

## RESEARCH ARTICLE



# Educational Leadership as a Lever for Modernizing Media Training Programs : A Field Study at Media Faculties of Lebanese Private Universities

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore crucial role of educational leadership as a lever for updating media training programs at the faculties of media at private Lebanese universities, in light of rapid technological and cultural transformations. The research is based on the central hypothesis that strategic planning, supporting teachers, effective organisation, driving innovation, ensuring equity, and honest assessment and evaluation (roles of smart leaders) are positively associated with the improvement of media programs, ensuring their alignment with digital advancements and current labor market requirements. The study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology, using field data collection tools that included student questionnaires and faculty members interviews in addition to curriculum analysis and observation. The focus was on media faculties in Beirut, with a sample comprising 187 students and 26 faculty members. The reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) indicated a high degree of internal consistency (0.88). Results showed that both students and faculty value the importance of educational planning, effective organization, continuous academic guidance, as well as ongoing evaluation and follow-up, in updating media programs. Participants expressed satisfaction with digital policies, educational tools and platforms, and training workshops, with mean scores ranging from 4.19 to 4.27 on a 5-point scale, reflecting a clear positive trend toward the effectiveness of educational leadership at faculty level or even higher leadership levels. The study also highlighted several challenges, including bureaucratic constraints, resource shortages, and the misalignment of some programs with labor market demands, emphasizing the need for integrated administrative and educational strategies.

Based on these findings, the study proposes mechanisms to strengthen the role of educational administration (leadership), including curriculum updates, integration of modern digital media, capacity-building or required professional development for the faculty (academic staff), and the activation of continuous evaluation to ensure program quality and alignment with digital and professional developments. The study concludes that educational administration represents a genuine lever for developing media training, contributing to the preparation of graduates capable of competing and making meaningful contributions to modern media work environments.

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## Introduction

In light of the rapid technological and cultural transformations shaping the contemporary world, there is an increasing need for educational institutions capable of keeping pace with these changes through the continuous renewal of their training programs, particularly in the fields of media and communication (Budiarto et al., 2024). With the expansion of the digital environment, the proliferation of new media platforms, the integration of multimedia tools, and the growing influence of digitalisation especially Artificial intelligence (AI), the skill sets required of media professionals are undergoing significant transformation. Consequently, the importance of sound educational and administrative foundations especially leadership that promote innovation in training content, innovative and research-based pedagogic content and approaches, and learning objectives has become more pronounced.

Educational leadership can be roughly defined as the process of guiding and influencing people (teachers, students, staff, etc.) within educational settings to achieve shared academic goals. Leadership is the process of creating and enhancing a positive teaching-learning environment and accomplishing an appropriate improvement with the help of visionary thoughts vision, preparing sub-ordinates, making democratic and participative decisions for maximum learning outcomes.

Educational Administration (leadership) plays a pivotal role in this context, as it represents the institutional framework responsible for planning, organizing, resources, providing support, guiding and evaluating educational and training programs. Its function extends beyond bureaucratic or technical dimensions to encompass a comprehensive educational vision that responds to societal needs, contemporary challenges, and emerging opportunities (Kumar & Limbachiya, 2023). Digital media is affecting leadership in many ways. (Uzorka et al., 2025). On the other hand, leadership is contributing a lot to the maximum utilisation of digital media. (Al-Azzam & Al-Khasawneh, 2024). There is technical scaffolding between leadership and media roles in education, hence it is interesting to see who/which does what and in which manner. Further, Richardson & Khawaja (2025) explored school leadership competencies to support learner-centered, personalized education that can be connected even to higher education perspective while talking about qualities, competencies and roles of an effective leader towards realisation of commonly agreed objectives. Similarly, Almakaty (2025) identified certain emerging trends in communication and media education in the digital age.

