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TEACHING HISTORY THROUGH THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA (POWERPOINT) IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SAUDI ARABIA

BY

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

2013

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of doctor of philosophy in education

Institute of Education
International Islamic University Malaysia

AUGUST 2013

ABSTRACT

This experimental study aims to investigate the effects of both multimedia and direct teaching methods on the academic achievement and attitude of history students. This was carried out through teaching treatment group units of history subject using multimedia (PowerPoint) and teaching control group the same units through direct teaching. The study also explores the availability levels of instructional devices at secondary schools in the *Asarah* province, and the extent to which history secondary school teachers use these devices, including the possible difficulties and obstacles history teachers may encounter in using instructional devices. A mixed-method approach was used to collect and analyse the data. Survey questionnaires were administered to tenth grade history students to collect the quantitative data, whereas semi-structured interviews were conducted with history teachers. Descriptive analysis and ANOVA were used to analyse the quantitative data, and N-Vivo was used to analyse the qualitative data. The results revealed that the treatment group performed better compared to the control group on achievement and attitude scales. The analysis also found that instructional devices did exist in the sampled schools sampled. However, teachers seldom use these instructional devices due to a general sense of unfamiliarity, which results in a number of obstacles and difficulties. This causes history teachers to avoid the use of such technological teaching aids.

خلاصة البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الفرق بين طريقة التعليم الحديثة وطريقة التعليم التقليدية وذلك من خلال تدريس المجموعة التجريبية موضوع التاريخ بواسطة الوسائط المتعددة وتدريس المجموعة الضابطة الموضوع نفسه بواسطة طريقة التعليم التقليدية، كما تهدف الدراسة أيضاً إلى استكشاف درجة توفر الأجهزة التعليمية في المدارس الثانوية بمحافظة السراة ودرجة استخدام المعلمين للأجهزة التعليمية والصعوبات التي تمنع المعلمين من استخدام الأجهزة التعليمية. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة قام الباحث باستخدام اختبار تحصيلي لقياس مستوى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية والمجموعة الضابطة قبل وبعد المرور بالتجربة التعليمية. وكذلك تم استخدام استبانة لقياس اتجاهات طلاب المجموعة التجريبية قبل وبعد المرور بالتجربة التعليمية. كما قام الباحث أيضاً باستخدام استبانة لاكتشاف آراء المعلمين حول درجة توفر الأجهزة التعليمية في المدارس الثانوية ودرجة استخدام هذه الأجهزة التعليمية والصعوبات التي تمنع المعلمين من استخدام الأجهزة التعليمية. وقد أثبتت نتائج الدراسة تفوق طلاب المجموعة التجريبية على طلاب المجموعة الضابطة كما أثبتت نتائج الدراسة أيضاً أن الأجهزة التعليمية متوفرة في المدارس ولكن المعلمين لايستخدمونها بسبب وجود مشكلات وصعوبات خارجة عن سيطرتهم.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions of higher learning.

Mefleh Qublan Al- Qahtani

Signature …… Date ……..

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This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved parents for their unconditional love,

My beloved wife; Ummu Muhammad, my children for their support, courage, love and patience

and

All my colleagues in University of Tabuk, brothers, sisters, friends and loved ones who were instrumental to the accomplishment of this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I thank Allah who granted me strength to finish this investigation, I thank my supervisor Dr. Md.Yusnan Hj. Yusof who gave me a lot of his time and effort till I finished my study, I thank the Supervisory Committee members; Dr. Ismaiel Hasanien and Dr. Fouad Rawash who assisted me, stood by my side, and delivered to me many useful tips that were of a great help in my study, I thank the First Supervisory Committee members; Dr. Akram M. Zeki and Dr. Sharifah Hassan for their efforts spent in reading my thesis and providing me with advices and guidance, I thank both the internal examiner Dr. Kamal Basha, external examiner Dr. Safwan Ali, and chairman Dr. Abdul Kabir Hussain, who accepted to discuss this thesis for the last time, may Allah reward them on my behalf the best reward. I thank the Malaysian people for their generous hospitality, I thank the Saudi cultural attaché in Malaysia and all its staff for the facilities and assistance they provided to me to conduct my study, I thank my colleagues at the University of Tabuk for standing beside me, I thank my father, mother and brothers, I thank my dear wife and my children who lived with me the details and steps of this endeavor by days, hours, and minutes and I dedicate this thesis and this work to them.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Modern education aims to structure human personality with diverse aspects such as functionality, physicality, intellect, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence. Such conditioning aims to produce proactive and productive future generations. Doubtless, such an initiative is fundamental for sustaining continued growth and prosperity (Jalalah, 2001).

Over the course of the 20th century, practical sciences have grown exponentially more so than the social sciences. Perhaps this is due to the fact that practical sciences are directly connected to property, power and industry. This has led curriculum personnel in the 21st century to marginalise social sciences to a certain extent due to their nearly sole focus on growing the practical sciences. This marginalisation had led to the emergence of a new generation, which is technologically advanced but detached from its origin and identity. As such, curriculum personnel have decided to revise curriculum policy and pay equal attention to social sciences to better educate the new generation to their culture and present and past glory. History is considered one of the most important branches of social science, which focuses on studying humans, the relationships between them, and the contributions they have made. It is presented as a documentation of the previous generations' lifestyle and experiences. It is also considered a pivotal avenue that connects the past to the present and makes use of past experiences in resolving future issues (Laqani, 2000).

