

# Curricula Governance from Stakeholders' Point Of View in Jordanian Governorates

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## Abstract

This study aimed at discovering the percentage of the inclusion of governance in the curricula, from stakeholders' point of view in Jordanian Governorates, represented by the units of analysis: Criteria of curricula governance, length of curriculum, narration and indoctrination, not keeping pace with the curriculum for technological development, communication skills, thinking skills, and the practical side of the curriculum. The analytical descriptive methodology, by applying content analysis was used to collect data. The sample consisted of 301 stakeholders in Irbid, Amman, Madaba and Al Karak governorates. They were chosen by using a purposive sample method. The findings showed that the inclusion of the criterion of thinking skills in the curriculum was more than expected. While the other criteria were less than expected, and were distributed in a way that would disturb their balance.

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**Keywords:** Governance, curricula, jordanian governorates.

### Introduction

Curriculum is one of the most important elements of the educational system, because it shows the nature of society, its philosophy and needs. Due to the rapid development of the current era, and at various levels, there is a need to work on curriculum development, to suit these changes and developments. The student is no longer dependent on the information provided by the current textbooks alone, they are no longer the only source in the face of technological advances. The educational curriculum refers to all educational experiences provided by the educational institutions. These experiences are linked to clear and specific educational goals. The curriculum refers to the educational materials allocated to each stage of study. The curriculum includes information on skills, concepts, attitudes and values, that students can acquire. Because the textbook has fundamental role in the process of teaching and learning, and because it is one of the most important sources of learning that contributes to shape the cognitive aspect, and affects the potential of the learner and his abilities and talents, the Ministry of Education set up a high committee for curriculum development. Recently, there has been a need to develop textbooks, especially, as the focus of building the content of books is on the knowledge that is communicated to students. This is reflected in the evaluative questions in all the textbooks, and for the different educational age levels, as the cognitive field reaches about 99% in the evaluative questions. While, in contrast, the proportion of skill areas reach about 1%. Because of the objectives of the Curriculum Development Unit in the Ministry of Education, are to improve and adjust for the better, there was a need to analyze the reality of the curricula from the Jordanian people point of view, from various governorates, by analyzing the responses of the study subjects to the criteria of school governance.

### Background of the Study

This study is in response to the seventh panel discussion launched by His Majesty King Abdullah II, which called for the need to keep pace with our curricula for technological and scientific developments, as well as Amman Declaration, 28 which emphasizes the improvement of the quality of curricula. Because there are many indicators that the current education outputs don't match the requirements of university education, and national strategy for human resource development, and its focus on curriculum development, teacher training

and review of secondary school examination. Therefore, in keeping with the conference of the Arab curriculum governance: Jordan is a model (Reality and Hope), the researchers surveyed the views of Jordanian society from several governorates on the subject of curriculum governance, by conducting a study aimed at identifying the differences among the responses, according to the variable categories of Jordanian society, represented by students at different stages of education, teachers, principals, educators and parents, through the use of visual and audiovisual media, which included video interviews to obtain responses about the criteria of curriculum governance, which have been determined by specialists in curricula. Governance is considered as a system, by which institutions are subject to a set of laws, systems and decisions that aim at quality and excellence in performance, by selecting the appropriate and effective methods to achieve the institution's plans and objectives, and adjust the relationships between the basic parties in performance. The principles of governance emanate from the organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD), which has become an international reference for policy makers, investors and organizations. They are principles of a developmental nature in light of any fundamental changes that take place in the surrounding environment (OECD, 2004, OECD, 1999). There are four basic principles of governance in educational institutions. They are:

**Independence:** The independence of the educational institution means its freedom to make decisions relating to its internal affairs in relation to academic and administrative work, as well as financial independence (Saber, 2007). Hadi 2010 pointed out that the independence of the educational institution is complete only by obtaining the self-management of its scientific performance. This includes the right of the educational institutions to determine its curricula, the academic freedom of the faculty members and scientific research. **Transparency:** It means providing the same information to all individuals and eliminating the disparity of information by providing identical information to those who cannot access it. Transparency and trust are the biggest guarantee for the implementation of good corporate governance (Olson, 2009). Transparency is represented by the clarity of the legislation, the ease of understanding, harmony with each other, objectivity, flexibility and development according to economic and social development, as well as, simplifying the procedures, dissemination of information, disclosure and accessibility (Kharabsha, 1997). **Accountability:** The concept of accountability indicates that the employee

