. He aimed to shed a light on the indicators of such freedom and the means that regulate it. He aimed to explore the relationship between the organizational environment of electronic media institutions and other environments. It was found that the journalists working online in Jordan are still obstacles and difficulties hindering those journalists from enjoying much freedom. Those obstacles and difficulties are attributed to security-related factors and bureaucratic measures.

El Issawi & Cammaerts (2016) investigate the role of Egyptian journalists includes e-media in shaping Egypt's complex and fast-moving political transition. Based on a thematic analysis of in-depth interviews and a conceptual framework building on Christians et al.'s normative roles of the media, it can be concluded that the monitorial and facilitative roles, which were prevalent in the early stages of the post-Mubarak era, were quickly overturned in favor of a radical and collaborative role. Egyptian journalists working in private media thus demonized their political adversaries, mainly the Islamists, transforming this political 'other' into the ultimate enemy.

Nielsen et al (2016) reviews challenges and opportunities for news media and journalism in today's changing media environment. The study analysis media environment where most people have access to more and more news and information about many issues, in large part enabled by digital media and the products and services of large technology companies. The study reported that increasingly digital, mobile, and social media environment with increasingly intense competition for attention. This puts increasing pressure on legacy media like broadcasters and newspapers. These remain important news producers but are becoming relatively less important as distributors of news. As their existing operations decline or stagnate, the development of new, sustainable business models for digital news production become more urgent.

Abed Al-Razaq (2013) aimed to explore the role of social media networks among young people. He selected a sample from students enrolled in public universities in Iraq. The selected universities are located in places that included early revolutionary movements. The latter researcher adopted a descriptive analytical approach. Questionnaire forms were distributed to 400 students. It was found that the social media networks play a significant role in shaping the political views of the students enrolled at the universities located in Mousel, Al-Anbar, and Takreet. It was found that there isn't any statistically significant differences between the respondents' attitudes which can be attributed to (gender, place of residence, academic stage, faculty and age)

Dashti (2009) used online content analysis to determine the role online journalism plays in political disputes, focusing on the most popular Kuwaiti personal writers' sites, weblogs and forums. The results show that the

language of online journalism took a different direction from the local press, with more freedom to write, discuss, and share ideas online with less fear of government retribution. What was considered a taboo red line in the local press became acceptable green line online. Also online journalism has consolidated offline users with online users to force the government to accept their demands.

Ma'ali (2008) aimed to explore the impact of electronic journalism on achieving political development in Palestine. He aimed to explore that since the establishment of the first electronic news website in 1996 till 2007. He aimed to explore the characteristics of the electronic journalism in Palestine. He aimed to explore the reality of electronic journalism in Palestine. It was found that electronic journalism plays a significant role in promoting political ideas of various types and sources. It was found that the content broadcasted online is printed and posted on the walls of universities, mosques and institutions. That participates in promoting ideas among people. Thus, it was found that electronic journalism plays a significant role in educating people about political issues in a scientific and reasonable manner. It plays a significant role in holding discussions between the members of the society of various social classes.

Comments on the Previous Studies

The aforementioned studies shed a light on the significance of electronic journalism in societies. Most of the aforementioned studies suggest that the number of electronic news websites has been increasing worldwide. Some of the aforementioned studies shed a light on the role of electronic news websites in promoting democracy. Some of the aforementioned studies shed a light on the political status of countries.

The aforementioned studies suggest that electronic journalism employs electronic means-including social media- for broadcasting news. The aforementioned studies differ from one to another in terms of the population. The present study differs from the aforementioned studies in terms of the subject. To be specific, it sheds a light on the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan.

The Study's Study

The researcher adopts a descriptive analytical approach.

The Study's Population

The study's population consists from all the students enrolled at public universities located in Jordan

The Study's Sample:

The researcher selected a random stratified sample. This sample consists from 200 students enrolled in public universities located in the central province in Jordan. These universities are: (the University of Jordan, the Hashemite University and Balqa Applied University). Information about the sample is illustrated below:

Table (1): Information about the sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	104	52.0
	Female	96	48.0
	Total	200	100%
University	The University of Jordan	71	35.5
	the Hashemite University	66	33.0
	Balqa Applied University	63	31.5
	Total	200	100%

The Study's Instrument:

The present study aimed to explore the role of electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan from the perspective of the students enrolled at public universities. A questionnaire was developed. It consists from three parts. The first part collects data about the respondents' demographic data (i.e. gender and university). The second part collects data about the extent of following up electronic news by university students. It consists from 7 items. The third part sheds a light on the role of the electronic journalism in the political processes university. It consists from 7 items. The five point Likert scale was adopted. The latter scale consists from the following rating categories: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. They represent the following scores respectively: 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1

Validity of the Instrument

Validity of the instrument refers to the degree to which the instrument is capable to measure what it was set to measure. It was measured through passing the questionnaire to a panel of experts to assess the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument
To measure the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha coefficient values were calculated. The latter value is 0.805. It's an accepted value.