The modernization of media training programs requires more than superficial curricular adjustments; it necessitates an integrated educational-administrative and leadership architecture capable of anticipating future developments, mobilizing qualified human resources, providing modern infrastructure, and adopting strategies for continuous performance evaluation and adaptive improvement (Balser & Tafuro, 2025).

In contexts where this issue has been the subject of sustained academic and professional debate, recurring recommendations have emphasized updating media training content to align with digital transformations, strengthening ethical standards in media practice, expanding opportunities for continuous professional development, and integrating emerging technical and cognitive skills. (Küng, 2015)

In Lebanon, private universities constitute a particularly fertile context for examining this issue, given the diversity of their institutional capacities, their relative autonomy in certain cases, and the multiplicity of challenges they face, including bureaucratic constraints, funding limitations, academic accreditation requirements, labor market demands, and the expectations of students and society at large (Nauffal, 2019). Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to explore how educational administration in general and leadership in particular, in media faculties at Lebanese private universities can function as a lever for modernizing media training programs through the following objectives:

- Identifying the current state of media training programs in these faculties in terms of content, pedagogical approaches, and the technologies employed.
- Examining the challenges and obstacles that hinder the modernization of these programs, whether administrative, pedagogical, technological, or relational (between the university and the media profession).
- Proposing mechanisms and strategies that educational administration may adopt to enhance its role as a driving force for qualitative modernization and to ensure the alignment of media training outcomes with contemporary requirements.

Methodologically, this research is based on a field study conducted on a sample of media faculties at Lebanese private universities. It employs a range of research tools, including interviews, questionnaires, curriculum analysis, and observation, to analyze data and generate evidence-based recommendations.

## 1. Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the role that educational administration can play in modernizing media training programs in a manner that ensures the alignment of media education outcomes with rapid professional and technological changes. This overarching aim is pursued through the following specific objectives:

- Exploring the current state of media training programs in media faculties at Lebanese private universities in terms of objectives, content, teaching methods, and the technological tools employed.

- Analyzing the role of educational leadership in planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating media training programs, and assessing its effectiveness in leading processes of modernization and development.
- Identifying the challenges and constraints facing the modernization of media training programs at the administrative, academic, and professional levels, with particular emphasis on the relationship between faculty administration and the requirements of the media labor market.
- Surveying the perspectives of faculty members and students regarding the effectiveness of existing programs and identifying the gap between educational outcomes and the actual needs of the media labor market.
- Proposing a comprehensive developmental strategy grounded in the principles of contemporary educational leadership, aimed at transforming media faculties into dynamic learning environments capable of adapting to future changes in media and communication.
- Providing practical recommendations to private universities and educational policymakers to enhance the quality of media education and improve graduate competencies in line with digital and technological transformations and the ethical standards of the media profession.

## 2. Research Problem

The contemporary world is experiencing unprecedented transformations, especially the field of media and communication, driven by digitalization, artificial intelligence, and the proliferation of new media platforms. These developments have generated fundamental challenges related to the competence of media professionals and their ability to adapt to evolving professional and technological environments (Karnouskos, 2020). Under such conditions, it is no longer sufficient for media training programs for media faculties to remain static or confined to traditional curricular models and teaching methods. Instead, they must undergo continuous development to keep pace with these changes and to meet labor market needs, while maintaining the ethical and human dimensions of media practice (Awada, 2023).

In the Lebanese context, media faculties within private universities exhibit distinctive characteristics stemming from disparities in resources, differences in educational philosophies, and the impact of ongoing economic, political, and social crises. Despite this diversity, multiple indicators point to a growing gap between media education outcomes and the needs of contemporary media institutions, resulting in limited employability of graduates or their reduced ability to contribute effectively within dynamic professional environments.

Within this context, educational leadership within administrative set up emerges as a strategic instrument capable of leading change within educational institutions (Agwoje

& Okeleke, 2023), as it is fundamentally concerned with planning, organization, and evaluation, in addition to fostering a supportive environment for continuous development. The central question thus becomes: to what extent does educational leadership in Lebanese media faculties play an effective role in modernizing training programs and aligning them with contemporary demands? Accordingly, the research problem lies in examining the relationship between educational leadership/administration and the quality of media training programs, identifying the constraints that limit the effectiveness of this role, and proposing practical approaches that enable educational leadership (along with administration) to function as a genuine lever for advancing media education in Lebanese private universities.