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is responsible for the results of his work, and for providing answers or explanations of his products, and there is an administrative or supervisory body question him. The relationship between the two parties shall be based on determining clear and agreed objectives, and the existence of criteria governing the process of accountability, used to measure the performance of the individual. The concept includes there is accountability may result in a reward or penalty (Al Hassan, 2010). Participation: It is one of the most important elements of any organization according to the concepts of modern administration, which emphasizes the importance of participation of all parties within the organization in decision-making. Participation helps to unify the group or organization, raise morale, promote creative thinking and connect individual goals to the organization's goals (Al Haj Al Yass & Al Haj Khalel, 1998). Governance in educational institutions is a mechanism for governance and guidance. It aims at achieving justice and transparency, and ensures the quality of performance and efficiency of the institution, by activating the actions of the institution administration, with regard to optimal investment of available resources. The educational governance in curricula refers to how to choose the means and styles to achieve its objectives, through participation and distribution of the tasks in the directorates and departments across the governorates, while maintaining contact, and follow up the progress of work, and put all parties in front of their responsibilities, and activate their relationship to the surrounding environment (Kowalski, 2011, Midloch, 2010, Sergiovanni, 1987). There have been numerous studies that have examined the application of governance principles and their relationship to integrity in the methods of assessment, preservation of heritage, habits, focus on the needs of students and the level of educational achievement. The study conducted by Cooper (2005) aimed at finding out the impact of the structure of the educational council on governance and raising the level of achievement among high school students, as well as meeting the cognitive, emotional and personal needs of students. A high school in California was selected. A qualitative methodology and content analysis were used to collect data, through three models of time series, and to make comparisons and matching. The findings showed that there is a success in the application of educational governance through the council's focus on the needs of students. There is also a positive impact on the level of student's achievement which was high. Brown and Duku (2008) carried out a study to find out the range of the governance of secondary school administrations in South Africa. The qualitative methodology was applied on a sample of 47 parents. The interview was used to collect data. The findings

showed that there was some tension between the inherited values of the children of these families and what are taught values and principles in these modern schools. The findings showed also there was a kind of tension and ongoing conflicts between these families and what the administrations of these schools call for. The study conducted by Naseradeen (2012) aimed at finding out the reality of the implementation of governance in the Middle East University from teaching and administrative staff members. The sample consisted of 64 faculty members and 49 administrators. The questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings indicated the reality of the implementation of governance in the Middle East University was high in general from the sample subjects' point of view. There were significant differences in the reality of implementation of governance according to job title, in favor of faculty members. There were significant differences attributed to experience variable, in favor of those who had more than two years of experience. Wiggins 2013 carried out a study aimed at discovering leadership patterns for District of Columbia officials, and the impact of the models of educational governance used in the administrations of this province. The study conducted on 51 educational leaders. A model has been implemented that includes the symbolic and political leadership framework, the human and structural resources of the leaders. The findings showed that the leaders in these schools were using multiple leadership and their performance was good, as there was a significant relationship between the number of years of experience they have and among the leaders who follow the pattern of multiple leadership, and that the more experience of the educational leader there was a tendency to employ all the different leadership styles. Wandira, Onen and Kimoga (2016) conducted a study to investigate the impact of school governance and training on curriculum management, on the level of performance of basic school principals in Uganda. The descriptive methodology was employed. Two tools represented by the interview and questionnaire were used. A sample consisted of 234 principals, 364 teachers, 19 coordinators of the centers and 6 academic supervisors, who were drawn randomly from these schools. The findings indicated that there were significant differences in performance between the principals and supervisors who were subject to training and not subject to training in school administration, in favor of principals and supervisors who were subject to training. The findings showed that the training in school governance and curriculum management has a positive impact on the development of the performance of administrators in basic schools. Finally, Holmes and Bradbury (2017) carried out a study to discover the relationship

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between the progress of students in the basic stage and the commitment of principals and teachers to follow the methods of assessment to measure the progress of students. The study was applied to the schools selected from five geographic regions, included 1131 male and female students. The interview and questionnaire were employed to collect data. The findings indicated that there were a large number of profitable commercial institutions that have flooded the basic schools with different kinds of assessments and tests, but their implementation procedure were not fair.

