

THE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER ON THE STUDENT'S PERSONAL EXPRESSION. ISRAELI EXPERIMENT

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This article reviews the influence of the school press on school students. The school press is not the most widespread media tool today due to the popularity of the Internet. Moreover, due to the printing press crisis, the school newspaper is not so popular today and is in danger of disappearing. The article is based on experimental research as a test case, which provides a theoretical and further will introduce a practical tool for producing an optimal school newspaper.

This article also shed light on the topics of media education in schools, the development of the school newspaper as an activity and problems. The aim of this article is to define conditions under which the beneficial influence of the school press on the individuality of young people will increase.

Keywords: *school newspaper, cognitive, emotional and behavioral-social influences, students' personal expression, media, communication, print and electronic journalism, education.*

INFLUENȚA PRESEI ȘCOLARE ASUPRA EXPRIMĂRII PERSONALE A STUDENTULUI

Articolul analizează în detaliu influența presei școlare asupra tinerilor. Actualmente, presa școlară nu este cel mai popular mod de comunicare mediatică datorită popularității Internetului. Pe deasupra, trebuie să constatăm că datorită crizei tiparului, ziarul școlar nu este foarte răspândit și este pe cale de dispariție.

Articolul dezbate educația media în școli, gestionarea presei școlare ca activitate și dificultățile asociate cu procesul de gestionare a acesteia. Scopul acestui articol este de a defini condițiile în care influența pozitivă a presei școlare asupra individualității tinerilor poate avea un efect mai mare.

Cuvinte-cheie: *presă școlară, influențe cognitive, emoționale și comportamental-sociale, exprimarea personală a studenților, comunicare, mass-media, presă tipărită și electronică, educație.*

Introduction

This article examines the main three topics: the media and the influence of the press on young people, the impact of teaching media and journalism in schools and the development of school journalism [1; 2; 3; 4].

Today, young people prefer the Internet and more modern printed press media. But it has also been found that the Internet has a devastating effect on them. Over the past decade, there has been limited research experience on encouraging adolescents to use media whose impact is considered more positive, such as reading books and newspapers. The beginning of the school newspaper as an activity occurred at the beginning of the 20th century and experienced an upsurge before the printing press crisis [5; 6; 7].

School journalism was more popular earlier, but the number of studies on its impact on young people was limited. Now this topic has become more relevant due to the fact that due to the crisis of the press, this type of activity has become endangered [8].

For this reason, in recent years this topic has become more frequently touched upon and the influence of the school newspaper on young people has been revised. Cognitive, emotional and behavioral-social aspects of personal self-expression of students were considered, and it was also found that this type of activity has a beneficial effect on writing and reading skills, social skills and awareness of the environment [9]. In the field of journalism and media research, the research results highlighted the contribution of these studies to the development of good citizenship and democracy, the presentation of relevant knowledge, the development of freedom of expression, feelings and criticism [10; 11].

In this experimental study, it would be possible to trace specific examples of the beneficial effect of a school newspaper on students.

In addition, the problem in media education is also affected. In teaching, the emphasis was placed on pedagogy than on aspects related to practical journalism [12]. There is a limited amount of research on this topic, and there are few programs in the school press.

The purpose of this article is to determine the conditions for optimizing the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social impact of a school newspaper on students' personal self-expression and to prove its relevance.

Context

The study of school journalism as the main and innovative source.

This research is valuable because the number of studies on this topic is limited. The study provides an innovative model of this kind. Moreover, one of the main recommendations is to continue producing the school newspaper in schools as an educational and valuable activity. In addition, the study researches aspects that has not been investigated before as to the cognitive, behavioral-social, emotional aspects of the influence of the school newspaper on young students (middle school to high school). The relevance of the printed school press is also being considered. The results established that the newspaper remains relevant and has a beneficial effect on school students.

A practical innovative Israeli experiment research

Our research as a practical Israeli experiment conducted at one point of time in a school paper in Israel, „Iton Betzefer”. The study is empirical-quantitative, correlative and inductive, which examines the phenomenon of the influence of one school newspaper on the students' personal expression. From which conclusions drawn about the specific paper studied, and lead to insights and conclusions about other school newspapers, as well as to offer a tool for producing an optimal school newspaper using a theoretical and practical model in further research.

The empirical test provided accurate relative data using closed questionnaires, helped answer the research question, and established the hypothesis of a correlation between the exposure degree to the school newspaper and its effects on students' personal expression, according to the study groups. It also demonstrated that increased exposure influences more students who exposed in high degree to the school paper. In our case, the experimental group, the writers, compared to the control group, the readers. The statistical and probabilistic methods of quantitative knowledge grouping and analysis have helped to create a model of a quality and successful educational school paper whose impact is significant.