### 3. Research Questions

- What is the current state of media training programs at media faculties of Lebanese private universities in terms of objectives, content, teaching methods, and their alignment with the requirements of the digital age and the labor market?
- What role do educational leaders play in planning, organizing, and evaluating the development of media training programs among the faculties?
- What are the main challenges and obstacles facing media faculties at Lebanese private universities in their efforts to modernize training programs?
- What strategies and proposals can enhance the role of an educational leader as an effective lever for developing media training programs in a manner that ensures the quality and global relevance of media education?

### 4. Research Hypotheses

**H1:** There is a statistically significant relationship between educational planning and the modernization of media training programs.

**H2:** There is a statistically significant relationship between educational organization and the modernization of media training programs.

**H3:** There is a statistically significant relationship between educational guidance and the modernization of media training programs.

**H4:** There is a statistically significant relationship between the evaluation and monitoring of academic programs and the modernization of media training programs.

### 5. Research Methodology

The descriptive–analytical approach is one of the most widely used methodologies in educational and social research. It aims to describe phenomena in a systematic and accurate manner, followed by their analysis and interpretation in order to understand

their dimensions and the relationships among their components, ultimately leading to scientific conclusions that may contribute to the development of solutions or future policies (Obeidat et al., 2010, p. 149). This method has been supported recently by Inayat & Younas (2025) which is based on collecting data from reality as it exists, then classifying, organizing, and analyzing the data to identify strengths and weaknesses and to determine patterns and relationships among the variables under investigation.

Given that this study seeks to diagnose the current state of media training programs and to analyze the role of educational leaders in their modernization, the descriptive–analytical approach is deemed the most appropriate. It allows for an empirical description of the phenomenon and the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, which are subsequently analyzed to examine the nature of the relationship between educational leadership (the independent variable) and the modernization of media programs (the dependent variable).

## 6. Research Instruments

This study employed a closed-ended questionnaire as a primary research instrument administered to students of media faculties. The questionnaire is among the most commonly quantitative data collection tools in scientific research, as it enables the systematic collection of data through predefined questions with fixed response options selected by respondents. This type of questionnaire provides precise quantitative data suitable for statistical analysis, thereby facilitating the corresponding analysis of data and interpretation of results based on comparison of results (Al-Khatib, 2003, p. 88). In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty members in media faculties to obtain in-depth qualitative insights into the phenomena and trends associated with the study, complementing the data derived from the questionnaire.

## 7. Research Population and Sample

The study population comprises students and faculty members of media faculties at private universities located in the Beirut Governorate. To ensure effective data collection, a purposive sample was selected, consisting of students and faculty members who demonstrated both the capacity and willingness to participate in the study. This sample is considered representative of the target population and enables the researcher to obtain reliable insights into the phenomena and trends relevant to the research.

## 8. Limitations

- **Thematic limitations:** This study is limited to examining the role of educational administration as a key factor in the modernization of media training programs, with a particular focus on analyzing the relationship between educational administrative practices (planning, organization,

guidance, and evaluation) and the quality and development of media training programs in media faculties at Lebanese private universities.

- **Spatial limitations:** The field study is confined to a sample of media faculties at private universities located in the Beirut Governorate. Accordingly, the findings and conclusions are context-specific and do not extend to private universities in other Lebanese regions.
- **Human limitations:** The study includes students and faculty members of media faculties at private universities in the Beirut Governorate, who constitute the target sample for understanding the research-related phenomena and trends.
- **Temporal limitations:** The research was conducted during the spring semester of the 2025 academic year.