#### *The Problem of the Study and Its Questions*

The problem of the present study stems from the general objectives of education in Jordan, which are represented by the development of capacities and special abilities, emphasis on creative thinking and critical thinking. In accordance with the recommendations of the Arab curriculum governance conference held at the Middle East University in Amman/ Jordan in 2017, which called for the need to develop mechanisms to involve stakeholders' to know their suggestions and point of view on the educational process, especially parents and students themselves on the criteria of curricula governance, which are determined by the specialists in the curriculum (the length of curriculum, narrative and indoctrination, not keeping pace with the curriculum for development and technology, communication skills, life skills, thinking skills, and the practical side of curriculum. The documented interview style was used, by employing the video method to answer the following question:

What is the percentage of including the criteria of governance in the curriculum, from the view points of the stakeholders': students, teachers, educators and parents?

#### *Importance of the Study*

##### *First- Theoretical Importance*

This study provides a real assessment of curriculum governance from the stakeholders' point of view at the level of the Kingdom. It is expected to benefit from its findings, which are recognized as the extent of implementation of the curriculum governance program, the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

##### *Second- The Practical Importance*

Working to determine conclusions and recommendations from the current study that have an impact on planning and curriculum development. Limitations of the study:

This study restricted on students, teachers, educators, and parents from: Irbid, Amman, Madaba and Al

#### *Definition of Terms*

**Governance:** Governance is a means of management. The concept of governance has been widely considered in light of the globalization of economic through which requires meeting the needs of the global market, and the failure of development in poor countries. **Educational governance:** It refers to a set of mechanisms, procedures, laws, systems and decisions that ensure transparency fairness and rationalizing the practice of curriculum developers.

#### **Methodology**

In this study, the descriptive methodology was applied, through the use of content analysis style, because it provides detailed data on the reality of the curriculum.

#### *The Population of the Study and Sample*

The population consisted of all stakeholders from students, teachers, educators and parents in Irbid, Amman, Madaba and Al Karak governorates. A purposive sample consisted of 301 stakeholders (students, teachers, educators and parents).

#### *The Tool of Study*

The videotaped interview was employed, and a number of questions were determined by a team of educational specialists in the field of curriculum governance. The questions were posed to the sample subjects by a team that was trained in the interview style, in addition to recording data in writing for archiving. A specialized team from the center for media development and training at the Middle East University participated in picturing the interviews.

#### *The Findings*

Findings related to the study question: What is the percentage of including the criteria of governance in the curriculum, from the view points of the stakeholders': students, teachers, educators, and parents?

To answer this question, a content analysis of the curriculum governance was carried out by the analysis units: (the length of the curriculum, narrative and indoctrination, not keeping pace with the curriculum for development and technology, communication skills, thinking skills and the practical side of the curriculum), in accordance with the criteria for the governance of the curriculum, so that the observed frequencies of the indicators of the governance criteria of the curricula, represented by the units of analysis, calculation of percentages and expected frequencies, and applying ( $\chi^2$ ) for good

conformity. In order to detect the good matching of the observed frequencies, for the expected frequencies,

of the school curriculum governance criteria. Table 1 shows that:

**Table 1:** The findings of  $\chi^2$  for good matching of the observed frequencies, for the indicators of school curriculum governance of their expected frequencies are represented by the units of analysis

$\chi^2$ tests	$\chi^2$ test value	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
Pearson Chi-Square	21.605	15	0.119
Likelihood	21.753	15	0.114
Linear-by-linear Association	2.273	1	0.132
No. of Valid cases	301		