Education wise, history allows students to be connected to their countries, the developments taking place around them and appreciate the contributions of their forefathers. To materialise these benefits, the methods of teaching history must be improved. This is because getting students to be interested in a taught subject depends heavily on the method of teaching used by the instructor. Recently, many concerns emerged projecting the necessity of abstaining from the lecture method or the teacher-centred method to the adoption of effective new techniques technology has brought to the spheres of teaching and learning. As such, the International Conference of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] 1974, proposed integrating technology into basic education. UNESCO emphasised that overlooking such integration would make the learning process incomplete. Furthermore, in its annual conference in 1985 UNESCO affirmed that any educational programme or method that isolates technology would not deem to be a comprehensive method (Mahmoud, 1993).

This was a strong message from UNESCO to educationists in that they are held responsible for incorporating modern technology across the breadth of education. This initiative led to the emergence of what has become known as instructional technology, which consequently led to the present knowledge explosion witnessed in the educational sector. As a result, two groups emerged for and against the new invention; the first group believes that instructional technology could effectively replace all necessary teaching aids across classroom settings. The second group however, believes that the new technology is dependent on human being; therefore it contributes nothing without human intervention (Suwaidi, 2006).

Interestingly, King Abdullah Abdul-Aziz Public Educational Development's Project had come into view at the national level to materialise the Ministry of

Education's endeavours to improve the quality of public education. The project aimed at overcoming facets of deficiency in public education sector, qualitatively redirect it towards knowledge economy and investing in human capital. The forgoing project is considered an imperative platform for comprehensive and fundamental reform of educational curriculum and school culture. Similarly, the project is structured in such a way that it is capable of meeting plans of liberating the educational approaches from traditional practices in order to foster approaches of capacity building, innovation and creativity among students and teachers simultaneously (Ministry of Education, 2004).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Saudi Ministry of Education has exercised tremendous efforts and invested considerable funds towards providing schools and teacher training programs with modern technologies. However, only the teachers of practical sciences were benefitting from the organised workshops and technologies at the expense of the teachers of social sciences. The researcher therefore poses the question as to whether social science teachers are really benefitting from the foregoing workshops, and whether the aims of the Ministry of Education have been materialised?

Unfortunately, when the researcher investigates the extent to which the Ministry of Education's efforts are practically beneficial in secondary schools of *Asarah* Province, it was found that studies of social sciences on the subject under study in general and history in particular were out of reach in the Kingdom. Few studies have been conducted in the field of social sciences in the context of Saudi Arabia (Balwi, 2002). This dearth in literature is clear indication that the practical science subjects were fortunate enough to predominate and capture researchers and principals' attention to the extent that principals perceived that multimedia is

specifically designed as a teaching method that enhances only practical science teachers and has nothing to do with teachers of social science particularly history.

Ghamidi (2004) reached the conclusion that although the Ministry of Education continuously equips secondary schools across the Kingdom with modern instructional teaching aid, a number of teachers fail to utilise such aids in their methods of instruction as they are ignorant of its benefits and how such aids are used. As a result they continue to heavily depend on the direct teaching method.

This practice of giving preferring the practical sciences over the social sciences, particularly history has negatively influenced history teachers to the extent that they perceive the huge amount spent by the Ministry of Education on improving school computer laboratories and instructional technology centres as not a contribution to social science subjects but designed to assist teachers of practical science subjects.

This study aims at examining the level of multimedia and device availability in the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province. It also investigates the extent to which secondary schools teachers use instructional technology in instructional processes and the obstacles that prevent them from optimising their use.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are to examine the effects of teaching history with multimedia through PowerPoint presentations and the extent to which it influences tenth grade students' attitudes and achievements. More specifically, the objectives of the study include the following:

1. Investigating the effects of using multimedia (i.e. PowerPoint) on tenth grade students' achievement in history through teaching the treatment group using

multimedia, while the control group is taught using the traditional approach (direct teaching).

2. Examining tenth grade history students' attitudes (treatment group) towards multimedia (i.e. PowerPoint).
3. Investigating perceptions of history teachers in the *Asarah* Province about the availability of multimedia and instructional devices across all secondary schools in the Province.
4. Exploring the extent to which history teachers in the *Asarah* Province are making full use of multimedia and instructional devices in the selected secondary schools.
5. Investigating problems and obstacles that hinder full the optimisation of multimedia and instructional devices in the classrooms in the *Asarah* Province from the perspective of history teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is worth noting that the researcher used the mixed-method approach in which the quantitative approach was adopted to answer research questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, while the qualitative approach was adopted to answer research questions 3, 4 and 5. Based on the aforementioned research objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of multimedia (PowerPoint) on pre and post-achievement of tenth grade students regarding the study of history (treatment and control groups)?