## 9. Validity and Reliability Testing

The reliability of the closed-ended questionnaire used in this study was verified using **Cronbach's Alpha**, which assesses the internal consistency of the instrument and the extent to which the questions coherently measure the intended variables. Table 1 presents the calculated Cronbach's Alpha for all items included in the questionnaire. As shown, the results for the student-directed questionnaire are as follows:

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha for the Study**

| Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 32              | 0.88             |

*Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS statistical analysis*

### 9.1. Demographic Results

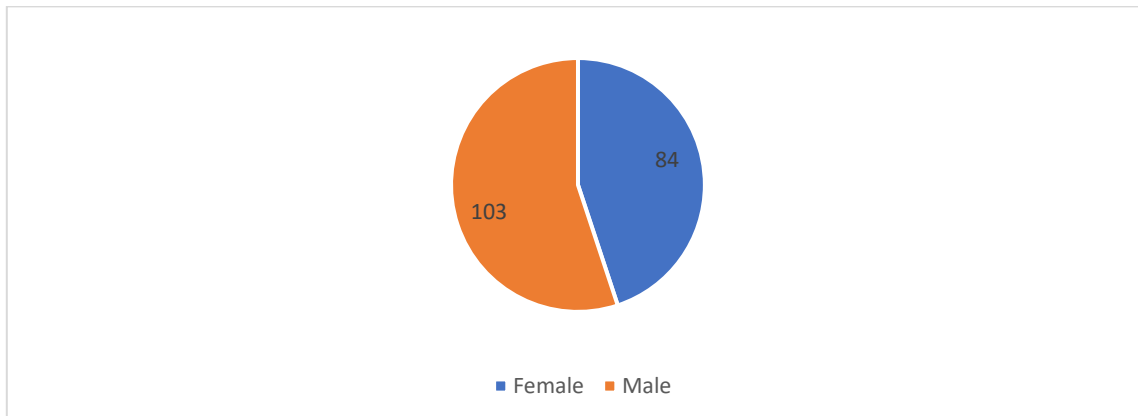
Demographic results represent a set of data and information relating to the personal and socio-economic characteristics of individuals or communities participating in a study or survey. These results typically include factors that allow the classification and analysis of the population based on personal attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, income, and other relevant characteristics. The demographic results of this study are presented as follows:

### 9.2. Distribution of University Students by Gender

Table 2 indicates that the number of female participants was 103, while male participants numbered 84. This outcome suggests that females constitute a higher proportion of the sample compared to males, which may reflect the general demographic composition of students in media faculties or indicate a higher willingness among female students to participate in the survey.

**Figure 2: Distribution of Students by Gender**

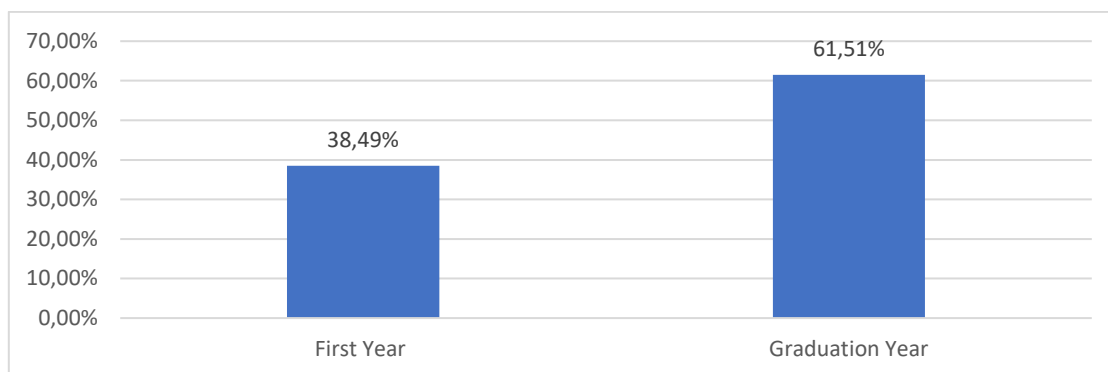
(Males:103, and females:84)

*Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS statistical analysis***2.9.2. Distribution of Students by Academic Year (First Year vs. Final Year)**

The analysis indicates that 38.49% of the participating students were enrolled in their first year, while 61.51% were final-year students. This distribution is illustrated in **Figure 3**, highlighting the representation of students according to their academic year.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Students by Academic Year**

( First year: 38.49%; final year:61.51%)

*Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS statistical analysis***3.2.9. Results of Statistical Tests for the Study Axes***Axis 1: The Relationship between Educational Planning and Updating Media Training Programs*

This axis investigates the relationship between educational planning and the updating of media training programs. Educational planning is a fundamental step to ensure the effectiveness of training programs and their alignment with contemporary requirements. Programs grounded in structured and systematic planning enable students to acquire media skills effectively, develop analytical and communication abilities, and foster creativity in media production. Integrating modern teaching methods and innovative technologies further enhances students' capacity to adapt to new media developments and apply acquired skills practically.

**Table 2** presents students' evaluations of this relationship (N = 187):

**Table 2: Students' Opinions on the Relationship between Educational Planning and Updating Media Training Programs**

| Statement   | N   | Strongly Agree | Agree  | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean | SD   |
|---|-----|----------------|--------|---------|----------|-------------------|------|------|
| The university provides clear digital policies guiding students to use technology effectively | 187 | 48.39%         | 35.48% | 10.48%  | 4.03%    | 1.62%             | 4.23 | 0.98 |
| The digital tools provided by the university enhance the learning experience                  | 187 | 50.00%         | 33.87% | 9.68%   | 4.03%    | 2.42%             | 4.27 | 0.94 |
| Integration of digital skills training into curricula is effective                            | 187 | 46.77%         | 37.10% | 10.48%  | 3.23%    | 2.42%             | 4.23 | 0.90 |
| Faculty support for students to acquire digital skills  | 187 | 44.35%         | 39.52% | 10.48%  | 3.23%    | 2.42%             | 4.21 | 0.92 |
| Sufficient digital resources and platforms are available for students                         | 187 | 49.19%         | 35.48% | 9.68%   | 3.23%    | 2.42%             | 4.24 | 0.95 |
| Encouragement of students to apply digital skills in practical projects                       | 187 | 47.58%         | 37.10% | 9.68%   | 4.03%    | 1.61%             | 4.23 | 0.91 |
| Workshops and training sessions help develop sustainable digital skills                       | 187 | 46.77%         | 38.71% | 9.68%   | 3.23%    | 2.42%             | 4.22 | 0.93 |
| Digital policies contribute to fostering innovation and creativity among students             | 187 | 48.39%         | 36.29% | 8.87%   | 3.23%    | 3.22%             | 4.27 | 0.92 |

*Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS analysis*

The results indicate a clearly positive trend in students' perceptions of the relationship between educational planning and the updating of media training programs. Percentages of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses range from 81.87% to 83.87%, reflecting students' recognition of university efforts in establishing clear digital policies, providing digital tools, and encouraging practical application of digital skills. Mean scores ranged between 4.21 and 4.27 (on a 1–5 scale), and standard deviations were low (0.90–0.98), indicating high consistency in responses. These findings suggest that educational planning positively impacts the quality and relevance of media training programs.

#### *Axis 2: The Relationship between Educational Organization and Updating Media Training Programs*

This axis examines how educational organizational mechanisms affect the effectiveness of media program updates. Organizational structure provides essential policies and procedures that enhance teaching quality, faculty efficiency, and students' digital skills.