The studied population

The study population consisted of 230 students studying in the Karmiel High School, Israel, and junior high school, ages 12-18, boys and girls from grades 7-12, 80 students in the experimental group, and 150 students in the control group. The school is state-funded from the secular Jewish sector. 1240 students enrolled in the program, including integrated classes: regular classes, special education classes (PDD) and gifted students (Figure 1).

Fig. 1. Distribution of the Writers and Readers Population by gender.



Source: by author.

An innovative research method - a comparison between the writers' and readers exposed to the school newspaper

For the first time, our research used a comparative method of two research groups exposed to the school newspaper: the writers-journalism students, the experimental group, and the readers-non-journalism-students, the control group.

Until today, studies investigated the school press influences conducted mainly among the students that were active in it, and almost no reference made to the students who read it. Therefore, our study enables for the first time an in-depth understanding of the entire school population's attitudes toward the school paper, and to prove there is a correlation between the exposure degree to the school paper and its influences, needs and functions, its status and relevance in the school.

The two research groups were exposed to the paper during their studies, compared to an American study from 2008 [13] that examined the contribution of the school press, but among students who were in the past journalism students, a study which did not pay attention to its readers. In addition, the study examines for the first time the school newspaper influence exposure on the media future orientation while comparing between writers and readers of the school paper. The revealed findings are important both to the future orientation research field, in general, of which overlap with the findings of other studies in the field [9; 4], and to the media future consciousness of the students, in particular. The similarity between our study findings to other studies' findings relates to the fact that at an early age, students think about their future in the immediate- and long-term future. They also have a cognitive awareness of the field of study and occupation they wish to deal with in the future, and the parents have influence on their children's future thinking, a field that is not sufficiently researched in a study of future orientations.

The experimental group

Consisted of all the journalism students active in the school newspaper ($n = 80$) (about 6.5% of the school population), boys and girls between the ages 12 to 18. Most of the group consists of high school journalism classes, and the few were from the junior high school journalism classes. In total only 58 students ($n=58$) participated in this study group due to various constraints (unwillingness to participate in the study, questionnaire malfunction), which constitute 72.5% of all media and journalism students aged 12-18= 12 boys (21.1%) and 46 girls (78.9%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution by Age of the Writers Population.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
12-13	1	5	8.6	8.6	8.6
14-15	2	16	27.6	27.6	36.2
16-17	3	31	53.4	53.4	89.7
18-19	4	6	10.3	10.3	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	58	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	58	Missing cases	0		

Source: by author.

Table 1 indicates the distribution of the experimental group (journalism students/writers) according to age range. It can be seen that the largest number of journalism students are aged 16-18 (63.7%) and the minority are aged 12-15 (36.2%).

The control groups

Consisted of a representative sample of students from the school newspaper readers (non-journalism students) (n = 150) (about 10% of the school population). 150 online questionnaires sent to a random number of students, 25 students from one class in each grade from 7-12 grade, aged 12-18. The group consisted of boys and girls of the school paper readers: 63 boys (53.2%), and 56 girls (46.8%), but in practice only 119 valid questionnaires were used in the study (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution by Age of the Readers Population.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
12-13	1	26	21.8	22.2	22.2
14-15	2	40	33.6	34.2	56.4
16-17	3	44	37.0	37.6	94.0
18+ +18	4	7	5.9	6.0	100.0
	0	2	1.7	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	117	Missing cases	2		

Source: by author.

Table 2 indicates the distribution of the control group (non-journalism students/readers) according to age range. It seems that the largest number of readers are aged 14-17 (71.8%) and the minority are aged 12-13, 18+ (28.2%).

In addition, the comparison between the two research groups, the writers and the readers, enabled an understanding of the main needs and functions that the school newspaper should fill for each of the research groups. One of the studies in this field provided an important estimation of aspects that were not studied in the past [14], and enabled us to improve the school paper according to the students' needs and satisfactions, especially when the paper is in crisis.

It should be noted that some of our study findings are surprising because they contradict several studies' findings, according to which the printed media primarily fill the cognitive function rather than the escapist function, and are the most important source of information and opinions for this age [15].

They also contradict the studies that claim the youth consume entertainment content mainly from the popular mediums, television and cinema, while the knowledge contents they consume from the printed media, as we found that most students in the two groups consume mainly entertainment contents from the school newspaper [16].

The method, which the two research groups compared by, allowed us to examine the school paper relevance, and although the findings indicate a difference between the two groups, it should be noted that both the writers and the readers think it is important to have a school newspaper at school. There is no doubt that this is a very important finding, especially in view of the newspaper disappearance from many schools, which is likely to continue its existence.