2. What is the effect of using the multimedia (PowerPoint) on the pre and post attitudes of tenth grade students (the treatment group) regarding the study of history?
3. What are the perceptions of history teachers regarding the availability of multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province?
4. What is the degree of the multimedia use and instructional devices in the selected secondary schools of the *Asarah* Province from the viewpoint of history teachers?
5. What are the difficulties and problems that history teachers encounter in their use of multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Given the forgoing research questions, the following hypotheses are tested:

1. There are no statistical significant differences ($p \leq 0.05$) between modern and traditional methods on tenth grade students' achievement in history.
2. There are no statistical significant differences ($p \leq 0.05$) of using multimedia (PowerPoint) on tenth grade students attitudes (treatment group) compared to their attitudes prior to its usage.
3. History teachers negatively perceive the availability of adequate multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the Asarah Province.

4. History teachers do not significantly perceive having the ability of using multimedia instructional devices in the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province.
5. History teachers do not encounter significant difficulties and problems in using multimedia instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province.

Table 1.1
Summary of the Research Questions and Hypotheses of the Study

Research Questions	Research Hypotheses
What is the effect of multimedia (PowerPoint) on pre and post-achievement of tenth grade students in regards to the study of history (treatment and control groups)?	H_O: There are no statistical significant differences ($p \leq 0.05$) between modern and traditional methods on tenth grade students' achievement in history.
What is the effect of using the multimedia (PowerPoint) on the pre and post attitudes of tenth grade students (the treatment group) in regards to the study of history?	H_O: There are no statistical significant differences ($p \leq 0.05$) of using multimedia (PowerPoint) on tenth grade students attitudes (treatment group) compared to their attitudes prior to its usage.
What are the perceptions of history teachers history regarding the availability of multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province?	H_O: History teachers negatively perceive the availability of adequate multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province.
What is the degree of the use of multimedia and instructional devices in selected secondary schools of the *Asarah* Province from the viewpoint of history teachers?	H_O: History teachers do not significantly perceive having any ability of using multimedia and instructional devices in the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province.
What are the difficulties and problems that history teachers encounter in using multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in *Asarah* Province?	H_O: History teachers do not significantly encounter difficulties and problems in using multimedia and instructional devices across the selected secondary schools in the *Asarah* Province.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The principal concern of this research is to examine the impact of teaching methods on tenth grade history students' attitudes and achievement in the selected secondary schools of the *Asarah* Province, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According Kuhn (1970), there is no single coherent body of learning theory; an assortment of theories co-exists. Some are fairly convincing and clearly explicated, some express beliefs and hopes about the human conditions, some constrained themselves to consideration of how learning occurs, and some seek to embrace wider aspects of human behaviour. Each has its own philosophical orientation about human existence and purpose, which predetermines research methodology and limits theory construction. Of these learning theories, constructivist and behaviourist paradigms are dominant (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009). The behaviourist paradigm according to Grassian & Kaplowitz (2009), regards learning as measurable through observable changes in behaviour. In such a situation, learning can be achieved if learners are provided with the correct stimuli and are trained to respond in a particular manner exhibited by a set of pre-defined or predictable behavioural outcomes (Leonard, 2002; Thorndike, 1931; Skinner, 1968). In other words, according to this theory learning is based on a stimulus-response hypothesis that postulates a neutral bond would be established between the stimulus and the response when a particular stimulus produced satisfactory response within a given environment (Thorndike, 1931). Here arises the significance of instructional method to history teachers in the *Asarah* Province as students learn more effectively when the instructional method is catchy, user friendly and satisfactory. The foregoing definition suggests that behaviourist approach is an inner power or internal arousal that directs, controls and instigates an individual to engage in an activity for its own sake and sustain that behaviour. It is a behaviour

done for its own sake rather than for some kind of reward or pay-off (Coisini, 2000; Sansone & Smith, 1986).

The constructivist paradigm postulates that learners construct their own knowledge, which is strongly influenced by perilous experiences. In this way, learners build their own individual sense of reality. Therefore, constructivism encourages educators to reflect on their perceptions and to provide experiences that will help their current knowledge (Piaget, 1926; Vygotsky, 1994; Bruner, 1987; Wood, 1998).

According to Mazzarelli (2010), the characteristics of constructivism learning and teaching can be seen in activities which reflect a real environment which is relevant to the teacher's philosophy to play an important role in terms of his/her discipline as guide, monitor coach and facilitator. These situations and environments reinforce the students to play important roles which may help them to control the learning process, activities and develop their skills and reflect the tasks which reflect the real environment. In a constructive environment, students work as a team and share knowledge, interact dynamically within the teachers who facilitate discussion and encourage students to produce creative and new ideas (Ogundo, 2010). In such an environment, learners are given the chance to learn and create their own knowledge and solve problems and use critical thinking to encourage them to gain their own knowledge from experiences. It is worth noting that a learner would be more engaged if he/she feels that his/her real world experience is taken into consideration. Based on the learning theories discussed, the proposed theoretical framework is outlined below as illustrated by Figure 1.1.