**Table 3** shows students' perceptions of the role of organizational mechanisms (N = 187):

**Table 3: Students' Opinions on the Relationship between Educational Organization and Updating Media Training Programs**

| Statement   | N   | Strongly Agree | Agree  | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean | SD   |
|---|-----|----------------|--------|---------|----------|-------------------|------|------|
| The university organizes education to ensure integration of digital and media skills      | 187 | 47.06%         | 36.36% | 10.70%  | 4.28%    | 1.60%             | 4.21 | 0.96 |
| The administrative structure facilitates updating media programs                          | 187 | 49.20%         | 34.76% | 9.63%   | 4.28%    | 2.13%             | 4.25 | 0.93 |
| Distribution of responsibilities among faculty contributes to digital program development | 187 | 46.52%         | 38.50% | 10.16%  | 3.21%    | 1.61%             | 4.22 | 0.91 |
| Organizational procedures encourage active student participation in practical projects    | 187 | 45.99%         | 37.97% | 10.70%  | 3.21%    | 2.13%             | 4.20 | 0.92 |
| The university provides continuous mechanisms to support media skill acquisition          | 187 | 44.39%         | 39.04% | 10.16%  | 3.74%    | 2.67%             | 4.19 | 0.94 |
| Digital resources and software are organized for easy student access                      | 187 | 48.13%         | 35.82% | 9.09%   | 3.21%    | 3.75%             | 4.24 | 0.95 |
| Workshops and training sessions enhance digital innovation                                | 187 | 46.52%         | 38.50% | 9.09%   | 3.74%    | 2.15%             | 4.21 | 0.92 |
| Organizational policies contribute to fostering creative thinking                         | 187 | 47.06%         | 36.36% | 9.63%   | 3.21%    | 3.74%             | 4.23 | 0.94 |

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS analysis

Students generally perceive the organizational framework as effective, with agreement percentages ranging from 81.43% to 83.96%. Mean scores (4.19–4.25) and low standard deviations (0.91–0.96) indicate high consensus, highlighting that structured procedures and distribution of responsibilities facilitate media program development and encourage innovation.

*Axis 3: The Relationship between Educational Guidance and Updating Media Training Programs*

Educational guidance is pivotal, encompassing academic advising and program alignment with evolving knowledge and technology requirements. In media education, guidance supports students' adaptation to rapid sectoral changes.

**Table 4** : summarizes students' perceptions of guidance effectiveness (N = 187)

| Statement  | Mean | SD   |
|--|------|------|
| Guidance provides a clear vision for program development aligned with contemporary needs | 4.25 | 0.91 |
| Guidance contributes to identifying student needs and designing relevant programs        | 4.22 | 0.93 |
| Academic guidance links programs with labor market requirements                          | 4.26 | 0.94 |
| Advisors continuously monitor program effectiveness                                      | 4.20 | 0.96 |
| Guidance encourages student participation in program improvement                         | 4.19 | 0.95 |
| Guidance offers individual and group support facilitating media training                 | 4.24 | 0.92 |
| Advisors direct faculty toward modern teaching methods                                   | 4.22 | 0.97 |
| Guidance ensures program goals align with national and international standards           | 4.23 | 0.94 |

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS analysis

Agreement percentages ranged from 81.4% to 85.6%, confirming strong student recognition of guidance as a key factor in aligning programs with professional and digital demands.

#### *Axis 4: The Relationship between Program Evaluation and Updating Media Training Programs*

Program evaluation ensures continuous improvement and alignment with technological and market developments.

**Table 5** : presents students' perceptions of evaluation and follow-up (N = 187)

| Statement  | Mean | SD   |
|--|------|------|
| Continuous evaluation identifies program strengths and weaknesses            | 4.25 | 0.93 |
| Monitoring ensures alignment with labor market requirements                  | 4.26 | 0.92 |
| Clear mechanisms exist for assessing program quality                         | 4.23 | 0.94 |
| Evaluation results contribute to actual improvements                         | 4.21 | 0.95 |
| Program monitoring enhances students' acquisition of advanced digital skills | 4.20 | 0.94 |
| Evaluation reports help faculty improve teaching methods                     | 4.24 | 0.93 |
| Periodic follow-up ensures compliance with standards                         | 4.22 | 0.94 |
| Student participation in evaluation improves program quality                 | 4.23 | 0.95 |

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS analysis

Agreement percentages ranged from 79.7% to 83.9%, highlighting students' recognition of evaluation and follow-up as crucial for improving program quality and skill acquisition.

