Analysis Project

I will explore the Egyptian education system in the early 1900s. This project will include the locations of schools that make headlines in the news, including the schools that are being advertised. This will also include what months of the year education seems to be of most importance in the newspaper. I will also look for trends in the school system, such as common problems (Sailer, 1912) or modernization (Saleh, 2012). Keep in mind throughout this paper the changes that Egypt is going through during the early colonization period of 1905. Britain was occupying Egypt during this time and many other countries were represented in Egypt making Egypt a melting pot like America. Education and schools in Egypt were overall successful between 1905 and 1907 because of the new schools built, resolved conflicts, and excellent displays of intelligence from the children.

The first preliminary query I ran was for any div type item that contained the word school, but that resulted in too many vague answers that were repeated and not entirely relevant to my purpose. Ultimately my query boiled down to school\* in any headline within the master content folder which returned 234 results. Upon first glance this information would indicate that education is something that the Egyptians took seriously in the early 1900s, but with further research, a lot of those instances of the word school in a headline were simply advertisements for those schools. These advertisements are still relevant to my project, however, because it proves that the school system itself was interested in persuading the parents that were reading this newspaper to send their children off to school through mere exposure advertising. The school that advertised the most was the Berlitz School of Languages, which offered lessons in languages such as French, German, Arabic, and others. I also noticed off the bat that there wasn’t much of a pattern in the months that schools showed up most in the newspaper. The only months that were slightly above average in displaying the word school were July and October, and I will discuss why later in the paper. This lack of dominance by any specific month proves that education was pushed evenly throughout the year, therefore represented well in Egypt throughout the whole year.

After skimming through all of the results I noticed that there were certainly a lot more schools that were successful than there were schools that were failing. This was due to the increase in the number of children interested in learning and the many advertisements for schools in Egypt during this time. Even though most schools in Egypt were doing great in this time, the parents and students wanted more funding to come from the Government. The Egyptian Government, however, was pouring all of their money into different public buildings and physically building new schools because the current schools are overcrowded. There were, in fact, four schools that were either built or planned to be built between 1905 and 1907 in Egypt including the fourth secondary school and an Italian school. This progress of the school system proves that the population in Egypt was growing during this time and these people that were coming to Egypt wanted to go to school and learn which is positive for this community.

Moving on to the schools that showed up the most in the newspaper, the Berlitz Schools of Languages showed up in the Egyptian Gazette 110 times between 1905-1907. This means that the Berlitz Schools took up almost half of my results from my query. For the most part, the Berlitz Schools were simply advertising for their individual language lessons, and the other times they showed up in the newspaper it was for an award they received for doing such a great job teaching. The reason that the Berlitz Schools advertised so often was because it occurred year-round, that is there was no start date and end date so the ads played through every month, because it was more similar to a tutoring service for those who wanted to learn a new language. This is important because it really proves that many different cultures were flooding into Egypt and it was best for people to understand and speak several languages so that they could communicate with each other. The progress of Egypt as a country was clear in population, economy, politics, and most importantly, education.

Although there were a few schools that showed up many times in the paper for prestigious reasons (Berlitz, Zeitoun Blind School, several girls’ schools), there were a couple of higher education schools that gathered fame in the paper for their students’ disobedience. More specifically, in 1905 and 1906 the Polytechnic school and the Khedivial Law school students went on strike against the administration. It was the Polytechnic schools that went on strike first in 1905 because the students were simply unhappy with the way the school was run, but the strike was short lived after the administration threatened the disobedient students with expulsion. However, the absence of strike in the Egyptian schools was short lived because in 1906 the Khedivial Law school students went on strike because of the wrongful expulsion of four students. These law Students were firmer in their strike than the previous Polytechnic students. The Law students released a list of demands, some unreasonable, some manageable, that ultimately resulted in some change is the schools. The Law students went on strike on and off with coming and going support from other students from different schools, such as the Polytechnic School, the Agricultural School, and the Ras-el-Tin school. These strikes were the lowest points for everyone, students and administrators, in the education system because during these strikes there were no students learning what they needed to be learning and the administrators were losing money.

Building on the flaw that is the disobedient students, the lack of funding, which was one of the causes for the students to strike, was another huge problem in the Egyptian Education system. According to T.H.P Sailer who visited Egyptian schools in 1907, the schools were dirty, with not enough desks and no real learning materials in the elementary schools, or *kuttabs.* The Government was still trying their best, however, and it was displayed with how they constructed their higher education schools (with sufficient supplies), and how they pushed teaching as a great job, by not making education majors pay for their higher education (Sailer, 1912). So again the theme of underfunded schools is displayed throughout the younger schools, but in the newer schools, that were built based of the European models, the students and teachers reaped the benefits of the small amount of money that they did receive from the Government.

Furthermore, into today’s Egyptian education system, there are still money problems. The Egyptian government spends 3.5% of their GDP on education which is lower than the international average. Unlike in 1907, however, the Government has stopped persuading children to even attend school as it is still easy to get a job without a degree if the children just focused on honing their skills for civil service jobs (Fahmy, 2008). This lack of interest from the Government along with the continued lack of funding 100 years later is why parents and students are fed up with the Education system in Egypt. Today the school system certainly seems far less successful than it was 100 years ago, because at least in 1907 the schools were advertising for themselves in the newspaper and many new schools were being built. This article proves, however, that a lack of funding from the Egyptian Government has always been an issue for Egypt’s schools.

Nonetheless, the Egyptian education system was doing its best to teach the all of the young, diverse children living in Egypt. Many schools did an excellent job of molding their students into intelligent and respectable young adults. For example, the St. Andrew’s Girls’ Schools (upper and lower), and the Church of Scotland Schools held exhibitions at the end of the 1905 school year where their students and teachers could show off their work from the semester. The end of the school year was typically sometime in late July. So, the students had a small ‘summer break’, if you will, between the months of August and September before school started again in October. All of these exhibitions proved to be important in deciding whether or not the staff of the schools were successful in educating the students, which they were successful for the most part.

In conclusion, Egypt’s school system between 1905 and 1907 were as successful as it could be in teaching the diverse group of children at the time. Language skills were pushed on to the children because of the influx of different cultures into Egypt at this time. Although a lack of funding and sometimes out of line students got in the way of a good education, at the end of the day and at the end of the school year, the children proved that they learned something valuable from the schools, which should be the goal of all school systems even today.

To visit my data visualization that is a map of where these schools are located in Egypt (and Cyprus), follow this link: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?hl=en&mid=1U8EOrHxL4Assz3gb2SIZwolsPks9HyNm&ll=30.357814919196628%2C30.557043207812512&z=8>

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