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Issues of Children with Disabilities as Reflected in the Jordanian Media from their Parents' Perception: A SWOT Analysis

Abstract

A SWOT study was conducted to analyze parents' perspective on the degree to which Jordanian media covers issues of children with disabilities; the study sample consisted of 129 parents. The researchers constructed a scale consisting of 28 items; furthermore, validity and reliability coefficients of the scale were extracted. Results showed a moderate level of media coverage regarding issues of children with disabilities; social media was given the highest rating followed by visual and audio media, and lastly print media such as newspapers and magazines. However, the majority of media coverage addressed physical and health issues and communicative disorders. Finally, recommendations to improve practices were provided.

Keywords: *issues of children with disabilities, Jordanian media, SWOT Model, special education*

Introduction

Media information is presented in many forms, which are very diverse and aimed at addressing all facets of society including education, culture, health, sports, politics, economics, and disability in particular (Ellis & Goggin, 2015; Ellis & Kent, 2011; Haller et al., 2012) The wide range of media topics and categories of information raises many questions about the delivery of media messages and the

extent of coverage for various topics and issues (O'Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2012; Perse & Lambe, 2016). Furthermore, questions are raised about the impact on those who follow media coverage in terms of increasing awareness or influencing new trends; these questions are of particular concern for families of children with disabilities (Briant, Watson, & Philo, 2013; Sarrett, 2011; Zhang & Haller, 2013).

Media Coverage of People with Disability

Since the 1970s, media in the United States has increasingly focused on issues related to individuals with disabilities in response to organizations that have undertaken efforts to defend the rights of disabled individuals and promote equal opportunities despite a person's disability (Haller, Dorries, & Rahn, 2006). For example, the medical profiling and negligence towards women with disabilities in sports has reinforced concerns about the stereotypes and preoccupation with physical disabilities (Pirofski, 2001; Thomas & Smith, 2003).

There are two models of media coverage concerning children with disabilities. The first model is a medical model that takes the traditional perspective of challenging disabled persons to enhance their performance and make accomplishments despite the person's disability (Chen, Hsu, Shu, & Fetzer, 2012). The second model is depicting disabled individuals as minorities in society who deserve for their rights and interests to be advocated as well as the model of promoting cultural diversity and fostering positive and progressive perceptions of disabled individuals and their concerns (Matthews, 2009; Oliver, 2013).

In analyzing the perceptions of persons with disabilities in printed media, Inimah, Ndeti, and Mukulu (2014) conducted a study on how persons with disabilities are presented in Kenyan publications. The study sample consisted of 70 persons with disabilities in seven organizations. The study results showed that the print media presented disabled persons in a negative light as a burden on society and as a segment of the population that is sorrowful and in need of sympathy. The results showed that 14.2% of the sample felt that the media was fair, and 42.8% felt that the media organizations were biased against them.

In the Arab culture, the majority of media coverage about individuals with disabilities is limited and superficial; media reports and broadcasting focus on charitable donations and philanthropy for disabled persons, but does not address the practical issues, daily problems, or inalienable rights of disabled persons and their families (Al-Gosaibi, 2007). Moreover, there is a shortage of disability image presented by the Arab drama. People with disabilities were presented with a stereotype of weakness, who deserve empathy, or they were presented as a subject of abuse and neglect (Abu Salha, 2011).

