The Role of Iran's Digital Radio Programs for Children in Literary and Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the role of digital radio in literary and religious education among children in Iran. This is a descriptive survey conducted in digital radio studious of Iran Participants were150 children between 4-11 years old, including 75 girls and 75 boys. Data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire. Our findings showed that children's age, hours of listening to digital radio, and radio programs with literary and religious contents had significant relationship with literary and religious educations that children receive from the digital radio stations in Iran.

KEYWORDS: Children, digital radio, literary education, religious education

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, rapid and widespread technical advancement has caused media owners to be in harmony with it. New media, mostly in the form of digital media, have provided grounds for the media diversity and widespread. Digital media with a two-way and interactive situation have noticeably expanded the range of audience choice. These media have a wider distribution and are less controllable in comparison to traditional media. The most important thing for media managers in Iran is to plan in this regard on which few researches have been conducteddespites other technical issues (Jalilinia, 2005). The experimental broadcast of children's digital radio launched in the summer of 2013, and began his work officially since the autumn of 2013.Children's digital radio enhances the awareness level, education and learning by common and widespread signals. Need assessment, bedding, modern strategy, thematic and functional diversity, ease and simplicity are some services of this audio media. Children and adolescents of different ages with various mental and spiritual tendencies are the main audiences of this network. Developing psychological guidelines in the field of children's literature, maintaining the original values of human, and continuing and semi- continuing experimental education in different scientific, literary, religious, social and artistic fields and in the forms of poetry, fiction, story, comics, declamation, play, speech and etc. are considered as the main goals of this new network. Children are affected by children's radio digital media in the form of subjects and concepts such as poetry, story, declamation, fiction, puzzle, music, and scientific, social and imaginative topics and recreation. Children as the main audience of this network should learn by listening to media how to activate their hidden imaginations.

Nowadays, despite the technology enhancement, radio has still maintained its special position. Analog technical problems of this media such as scratches, disconnecting, and poor portable and failure in receiving signal, have caused technical media researchers to handle radio challenges by taking step and connecting to the realm of new and digital technologies. Along with digital media enhancement, children's digital radio seek to meet a large part of children's intellectual, mental, emotional and social needs in different forms and subjects by special parts in accordance with their ages, certain individual, physical and mental characteristics. Also, in term of education, while coordinating with the newest media in the field of children's literature, this media should perform its special mission that is fostering children's imagination, spirit, and individual creativity (Aghili and Mahdizadeh , 2009).

Children are the second group of audiences of this media (after the parents and public).Programs in the morning are performed with a kind of happiness, positive emotion and joy, and night programs are performed with a kind of relaxation and calmness. In fact, the main goal of morning programs is to make children release their positive and inner emotions in the forms of music, rhythmic poetry and musical programs, and that of night programs is to run children's imagination and inner powers in the forms of fiction, story, comics, story, monologue, drama, and etc.

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Today, which is the age of communication, information and electronic media, although books, as a widespread and cheap media, are still as an undeniable necessity for children' education, there are positive tendencies towards electronic media such as children's digital radio, the use of which has become as a social culture. It should be noted that such media are as an integral part of new educational system, but children should not spend all their times on digital radio programs and neglect studying and book reading. When children spend most of their times on digital radio, they gradually turn to mere audience. This is a danger to which parents should pay attention. Parents should have such planning in the family environment that if necessary, allow their children to use children's digital radio programs and do not cause them to lose the opportunity to think, ask and do other activities. In this paper, we try to investigate the role of this media in literary and religious education of children who are a particular audience of this media.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2. 1. Digital radio

Radio, as a media gradually migrating fromits traditional form to modern technology, is one of those media which can be easily adapted to digital media features. These unique feature will provide a series of changes in the processes of production, transmit and receive radio programs. Consequently, other equipment will be replaced by the current equipment. In this way, according to the act taken by the international policy-making council of radio transmitter, all the analogue antennas must become digital (Lax et al, 2008). Changes in features of receiver devices lead to enhance the expectation level of the audiences. As a result, media managers need to know the exact demands of audience and thereby, adapt the program contents with the new situation.