Results of discussion

This article reviews the influence of the school paper on adolescents. The school newspaper is a useful tool and a part of democratic education at schools.

Moreover, the barriers to this type of activity are censorship, the problem of financing, the involvement of adults (school principal, consultant, teachers, parents) in the printing process, the reduction in reading and writing among adolescents, empowerment of social media and the global crisis of the printed press.

Due to these boundaries the school newspaper is under threat of extinction today more than ever. Also today, young people prefer to read short articles and news on the internet rather than books or printed press. [17, 10, 3, 7].

There are a small number of studies whose topic was the development of the school press and it is difficult to understand when they began to be conducted.

For this reason, this study is relevant and functional. It examines in detail the correlation between the school newspaper and the students' achievements, cognitive and awareness, their behavioral and emotional aspects. Analyzing the influence of the school newspaper on the student's abilities and self-expression, this study helps formulate a description of the school newspaper as an activity.

According to the research results, a positive correlation was found between the exposure degree to the school newspaper and its various effects on the personal expression, according to each of the research groups. The more exposure to the school newspaper, the more its positive impact. Because the writers are more exposed than the readers are to the school paper, the influence and contribution degree is higher on their personal expression.

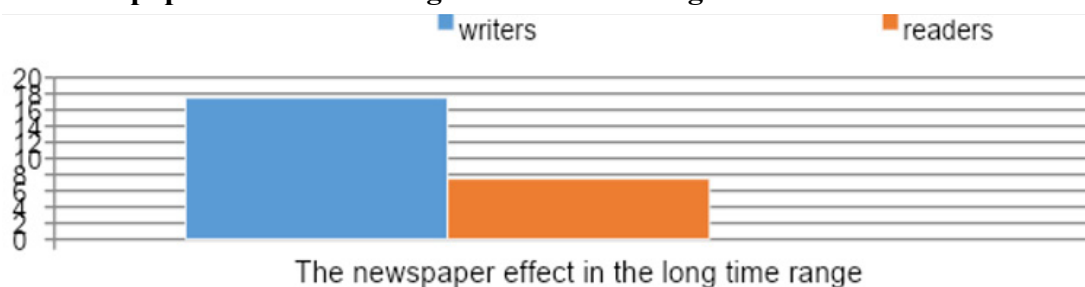
These findings lead to the conclusion that since the essence of school paper effects is a function of the students' exposure to the school paper, the effects' positive components on the personal expression are optimized by increasing the students' exposure to the school newspaper in the best possible way.

In addition, the hypothesis that the time range of effects after the printed school paper's exposure would be more in the immediate and short-time span future (up to 5 years to 10 years) than in the long-time span future (over 10 years), confirmed regarding both study groups.

Most writers (53.5%) (n=31) indicated the printed school paper's content did not influence them in the long-time span future (over 10 years), compared with only 15.5% (n=9) noted it would influence them.

The same was found among readers. Most of them 72.2% (n=86) indicated the the printed school paper's content did not influence them in the long-time span future, compared with only 7.5% of them (n=9) who noted it would influence them (Figure 2).

Fig. 2. The newspaper effect in the long - time term among writers and readers.



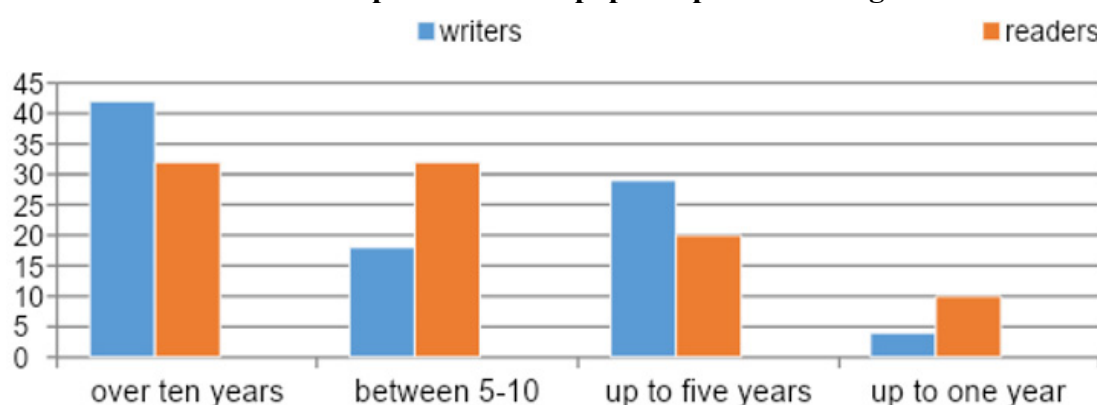
Source: by author.