The Study's Variables:
The study's variables are listed below:
-The independent variable: It's represented in the role of electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan from the perspective of university students
-The dependent variable: It's represented in the respondents' attitudes towards the role of electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan from the perspective of university students. It's measured through the items of the questionnaire.

Methods for statistical analysis:
To meet the study's goals, the SPSS program was used for analyzing data and reach results. The following statistical methods are used by the researcher:
-The researcher calculated Cronbach alpha coefficient value to measure the reliability of the questionnaire
-The researcher calculated percentages and frequencies to identify the characteristics of the respondents
-The researcher calculated means and standard deviations in order to identify the respondents' attitudes
The researcher adopted the following statistical criteria to classify means:
High: 2.34 or higher
 Moderate: 1.67- less than 2.34
Low: less than 1.67
The Study's Results:
Results related to the first question:
Q.1. What is the reality of following up the electronic news by university students in Jordan?
To answer the first question, means and standard deviations were calculated. Table (2) presents the results related to the first question.

Table (2): Means and standard deviations for the reality of following up the electronic news by university students in Jordan

No	Statements	S.D	M	Degree
1	I often rely on websites to get daily news	.87947	3.5200	High
2	I often view more than one news website	.55635	3.4550	High
3	I participate in commenting on political articles published on news sites and blogs	.51896	3.2950	High
4	News websites provide an opportunity to analyze political reality	.67992	3.2550	High
6	There is a great opportunity for political reform by reading various views through websites	.53873	3.2150	High
7	I interact extensively with my colleagues in discussing political topics posted on websites	.54152	3.1150	High
5	I interested in articles related to political reform	.34840	3.0650	High
	Total	.36128	3.2743	High

Table (2) presents the reality of following up the electronic news by university students in Jordan from their perspective. It was found that the extent of following up the electronic news by university students is high in Jordan from their perspective. That's because the overall mean is 3.27 which is high. The overall standard deviation is 0.361.

The mean of statement (1) is 3.52 which is high and ranked first. The standard deviation of the latter statement is 0.879. The latter statement states the following: (I often rely on websites to get daily news). The mean of statement (5) is 3.06 which is high and ranked last. The latter standard deviation of the latter statement is 0.361. The latter statement states the following: (I interested in articles related to political reform).

The latter result may be attributed to the spread of modern technologies in society. Such modern technologies include: smart devices, mobile applications, social media, and news websites. Therefore, people rely much on news websites for following up the latest news, including political news.

The results are consistent with Nielsen et al (2016) which reported that increasingly digital, mobile, and social media environment with increasingly intense competition for attention. Dashti (2009) reported that online journalism took a different direction from the local press, with more freedom to write, discuss, and share ideas online with less fear of government retribution.

Results related to the second question

Q.2 What is the reality of the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan from the perspective of the university students?

To answer the second question, means and standard deviations were calculated. Table (3) presents the results related to the second question

Table (3): means and standard deviations for the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes in Jordan from the perspective of the university students

No	Statements	S.D	M	Degree
11	News websites are mobilizing the largest number of supporters of political ideas	.81059	3.7150	High
12	There are many parties that rely on news websites	.48897	3.3900	High
8	News sites contribute to political awareness	.45490	3.2900	High
10	News websites display the political situation more easily	.62735	3.2800	High
13	There is a margin of freedom in the news websites	.57044	3.2850	High
9	I get to know political issues through news websites	.56708	3.2550	High
14	There are fundamental differences between the electronic and traditional press in presenting the subject of political reform	.60299	3.1150	High
	Total	.43039	3.3329	High

Table (3) presents the respondents' attitudes towards the role of the electronic journalism in the political reform processes. It was found that these attitudes are positive. That's because the overall mean is 3.33 which is high. The overall standard deviation is 0.430.

The mean of statement (11) is 3.17 which is high and ranked first. The standard deviation of the latter statement is 0.810. The latter statement states the following: (News websites are mobilizing the largest number of supporters of political ideas). The mean of statement (14) is 3.11 which is high and ranked last. The standard deviation of the latter statement is 0.602. The latter statement states the following: (There are fundamental differences between the electronic and traditional press in presenting the subject of political reform).

The latter result may be attributed to the fact that the political reform processes is affected mainly by the extent of awareness that people have. Today, electronic media can easily promote awareness among people. That's because electronic news websites can be easily accessed due to the spread of ICT and internet services

The results are consistent with Owen (2020) which reported that new media have both expanded and undercut the traditional roles of the press in a democratic society.

Abed Al-Razeq (2013) suggests that social media plays a significant role in shaping the university students' political attitudes

Dashti (2009) reported that online journalism took a different direction from the local press, with more freedom to write, discuss, and share ideas online with less fear of government retribution.

Recommendations

In the light of the study's results, the researcher recommends the following:

-Increasing the engagement of university students in electronic news websites and blogs. Such engagement shall promote political awareness among them

-Creating a platform that include news websites. This platform must aim at promoting political awareness among students and assisting students in avoiding negative political content.

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