Although in today's world, digitalization is a global process, but every country and society experiences this process within its own historical, social and cultural contexts. Now that Iranian radio networks should also become digital in terms of production, transmitting and receiving, it is necessary to study and predict the essential changes for an effective production (Aghili and Mahdizadeh, 2009). The nature of radio is along with potential features which have made using new technologies possible. Certainly, if traditional radio does not redefine itself in the presence of new technologies, it will disappear in the current media campaigns. Investigating some situations which lead to a maximum utilization of the quantitative and qualitative development of digital radio, is one of the most essential needs of this old media (Hausman et al, 2007).

In Iran, broadcasting digital channels of radio and television with DVB-T standard has been started since October 2009. As time passed, it was launched in all parts of Iran. According to the released report, approximately 90 % of areas in Iran were supposed to cover digital network until the end of 2013, and to turn off the analogue television at the end of 2014. Logically, digital radio is expected to attract more audience rather than before, and reach new audiences belonging to different classes in addition to maintaining old ones. In fact, one of the main reasons is to adapt digital radio to other media, such a way that it seems that digital radio influence other media to use them as a power means to attract more audiences.

2.2. Children's digital radio

Children's digital radio is an audio broadcasting media, which provide various programs in terms of form and theme through signals and waves around world and Iran in different areas (scientific, literary, social, religious, and etc) for various audiences which are the same children and adolescents. Therefore, children's digital radio provides creative and various programs in the forms of monologue show, comics, friends, declamation and fiction and in different items for its mainstream audience (Biryukov, 1981).The aim of children's digital radio is to provide high quality and quantity programs for children in the forms of poetry, anthem, drama, and story at the appropriate times, and enhance children's efficiency, hobbies, self-esteem and self-confidence. Children's digital radio intends to provide various literary and religious programs to teach children to say "I can do it". Dealing with media such as children's digital radio, the following should be considered:

a)   It is required to obtain sufficient knowledge about children's digital radio;
b)   It is required to communicate intelligently with content of children's digital radio;
c)   It is   required that social and cultural contexts of children's digital radio be analyzed by parents and educational authorities;
d)   Every child or adolescent's perceptions of digital radio should be investigated by educational authorities. (Salehi Amiri, 2008).

Children record what they see, and discover the principals of what they have seen. So, it would be better to reconcile them with radio from childhood. In this way, media will have more audiences, and children become seriously familiar with listening, learn to listen carefully and increase their concentration.

2.3.Education based on radio

Education is a type of sectional or continuing informing, which is given to the audience based on time and in different scientific, literary, cultural, sports and artistic fields, and in the forms of speech, written, recorded, and media. In this basis, learning is an outcome of education (Motamednejad, 2008).Education is relatively permanent changes which occur in an person continuously and non-continuously in the forms of behavior, speech and thought over time (Shekarkhah, 2008). Education means teaching to learn something with the aim of change. Thus, it can be said that education, teaching or learning can be considered as an instrument to be better, become better and remain better. Education contains three main elements:(1) person who teaches, (2) the one who learns, and (3) work, knowledge or science that should be taught. Briefly, they can called "teacher", "learner" and "subject" (Raouf, 2011). In this study, we mainly considered two parts of education can be given by radio: literary and religious.

2.3.1. Literary education

Literary education is a part of education done by media and children learn some knowledge such as poetry, storytelling, fiction, reciting, radio monologue, music and performing arts. In teaching poetry, children learn how to think, and organize their thoughts in the form of imagination. In music, children learn to establish a balance between music and song, melody and tune, and how to shake their feet and hands in harmony with that rhythm or music, i.e. how to sing and dance. In the field of storytelling, children learn how to listen carefully, relate story elements with characteristics, and to know rules and tactics of improvisation and communication chain. In the field of reciting, they learn how to compose poetry, make harmony between poetry and diction by the sense of association, and how to make their mnemonic poems rhythmic and musical.
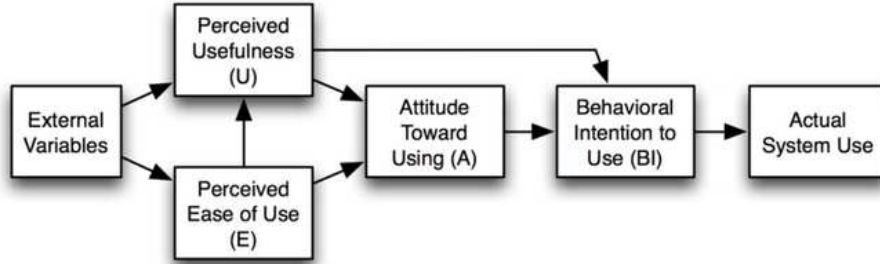
2.3.2. Religious education