Conceptual Framework

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is an analysis method and decision-making tool suggested in 1971 by Ken Andrews in the management field (Görener, Toker, & Uluçay, 2012; Ying, 2010). Even though the SWOT model is a management framework, 5.3% of the studies that used the SWOT model were in the education field (Ghazinoory, Abdi, & Azadegan-Mehr, 2011). For example, SWOT analysis was used to identify internal and external factors that affect deaf bilingual education in Spain (Munoz-Baell, Alvarez-Dardet, Ruiz-Cantero, Ferreiro-Lago, & Aroca-Fernandez, 2011). In this study, the researchers built a scale to identify the issues of children with disabilities as presented in the Jordanian media and its possibility to increase positive or negative perceptions that might be devolved by parents. The researchers created a SWOT framework based on the following factors. Strengths: issues that are presented in a positive way in the Jordanian Media. Weaknesses: issues that are presented in a negative effect in the Jordanian Media Opportunities: Content that may have a positive effect perceived by parents. Threats: content that may have a negative effect perceived by parents (Figure 1).
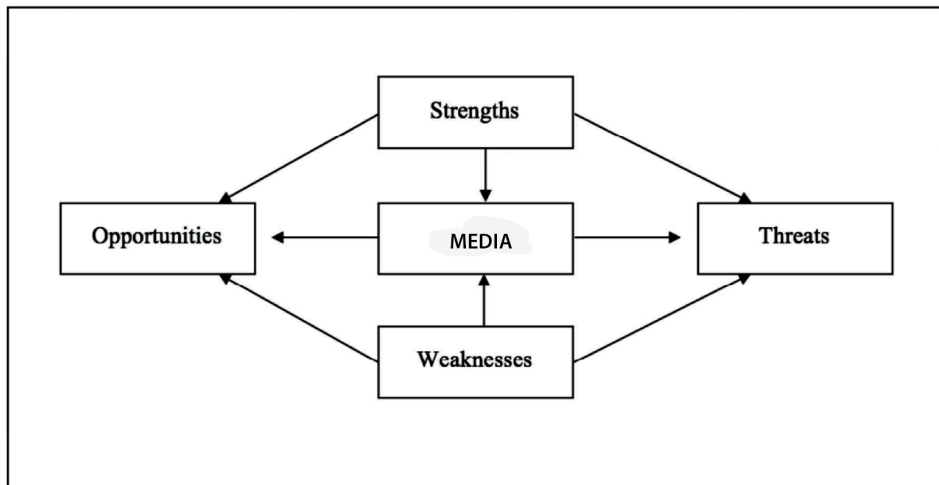

Figure 1. SWOT Analysis Model for Issues of Childern with Disabilities in Jordanian Media

Study Rationale

In consideration of the foregoing statements, this study is intended to pinpoint the realistic perspective and interests of parents who follow Jordanian media about the issues that affect children with disabilities. Undoubtedly, those parents are particularly concerned and have emotionally invested in public awareness, widespread publications, expert opinions, and other informational materials regarding the afflictions of children with disabilities. Hence, this study aims to clearly identify the parents' perspective of the quantity and quality of Jordanian media coverage regarding children with disabilities using a SWOT analysis. Furthermore, the goal of this study was to rank the various forms of media (social, audio, visual, and print) in order of the extent to which disability issues are covered in each method.

The importance of this study is two-fold in that it addresses the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject matter. In the theoretical aspect, the purpose of this study is to distinguish how parents of disabled children perceive the various forms of Jordanian media coverage about children with disabilities as compared to the perceptions of media broadcasts by other segments or members of society. The theoretical aspect of this study is significant because it is the first investigation into Jordanian media – and one of the rare Arab studies – that addresses media coverage of children with disabilities from the viewpoints of parents whose children are disabled. In the practical aspect, this study is intended to present meaningful results that will serve as a basic foundation for re-shaping current media practices and guiding future media policies for producing and broadcasting information that meets the needs and desires of families with disabled children. Furthermore, this study is also important in providing a reference to assess the role of Jordanian media in covering and addressing the issues of children with disabilities.

Research Methodology

Research Sample

The study sample consisted of 129 parents (66 females and 63 males) randomly selected from the families of disabled persons who are enrolled at special education centers in Zarqa Governorate in Jordan.

Instrument and Procedures

To achieve the objective of the study, the researchers designed the study to consist of 28 measurements divided into four categories representing the dimensions of the SWOT model (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). The

measurement data was gathered by allowing the participants to answer questions or provide responses according to the degrees of the Likert Scale (1–5).

Data Analysis

The validity of the study was verified by a review panel of qualified arbitrators as well as parents of disabled children. Eight of the arbitrators were faculty members of Hashemite University, who were subject matter experts and followed media coverage pertaining to the issues of children with disabilities. There were nine parents on the panel, each of whom had a least one child afflicted with a disability. The parents reviewed the initial draft of the study – which comprised 35 measurements – to ascertain the applicability of the measurements to the study's objective, the clarity of the questions and statements, and the validity of the study's content. The output and feedback from the review panel yielded an 80% consensus that the measurements were well-aligned and appropriate for the purpose of the study; the remaining 20% recommended rewording the questions and statements to be more concise and observed that some measurements were duplicated or inherently implied in other paragraphs. Taking into account the recommendations and observations of the review panel, the study was modified and resulted in 28 points of measurement, which represented the four dimensions of the SWOT analysis model with seven measurements per dimension. The degree of correlation between each measurement and its associated SWOT dimension is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Internal consistency coefficient of the scale's dimensions

Indicators	Strength	Weakness	Opportunities	Threat
Total	0.586**	0.300-	0.927**	0.439**

The Cronbach Alpha equation was used to calculate the stability of the study instrument. The results of the analysis showed appropriate degrees of stability of the instrument, based on the performance of 40 parents outside the sample of the study. As shown in Table 2, the values are suitable for the purposes of the study.