It is clear from table 1 that there was no significant relationship at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies for school curriculum governance indicators, and their expected frequencies, represented by analysis units. According to  $\chi^2$  of good conformity, it was found that there was no good matching for the observed frequencies for the indicators of school curriculum governance criteria in governorates, because there was no relationship between the two phenomena, i.e., the responses of individuals in the different governorates were independent of the items related to the criteria of school curriculum governance. Table 1 also shows that

the value of  $\chi^2$  was 21.605 at 0.119. This value is considered greater than the value of  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, because there was no good statistical matching for the observed frequencies of school curriculum governance criteria indicators. To answer the study question: what is the percentage of including the criteria of governance in the curriculum, from the view points of the stakeholders: students, teachers, educators and parents?

The observed frequencies of the school curriculum governance indicators for the study sample were monitored from different governorates.

**Table 2:** frequencies of school curriculum governance criteria for the study sample

The Governorates	Length of curriculum	Narrative and indoctrination	Not keeping pace with the curriculum	Communication skills and life skills	Thinking skills	Practical side
Irbid Frequency	10-10.3%	18-18.6%	14-14.4%	27-27.8%	16-16.5%	12-12.4%
Percentage						
Amman Frequency	12-18.5%	14-21.5%	12-18.5%	10-15.4%	4-6.2%	13-20.0%
Percentage						
Madaba Frequency	10-14.7%	7-10.3%	19-27.9%	18-26.5%	6-8.8%	8-11.8%
Percentage						
Al-Karak Frequency	16-22.5%	13-18.3%	12-16.9%	12-16.9%	9-12.7%	9-12.7%
Percentage						
Total Frequency	48-15.9%	52-17.3%	57-18.9%	67-22.3%	35-11.6%	42-14%
Percentage						

It is clear from table 2 that the frequencies percentages of respondents' answers to the school curriculum governance criteria for the governorates under study (Irbid, Amman, Madaba, and Al Karak). The percentages were as follows: the highest frequency of observation of the responses of the sample of the study on interviews in Irbid governorate was on communication skills criterion, which reached 27 frequencies, and by a percentage of 27.8%. While the lowest observed frequencies were on the criterion of the length of the curriculum, as the observed frequencies reached about 10 by a percentage of 10.3%. In Amman governorate, the highest frequencies were recorded on the criterion of narration and indoctrination. They reached 14 observed frequencies, by a percentage of 21.5%. The lowest observed frequencies in the governorate were recorded on thinking skills criterion. The observed

frequencies were 4, by a percentage of 6.2%. While in Madaba governorate, the highest observed frequencies were recorded on not keeping pace with development and technology criterion. They reached 19 observed frequencies, by a percentage of 27.9%. The lowest observed frequencies in the governorate were recorded on thinking skills criterion. The observed frequencies were 6, by a percentage of 8.8%. In the governorate of Karak, the highest observed frequencies were recorded on the length of the curriculum criterion. They reached 16 observed frequencies, by a percentage of 18.3%. While the lowest observed frequencies in Al Karak governorate were recorded on thinking skills and the practical side criteria. The observed Frequencies were 9 by percentage of 12.7%. Table 2 also shows that the highest observed frequencies on the criteria of school curriculum governance as a whole, and at the level of

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all governorates has been shown on the communication skill criterion. They reached 67 observed frequencies, by a percentage of 22.3%. While the lowest observed frequencies were recorded on thinking skills criterion. They reached 35 observed frequencies, by a percentage of 11.6%.