In Religious education, the goal is explaining religious teachings, God, prophets and Imams, and be therefore become familiar with their personality and lifestyle as a pattern for children and enjoyment of religious rituals in their daily lives. The main goal of children's digital radio in Iran is giving religious education for children. For example, when children hear the story of Imam Hussein (PBUH), they develop a conceptual relationship with oppressed Imam causing more and more active presence in the mosque in the days of mourning, or at least strengthen their tendencies towards such works.

2.4. The role of children's digital radio on their learning and education

Examining the role of children's digital radio in promoting the level of their education, creativity and learning are the main goals of this study. So, achieving factors such as learning, creativity, media literacy, education and appropriate social behaviors all thanks to the use of children from of this media. In today's world, due to the significant role of digital radio in developing creativity, learning, and promoting culture among Iranian children, archival collection can be considered as one of the effective factors in digital radio programs for children. Since archival collection play a substantial role in improving the programs quality, modeling, and proposing new ideas, they help program-makers in the process of programing for children's digital radio, and cause the producers of radio programs to intellectually use the sound archives to upgrade their programs. Sound archives of Islamic Republic of Iran, especially children's digital radio, are one of the largest archival collections in the Middle East due to having the richest sound sources i.e., a 400-hour sound archive. The record of some of these children's digital radio archival collection dates back to one hundred years ago. As regards the importance and value of archival collection, it is enough to note that in many cases, a main part of them is considered as the most unique sound sources for children (Biryukov, 1981). The main and essential reasons for digitalizing sound archives in broadcasting organization is to maintain sound archives and make them available for radio program-makers, especially children's radio program-makers. Both of these reasons can be considered as a positive step towards doing activities related to program-making and improving culture level and educational system. Successful use of this information technology depends on the effective factors, which influence accepting technology by program-makers. Without considering these factors, this technology will not be used appropriately or it will not be allowed to be used anymore after a while due to lack of appropriate usage. Among various models which have been used by information technology researchers for explaining or predicting the effective factors in information technology acceptance, Davis's Technology Acceptance Model (1989) can be considered as one of the most applicable models in this field. This model has been designed in America, applied in several researches, and gradually gained the necessary validity in other countries. Davis's model is the modified model of the Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action (1980). The theory of reasoned action is a completely general theory, and has been developed to explain any human's course of action. Therefore, a need existed to design a model for examining determining factors in technology acceptance and use as

an action. Technology Acceptance Model was an appropriate response to fulfill this sense of need. The method of this model and its performance is presented in figure 1. The basis of this model is on the two following points:

a.   Mental perception of technology ease of use

b.   Mental perception of usefulness

Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989)

2.5. RESEARCH METHOD

This study conducted to assess the role of digital radio in children's education in the field of literature and religion; in terms of methodology is descriptive survey performed in Iran. The statistical population is consisted of children, who were the audiences of children's digital radio station, and attended in the studio of radio programs for children. It should be noted that since these audiences were at an early age, they might not be able to answer the questions or do not understand the question. Therefore, it was preferred to ask question from their parents or teachers, who had a close relationship and interaction with them, and recognize the educational effect of radio programs on children. Monthly, 1500 children attend indifferent programs of this media. Most of whom are children. Random sampling technique was used and 150of 1500 were selected.

Data collection was done by a field study using a research-made questionnaire and interviewing. We considered different radio programs for children to be able to design the research questions, because every one of these programs has its own educational goals. The questions were designed in this way: first each of these programs was evaluated, then by determining that children are the listener of which of these programs, their parents and teachers were asked about the educational goals of these programs. To determine the validity of questionnaire using content validity. This questionnaire contains 22 questions designed based on 5-choice likert type scale. Questions are about hours of listening to children's digital radio programs, the rate of listening to 10 programs with various contents broadcasting for children. The designed questions were presented to three professors and they were asked to express their opinions about the questions. After receiving their opinions, and correcting them, the research questionnaire was prepared for distributing among participants. In the first part of the questionnaire, the demographic characteristics of the children such as age and sex, hours of listening children's digital radio stations were asked. Based on the collected data, the following are considered as the research hypotheses:

H1: there is a significant relationship between age and educations given by children's digital radio.