Table 2. Cronbach alpha equation of the scale's dimensions

Indicators	Strength	Weakness	Opportunities	Threat	Total
Reliability coefficient	%89	%76	%74	%78	%71

Research Results

The results showed an average SWOT analysis score of 3.41 for Jordanian media coverage of children with disabilities. As shown in Table 3, the scores for each index were 3.20, 3.73, 2.97, and 3.74 for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, respectively.

Table 3. Averages and standard deviations of the study responses in correlation to SWOT analysis

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Media Coverage	Rank
Strength	3.30	0.510	L	3
Weakness	3.73	0.454	H	2
Opportunities	2.97	0.572	M	4
Threat	3.74	0.362	H	1
Total Scale	3.41	1.104	M	

Note: L: Low. H: High. M: Medium

Strengths Index

As shown in Table 4, the degree of the Jordanian media coverage pertaining to issues of children with disabilities was moderate in correlation to the strength index. The highest ranked measurement was "The media provides me with the causes of disability in my child" under the section "Other Matters and Success Stories for Children with Disabilities".

Table 4. Averages and standard deviations of the study responses in correlation to strengths

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
1	4	The media provides me with the causes of disability.	3.88	0.680	H
2	5	The media informs me of the problems facing my child and children with disabilities.	3.62	0.801	M
3	3	The media tells me the future of my child's disability.	3.49	0.781	M
4	1	The media informs me about the categories and characteristics of individuals with disabilities.	3.48	0.638	M

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
5	6	The media treats my needs as a family with a child with disabilities and guides me to the sources of support that I can use.	3.07	0.871	M
6	2	The media provides me with the best and most successful ways to deal with my children with disabilities.	2.77	0.602	M
7	7	The media provides me with social support by presenting experiences of other parents and success stories of children with disabilities.	2.05	0.822	L
		Total	3.20	0.510	L

Weaknesses Index

As shown in Table 5, the degree of Jordanian media coverage pertaining to issues of children with disabilities was relatively high in correlation to the weaknesses index. The highest ranked measurement was "The media does not show me when I present the issues of children with disabilities where I provide the service I need or access", and the lowest ranked measurement was "Persons with disabilities are closer to compassion or charitable work ".

Table 5. Averages and standard deviations of the study responses in correlation to the weaknesses

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
1	14	The media does not provides me with places or locations that provide dissabilities services.	4.13	1.102	H
2	10	The media presents information related to disability in a superficial and traditional manner that is not dealt with in depth and in keeping with modernity in the presentation.	4.03	0.683	H
3	13	I believe that putting the issues of people with disabilities in the media just in order to fill a media space with no quality of the content.	3.98	0.695	H
4	8	The media is repeating the same issues concerning children with disabilities in a way that does not motivate me to follow up.	3.75	0.810	H

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
5	11	The media does not adequately answer the questions that concern me and my children with disabilities, such as assessment, diagnosis, behavior modification, rehabilitation and integration opportunities, etc.	3.60	0.654	M
6	12	I see that some of the disability-related issues in the media are not applicable or can't be applied.	3.43	0.934	M
7	9	The media presents children with disabilities more closely to compassion, kindness or philanthropy.	3.19	0.829	L
		Total	3.73	0.454	H

Opportunities Index

As shown in Table 6, the degree of the Jordanian media coverage pertaining to issues of children with disabilities was moderate in correlation to the opportunities index. The highest ranked measurement was "The media provides me with opportunities to identify the needs of my child with disabilities and my needs as a family ", and the lowest ranked measurement was "The media allows me to identify national and international efforts of organizations in various institutions for the benefit of children with disabilities".

Table 6. Averages and standard deviations of the study responses in correlation to opportunities

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
1	16	The media gives me opportunities to recognize the nature of my children's needs and my family's needs.	3.57	0.864	M
2	15	The media provides me with opportunities to identify early intervention methods for disability and prevention methods to prevent their future occurrence.	3.47	0.857	M
3	17	The media provides me with opportunities to identify the nature of the educational, health, social, psychological and support services that can be provided to my children with disabilities.	3.30	0.834	M
4	20	The media gives me opportunities to recognize the potential impact of disability on my child's development.	2.84	0.754	M
5	21	The media lets me know my child's personal, professional and social future and what he/she can do.	2.72	0.695	M

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
6	19	The media provides me with opportunities to familiarize myself with the laws, legislation and rights of my children with disabilities.	2.55	0.865	M
7	18	The media provides me with opportunities to identify national and international efforts in various institutions for children with disabilities.	2.37	0.707	M
		Total	2.97	0.572	M

Threats Index

As shown in Table 7, the degree of the Jordanian media coverage pertaining to issues of children with disabilities was moderate in correlation to the threats index. The highest ranked measurement was "I see that the information space for presenting children's issues is not devoted to their issues", and the lowest ranked measurement was "I believe that disability-oriented information is seasonal in the sense that it addresses issues of persons with disabilities on specific days or days of the world ".