#### *Faculty (Academic staff) Interviews (N = 26)*

- **Educational Planning:** 69.2% consider current planning appropriate, 23.1% suggest partial improvement, 7.7% deem it ineffective.
- **Educational Organization:** 65.4% view organization as effective, 26.9% see a need for support, 7.7% consider it weak.
- **Educational Guidance:** 73.1% see guidance as effective, 19.2% require enhancement, 7.7% report absence in some universities.

- **Evaluation and Follow-Up:** 61.5% consider the system effective, 26.9% need development, 11.6% report absence in some programs.

*Comparison of Student and Faculty Perceptions*

| Axis                              | Student Agreement | Faculty Agreement | Notes  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Educational Planning</b>       | 83.87%            | 69.2%             | Students more positive; faculty note gaps with labor market.                           |
| <b>Educational Organization</b>   | 83.96%            | 65.4%             | Students perceive effective organization; faculty highlight administrative challenges. |
| <b>Educational Guidance</b>       | 85.6%             | 73.1%             | Consensus on importance; faculty see need for stronger implementation.                 |
| <b>Evaluation &amp; Follow-Up</b> | 83.9%             | 61.5%             | Students perceive higher effectiveness than faculty.                                   |

*Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS analysis*

*Hypothesis Testing*

| Hypothesis  | $\chi^2$ | Sig   | Decision | Interpretation  |
|---|----------|-------|----------|---|
| <b>H1: Relationship between planning and program update</b>     | 0.67     | 0.000 | Accepted | Strong positive relationship.                         |
| <b>H2: Relationship between organization and program update</b> | 0.59     | 0.003 | Accepted | Effective organization enhances program development.  |
| <b>H3: Relationship between guidance and program update</b>     | 0.71     | 0.000 | Accepted | Guidance is a pivotal factor in updating programs.    |
| <b>H4: Relationship between evaluation and program update</b>   | 0.63     | 0.001 | Accepted | Continuous evaluation contributes to program quality. |

*Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS analysis*

### **Key Research Findings**

- **Educational Planning:** Positive correlation with program updates; digital policies and skill integration significantly enhance student capabilities.
- **Educational Organization:** Administrative structure facilitates program updating, encourages innovation, and supports practical skills application.
- **Educational Guidance:** Crucial in aligning curricula with labor market needs and providing support for students.
- **Evaluation and Follow-Up:** Essential for identifying strengths and weaknesses, ensuring compliance with standards, and enhancing digital/media skills.
- **Overall:** Educational Administration (leadership) in private Lebanese media faculties acts as a key driver for program modernization; planning, organization, guidance, and evaluation complement each other to improve program efficiency and output.

### *Recommendations*

1. Strengthen administrative digital policies and integrate digital skills into curricula.
2. Develop flexible organizational structures allowing continuous faculty and student participation in program updates.
3. Implement sustainable guidance programs linking education to labor market needs with individual/group support.
4. Intensify continuous evaluation and follow-up to ensure program relevance and alignment with international standards.
5. Promote digital innovation through workshops and applied training to link educational outcomes with practical media industry needs.

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### **Ethical approval**

This study was conducted in accordance with generally accepted ethical standards for educational and social science research. Participation was voluntary, and the information collected from students and faculty members was treated confidentially and used solely for academic research purposes. If required by the journal, the authors may add the name of the approving institution or committee and the approval reference number, where applicable.

### **Author contributions**

**Violla Talal Makhzoum** contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the original manuscript draft.

**Intakhab Alam Khan** contributed to the methodological refinement, academic supervision, critical revision of the manuscript, and final review and approval of the submitted version.

Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical and institutional considerations.

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