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Factors Influencing Journalistic Editing in the Web Sites of Palestinian News Agencies

Study of the mass communicator, the working
environment and the pattern of ownership

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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The study, titled “Factors Influencing Journalistic Editing in the Websites of Palestinian News Agencies; Study of the mass communicator, the working environment and the pattern of ownership, included 7 chapters. The first chapter offered a detailed description beginning with the methodological and procedural framework of the research. The second chapter presented the theoretical framework of the study, which included a detailed analysis of the Agenda-setting, communication and the Gatekeeping theories.

Meanwhile, the third chapter was presented under the title “Online journalism, its forms and development in Palestine”. This chapter discusses the phases that online journalism in Palestine has gone through as well as its many forms and the obstacles which hindered its development, concluding with the electronic Zionist war, which was introduced as a reflection to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As for the fourth chapter which came under the title, “Palestinian News Agencies”, it highlights the founding of such agencies, their development and the interactive services they provides.

The fifth chapter tackled the issue of journalistic editing and forms in online media, the most prominent approaches of editing in news agencies, editorial policy of online websites, selection standards of news stories and journalism genres in electronic press.

The sixth chapter discussed in detail the factors influencing news editing, communication technology and its effect on news editing. The chapter further discussed the features of electronic writing and the impact of communication technology on news editing.

Lastly, the seventh and final chapter shared the results of the analytical study and the field research, the recommendations and suggestions for future research.

This study deployed two research methods, including a media survey and a comparative approach. The population of the study is compromised of 186 individuals, who represent the communicators during the time when the study was conducted. A total of 124 individuals provided responses. Furthermore, the study was conducted in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and abroad due to the fact that a number of the communicators who are part of the study are based in Lebanon, Cairo and Amman.

The researcher analyzed the media websites, which are included in the study, using two topics; the Palestinian reconciliation and the prisoners' suffering in the Israeli occupation jails from October 20 to December 19 of 2014 for a total of 60 days. The study deployed the method of comprehensive analysis and the use of two distinct topics, because it promises to offer the researcher a chance to discover how the topic determines the use of certain journalism genres.

The results revealed that the most prominent factors influencing editorial policies in the websites included in the study are, in order of importance; the political situation, media ownership, the target audience, the communicator's party affiliation, the funding, the security conditions and lastly, the training level of the communicators.

As for the internal Palestinian factors influencing journalistic work in the websites included in the study, are in order of importance, the lack of a modern law that protects journalists, the dependence of the judicial system, the division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the interference of Hamas' armed forces in journalistic work, the deterioration of the political security situation and lastly the poor cooperation between media institutions.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the most prominent factor which determines the daily media work plan is the current daily events and their developments. The daily work plan is also determined by the personal assessment of the reporter or senior editor, then the editor in chief, the coverage of competitor media websites, and lastly the directives of the News Agencies Chairman of Board.

To sum up, taking into consideration the results of both the analysis of the issue of prisoners and the Palestinian division, the study revealed a significant relation between the nature of a specific media website (official, partisan, private) and the tendency to use certain editorial templates in its journalistic editing.