Table 7. Averages and standard deviations of the study responses in correlation to threats

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
1	24	The information space presenting children with disabilities issues is not dedicated to their issues; only paragraphs within programs or columns within pages are included.	4.41	0.767	H
2	28	The lack of media in dealing with modern trends in the field of disability, especially those associated with the disability of my child as self-determination.	3.94	0.753	H
3	22	I see that media attention to the issues of children with disabilities is limited to specific categories of people with disabilities, such as the cases of the Sun drum and autism.	3.92	0.766	H
4	26	The media simply presents theoretical scientific knowledge in the field of disability without dealing with practical experience.	3.74	0.576	H

No.	Rank	Survey	M	SD	Media Coverage
5	25	The characteristics of the media space do not match the specificity of the issues of children with disabilities. In the visual media, it is an example that is often presented in the morning and can't be followed up.	3.65	1.24	M
6	27	The media only presents specific aspects of issues of children with disabilities, such as medical aspects, as an example and does not expand to cover other aspects.	3.50	0.697	M
7	23	I feel that the media oriented towards people with disabilities is seasonal in the sense that it cares about the issues of people with disabilities on specific days or on global days.	3.04	0.818	M
		Total	3.74	0.362	H

As shown in Table 8, the most important forms of media coverage pertaining to the issues of children with disabilities are electronic media (41%), visual media (31%), audio media (16%), and reading media (12%).

Table 8. Distribution of media types frequency

Variable	Variable Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Media	Electronic media	53	41
	Visual media	40	31
	Audiovisual media	21	16
	Readable media	15	12
Total		129	100

As shown in Table 9, the results indicated that the most prevalent media coverage pertaining to children with disabilities addressed physical and health disabilities related to medical treatment (25%), autism (16%), learning disabilities (15%), mental disability (13%), behavioral and emotional disorders (11%), and hearing disabilities (9%), visual impairments (7%), and communicative disorders (4%).

Table 9. Most prevalent disability topics by frequency of media coverage

Variable	Variable Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Disability category	Physical and health disabilities	32	25
	Autism	21	16
	Learning difficulties	19	15

Variable	Variable Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
	Mental handicap	17	13
	Behavioral and emotional disorders	14	11
Disability category	Hearing disabilities	12	9
	Visual disabilities	9	7
	Communication disorders	5	4
	Total	129	100

Discussion

Limitations of media coverage for disability issues, especially those related to the causes of disability, are evident. It is important to focus attention on the causes of disability in order to raise awareness, guide public opinion, and foster understanding about the root of disability issues. However, media attention shows the nature of the services needed by children with disabilities and their families and provides information on the places of service delivery that may be part of the promotion of media and marketing places of service and this is what the various media are keen to avoid. Additionally, it shows change in the perception of individuals with disabilities in general, being no different from individuals without disabilities. This may be the reason for the interest of different media outlets to view the nature of the services needed by children with disabilities and their families to be able to meet or access. Regarding the various forms of media, electronic publications have become the most prevalent and widely used medium in society compared to other forms of media. The lack of interest and low ranking of print media is due to the low demand for reading materials and the substandard presentation of issues pertaining to children with disabilities.

The high percentage of physical and health disability topics covered in the media is due to the numerous cases, prevalence of concerns or questions, and variety of conditions such as neurological disorders, musculoskeletal problems, and most recently communicative disorders. The media space devoted to the issues of people with disabilities, who seek media in different forms to cover the topics of the most interested segments of society, which pose vague questions and many urgent ones, but there is little question about these disorders compared to other disability categories

Conclusions

In the light of the study findings, the researchers give the following recommendations to improve the coverage of disability issues in Jordanian media:

1. Conduct scientific research in the field of disability and further studies to identify the issues of families with disabled children as well as the children's needs.
2. Identify the perceptions of disability as reflected in the media and attitudes of Jordanian society towards children with disabilities and their various issues.
3. Urge the media to play a more significant role in raising public awareness about the issues of individuals with disabilities especially in cases where indicators of weaknesses or threats have emerged according to the results of the study
4. Devote greater attention to covering all the topics and issues regarding various forms of disability.
5. Develop informative programs aimed at the issues of children with disabilities such as specialized studies that address the issues and meet the information needs of persons who are interested in disability topics.

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