H2: there is a significant relationship between hours of listening to children's radio stations, and literary and religious educations given by the media.

H3: there is a significant relationship between listening to programs with literary and religious contents, and promoting the educations among children.

Finally, SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data , and test the hypotheses. The results are presented in next section.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive statistics

In this section, the obtained descriptive statistics related to the study sample are presented in tables 1-3.

Table 1. Frequency of children based on their age

Age group	N	%
4	24	16.0
5	36	24.0
6	20	13.3

7	23	15.3
8	17	11.3
9	10	6.7
10	11	7.3
11	9	6.0
Total	150	100.0

Table2. Frequency of children based their sex

Sex group	N	%
Girl	75	50.0
Boy	75	50.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 3. Frequency of the hours of listening to digital radio

Hours of listening	N	%
30 min -1.30	97	64.7
2-3	48	32.0
More than 3 hours	5	3.3
Total	150	100.0

3.2. Referential statistics: Testing research hypotheses
H1: Relationship between age and educations given by children's digital radio

According to the results of Pearson correlation test, since p-value of the correlation between age and literary was greater than 0.05, so we concluded that there was no relationship between children's ages, and literary education given by children's digital radio, but, as can be seen in table 4,the relationship exists only between children's age, and religious education at 99 % confidence level (R=0.24, sig=0.006, p-value<0.05). It is a positively direct relationship; it means that the older children learn religious materials better from children's digital radio in Iran.

Table 4. Correlation test results of H1

Model	Variables	Pearson correlation coefficient	sig
1	*Children's age andreligious education*	0.24	0.006

H2. Relationship between the hours of listening to children's digital radio stations, and literary and religious educations given by the media

Based on table 5, R=0.27, sig=0.001 for model 1, R=0.37, and sig=0.000 for model 2. since p-value<0.05 for both model, so it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the number of hours when children listen to children's digital radio per week, and literary and religious education given to them through this media at a 99% confidence level and their correlation is in positive directions.

Table 5. Correlation test results of H2

Model	Variables	Pearson correlation coefficient	Sig
1	*Number of hours spent for listening to children's radio and literary education*	0.27	0.001
2	*Number of hours spent for listening to children's radio and religious education*	0.37	0.000

H3. Relationship between listening to children's digital radio station programs with literary and religious contents, and improving the related educations among children

Table 6. Correlation test results of H3

Model	Variables	R	Sig
1	*Listening to programs with literary contents and improvement of literary education*	0.55	0.000
2	*Listening to programs with literary contents and improvement of religious education*	0.24	0.003

Based on table 6, R= 0.55 and sig=0.000 for model 1, and R=0.24 and Sig=0.003 for model 2. Accordingly, we can say that there is a significant and positive relationship between listening to children's digital radio station programs with literary and religious contents and improving the related educations in children at 99% confidence level. In other words, children who listen to such programs are improved in terms of literary education.

4. Conclusion

There are different educational contents among various programs of children's digital radio. In this paper, the role of digital radio in literacy and religious education among children was investigated. The research sample was consisted of 150 children between the ages of 3 and 11, who attended in the studios of children's radio programs in Iran. 64.7% of them were the listeners of Children's digital radio stations for 30 min to 1.30 minutes per week. After collecting data from questionnaires and interviews, three hypotheses were developed to evaluate the role of digital radio in literacy and religious education of children. About the relationship between children's age, and literacy and religious education given by children's digital radio stations, it was concluded that there was only a significant relationship between the religious education and children's ages. It means that those children, who were older, were given more religious education by these programs. Also, there was not any relationship between children's ages and listening to the other children's digital radio programs and educations given by them. Our findings also showed appositive relationship between hours of listening to children's digital radio stations and receiving literacy and religious by children. Moreover, listening to digital radio programs with literary and religious contents were correlated positively with developing the studied educations. Those children, who listened to programs with literacy contents teaching storytelling, Persian poems, and Persian proverbs, received impressive literacy education. It also should be noted that programs with religious contents were able to play a noticeable role in promoting religious spirit among children.

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