### Findings Discussion

Discussion of the findings of the study question: What is the percentage of including the criteria of governance in the curriculum, from the view points of the stakeholders: students, teachers, educators and parents? The findings showed that school curriculum governance criteria represented by: the length of the curriculum, narrative and indoctrination, not keeping pace with the curriculum for technological development, communication skills, thinking skills, and the practical side of the curriculum, were distributed in a way that compromises its balance, which requires work and emphasis on achieving the general objectives of education in Jordan. So that the focus is on the development of different skills, whether personal, social or cognitive skills. The reason for their distribution in an unbalanced way is that the national team for the authoring of books and the preparation of curricula did not adopt the criteria of school curriculum governance, which came out of this study, as criteria of educational governance declared to rely on its principles in the process of authorship, and therefore, the inclusion of criteria indicators may not have been intended to criteria, but the ideas and various educational trends. This is in line with Wandira, *et al.* (2016) study, which requires the educational need to write books and the development of curricula in accordance with the criteria of educational governance. The findings of the study in Irbid governorate showed that the highest observed frequencies were the responses of the study sample that based on the communication skills criteria. This may be due to the lack of school curricula to develop students' personal skills, especially university students who were surprised that university life and professional life require them to employ their communication skills and life skills. This has been demonstrated by the responses of university students, who spoke of their ideas, and lack of skills to provide lectures and stand confidently in front of the public. Students attributed this to the lack of school curricula, to communication skills and life skills, in addition the observations of faculty staff members about the weak educational and skillful outputs for high school graduates who had attended university. This may be explained by the lack of educational connotations that preparing school curricula, knowledge and educational activities under them, when planning to write textbooks. This is far

from what the modern education calls for a focus on the personality of the learner in all its aspects. Moreover, modern education systems call for considering educational activities as essential in the educational process, taking into account the needs of students and their different potentials. This is what came out of the study of Holmes and Bradbury (2017) and Nasseradeen (2012). With regard to narration and indoctrination criterion, and the fact that the governorate of Amman recorded the highest observed frequencies, may be due to the fact that respondents from the sample have complained about the amount of cognitive knowledge that requires teachers to comply with the completion of their teaching, according to the planned time schedule. So that teachers are urged under pressure, which calls them to resort to narration and indoctrination with little interest in activating educational activities that focus on the role of the student, and his interaction in the educational process. Teachers and parents indicated that the quality of the study information is limited in knowledge, and lacks the practical aspect. This corresponds to Cooper's (2005) study. Madaba governorate recorded the highest observed frequencies on the criterion of not keeping pace with development and technology. The responses focused on the lack of school curricula to imitate the language of the modern era and keeping pace with technological developments. The school curricula developers did not take care of the tremendous development in the technological information, nor how it could be employed through the curriculum and teaching methods. The students also pointed to the lack of the books to clear images, and there is a need to receive information in a modern and sophisticated technological way. Secondary and intermediate school students also pointed to the lack of computer-based curricula in modern computer programs, and to the lack of research and application. This is consistent with the Holmes and Bradbury (2017) study. A review of the observed frequencies in Al Karak governorate, appears to be the highest on the length of the curriculum. This may be due to the fact that the respondents in this governorate indicated the length of the curriculum and the large amount of information they receive. Because school curriculum developers do not work on curriculum development to take into consideration students' needs, and that the focus in building the content is knowledge. These findings confirm what previously emphasized by the researchers, that the school curricula need educational governance and the adoption of the criteria of school curriculum governance, which came from this study. There is no doubt, and following the answers of the sample subjects from various social groups, we find that the school curriculum contains an enormous amount of information and cognitive

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style of narration and indoctrination, and long curricula don't fit with the time plans, which burden teachers, students and parents. By following the responses of the sample, we find that the authors of the curricula focus on the lower cognitive levels that emphasize on narration and indoctrination, and move away from the higher cognitive levels that stimulate students to analyze, apply evaluate and solve problems. It is noted that the authors of the curriculum included questions that stimulate thinking in school curricula, but teachers and students indicated that they skip them, because they linked to the schedule of study plans, as well as the length of school curricula.

### Recommendations:

Adopting the seventh discussion paper of His Majesty King Abdullah II the basis for comprehensive review of the reality of education in Jordan, in order to establish new rules for reforming the educational system. Developing a practical guide to curriculum governance that includes the criteria to be followed for the administration of the public education system, and to ensure its quality, and the need to codify, institutionalize and globalize the process, in order to achieve the principles of independence, transparency, participation and accountability. Developing mechanisms to engage stakeholders to find out their suggestions and point of views regarding the educational process.

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