The hypothesis, concerning the future effects after the printed school paper's exposure according to both study groups, refuted. The future time span among the writers was found to be mostly between the medium to long-time span future (over 10 years to 50 years) (44.8%) (n=26).

However, contrary to my expectation, among the readers, it stands mainly on two consecutive time spans on average. Over the short-time span future (5-10 years) (34.7%) (n=41) and on the long-time span future (30-50 years) (34.7%) (n=41), and less on the immediate-time span future (up to 5 years) (Figure 3).

Study results illustrate a positive correlation between the exposure degree to the school newspaper and its effects on students' personal expression in relation to gender and age variables. The exposure of female gender to the school paper is higher than that of male gender, especially among the experimental group (the writers) at the level of influence, interest, involvement, social skills and involvement in the community.

In addition, younger students from junior high schools are more involved, influenced and contributed than graduate' students in relation to the influence of the school paper on their future media orientation in the cognitive and behavioral fields in the immediate time span.

Fig. 3. The future effects after the printed school paper exposure among writers and readers.

Source: by author.

These findings lead to the conclusion that gender and age variables have a weight on the effects optimizing the school paper influence on personal expression and positive contribution. Therefore, we have to consider it in order to optimize the purpose of a school newspaper and expand its exposure to students from high school and for both genders.

Some of the study results also point to the dysfunctional nature of the school newspaper in terms of its impact on personal expression, especially among readers, since it proved its influence and substance degree at all levels is relatively low.

The negative results indicate a low degree of influence in terms of knowledge accumulation, content issues, change of agenda, low impact in the future media orientation in the cognitive and behavioral levels and low fulfillment of needs and functions. Negative feelings of indifference and frustration found, preference for other media means over the school paper, low reading of the school newspaper, and dissatisfaction with the degree of its distribution and frequency, and dissatisfaction with the involvement of the educational staff in the production of the school newspaper and censorship.

This leads to the conclusion that despite the fact that the school paper is an important educational and democratic tool, the deficiencies accompanying its production impede its success, which requires its immediate improvement in order to justify its existence in the education system.

The results of research findings demonstrate a significant difference between the two study groups, the writers and the readers. However, we also found a similarity between them. The high relevance of the newspaper, the satisfaction of enjoyment and entertainment from it, a similar interest in its content, preference for the printed school newspaper instead of the digital, awareness to the cognitive influences and a low impact on the cognitive future media orientation.

This leads to the conclusion, that on the one hand, the school newspaper has a different effect on each of the study groups' students since they see the school paper from a different angle in terms of the needs and functions it fills for them. On the other hand, there are similarities between the two research groups, the writers and the readers. Hence, a different approach to each group may fill the needs of each study group and narrow the gap between them. In addition, the similarities between them indicate that closing the gap between them is not a difficult task to perform, and therefore it is possible and desirable to improve the school's paper with reference to these findings.

Conclusions

The reason for conducting our experimental research is that in recent years there has been a crisis the school press has experienced. The research analyzes the correlation between journalistic activity and influence on students' self-expression. The experiment conducted in an Israeli school in which two groups of students were compared has demonstrated several important findings.

Journalist students who participated in the process of writing material for the school newspaper (experimental group) and students-readers (control group). When analyzing the results of the experiment, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The correlation between the degree of influence of the school newspaper and its beneficial effect on the students was proved. The higher the degree of impact, the higher the effect on the cognitive, behavioral-social and emotional aspects on the student's self-expression. The writers of the newspaper, since they are more exposed to the school paper, the higher its influence on them, and consequently there were more positive results among them, while among the students-readers were found more moderate influences.

2. A significant difference was inspected between the two groups involved in the experiment. Students-journalists are more susceptible to influences than students-readers. But there was no significant difference in preferences regarding the format of the newspaper or its content between the two study groups.

3. Gender and age variables have a great influence on the willingness to get acquainted with journalism. Students from female gender are more interested in the journalism school activity and more influenced by it. Middle school students are more likely to join more hours at school paper activities than high school students are so the influence among them is wider.

4. The degree of influence of the school newspaper on the future media orientation of most students is not very high. Low percentage of students in any grade declared choosing journalism activity from any kind (hobby, work, studying) in the future.

5. Most of the research results are accurate, as the level of internal validity and reliability is quite high.

6. The level of influence of pedagogical and psychoanalytic conditions on the quality of the effect of the school newspaper is high and should act as one integral system.

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