

The Extent of the Need for Teaching Forensic Sciences for Law Students in Jordanian Universities

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Abstract

This article examines the actual need for teaching forensic sciences to Bachelor of Law students in Jordanian universities, where the research extrapolated the study plans for the specialization of law in the faculties of law in Jordanian universities, which amount to 20 faculties, to know the faculties that teach forensic sciences. It was found that only one faculty offered forensic sciences as an elective requirement, and that 13 faculties included among their study plans the course of forensic medicine as an elective requirement.

Also, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to a random sample of 120 lawyers in Jordan. The questionnaire contained 9 multiple-choice questions, the most important results are that only 39% of the sample studied one of forensic sciences subjects at the bachelor's level, and 36% of them know the work of forensic experts, and 92% support that the forensic sciences to be as a compulsory requirement course for law students.

The article discussed the results of the questionnaire in a scientific discussion and concluded the necessity to design a subject specialized in forensic sciences for students of law, provided that it is a compulsory requirement because of its great importance in the work.

Keywords: Forensic sciences, Education, Justice, Law study.

Introduction

Forensic sciences are considered one of the modern sciences of distinctive importance due to the important services it provides to justice through the use of scientific means to uncover crimes. It's distinguished by the fact that it uses various modern means and techniques to uncover crime.

By forensic sciences, we mean those sciences that assist in uncovering crimes, clarifying their mysteries, determining the methods of their commission, and tracing the perpetrator and tracing his traces through

physical evidence¹. These sciences play an important role in revealing the truth, especially in criminal cases, and to the extent that these sciences are advanced, the results reached by the judiciary are identical to reality, thus achieving reassurance in judgments².

It is noticeable that forensic sciences has developed remarkably in the modern era, expanding its scope to include several branches of the sciences American Academy of Forensic Sciences, for example, includes the following specific areas of expertise: pathology and biology, toxicology, criminalistics, questioned documents, forensic odontology, anthropology, jurisprudence, psychiatry, and a general section. Other sections are developing in such fields as engineering, geology, and microscopy³.

There is no doubt that the use of Forensic sciences at present time has become very important, as most courts resort to these sciences to reach the certainty of truth, and this is what leads us to raise the topic of this article,

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which is, is it now necessary to teach Forensic sciences for law students?

The article used two methods to arrive at results. Initially, a survey study of the study plans for the Bachelor of Laws program was conducted for all 20 Jordanian universities, to know the reality of teaching Forensic sciences in law faculties. After knowing the results of this study, I designed a questionnaire that contained 9 multiple-choice questions, with the aim of the reality of lawyers knowledge of forensic sciences and the extent to which they needed to study forensic sciences or not.

A random sample of 120 Jordanian lawyers was selected, all of whom were graduates of Jordanian law schools, whose experience in the profession ranged from one to thirty years.

The questionnaire contained the following questions:

- Have you studied forensic sciences or one of its branches in the Bachelor?
- Do you have interests and following new information in forensic sciences?
- When you want to know any information in the forensic sciences, your method for that is:
- Do you have the ability to discuss forensic experts with scientific information?
- Have you ever asked the court to resort to forensic evidence to deny the accusation?
- What are the most important cases in which you think forensic sciences have a role?
- Have you ever seen how forensic experts work?
- What kind of evidence have you dealt with the most in your cases?
- Do you think it is necessary to study forensic sciences as a compulsory course at the undergraduate level?

Result

The study plans for all law faculties in Jordanian universities (government and private), totaling 20 faculties, were reviewed in each of the following

universities: University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, Mutah University, Al Al-Bayt University, Al-Balqa Applied University, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Applied Science Private University, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, University of Petra, Israa University, Al-Zaytoonah University, Middle East University, University of Islamic Sciences, Philadelphia University, University of Jerash, Irbid National University, Jadara University, Ajloun National University, Zarqa Private University, and Amman Arab University.

It turns out that one university, which is Applied Science Private University, teaches criminal science as an elective course for law students. According to the description announced by the faculty, “ This course is devoted to the study of one of the auxiliary criminal sciences chosen by the teacher: Criminology, penology, criminal policy, judicial psychology, a criminal investigation, criminal medicine, etc”.

It was also found that thirteen universities teach (forensic medicine) as an elective course for students of the Faculty of Law. These universities are: University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, Mutah University, Al al-Bayt University, Al-Balqa Applied University, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, University of Petra, Al-Israa University, Al-Zaytoonah University, Jerash University, Irbid National University, Ajloun National University, and Amman Arab University. The description of the course was the same in all these universities, which “This course aims to study the definition, means of requesting help from forensic medical doctors in judiciary proceedings and investigations including medical reports, inspection of dead bodies, their autopsy and reasons of death”.

As for the results of the questionnaire, it was as follows:

1- (39%) of the study sample studied one of the forensic sciences subjects at the bachelor’s level, compared to (61%) of them did not study any of its branches.

2- (80%) of the study sample have an interest in forensic sciences and follow up on new information.

3- (55%) of the study sample obtains their information in forensic sciences from the Internet, and

(37%) of them through asking experts, while (8%) of them resort to specialized books and journals.

4- (58%) of the study sample believes that they can discuss scientific information with forensic experts.

5- (49%) of the study sample had previously asked the court to resort to scientific evidence to deny the accusation from the accused.

6- (52%) of the study sample believed that the cases that most need resort to forensic sciences are those related to murder and abuse, while (46%) of them believe that are the cases related to sexual crimes, and (2%) believe that are cases related to property crimes.

7- Only (36%) of respondents know how forensic experts work.

8- The experience of Detecting Forgery And Counterfeiting constituted the most scientific expertise that the sample members dealt with (65 people), followed by the experience of traffic accidents (22 people), then the experience of the genetic fingerprint (14 people), and then the other experiences, and the experience of weapons came as the least type of experience dealing with Frequently (one person from the sample).

9- (92%) of the study sample believed that it is necessary to study forensic sciences as a compulsory course at the bachelor's level, compared to (8%) of them who do not believe it is necessary.

Discussion

It seems that the study plans for the Bachelor of Laws program at Jordanian universities are still traditional so that still contain legal courses explain the texts of law, meaning that the basis for studying law in these universities stems from the legal text only, so these plans lack many of courses that helps law student to practice his profession. Therefore, it is important to include assistive courses that develop student's skills, not only in interpreting and analyzing legal texts but also in linking all sciences with the science of law.

There is a clear neglect of forensic sciences during the study of law, and even with a number of faculties that teach forensic medicine as an elective requirement, this is not sufficient, as forensic medicine is only a branch of forensic sciences. In connection with the results of

the questionnaire, there are branches of forensic sciences that are more used than forensic medicine, so the student must be familiar with them.

There is no doubt that there is recognition of the existence of a large gap between the scientific and legal disciplines, on the other hand there is recognition of the need to bridge this gap⁴. As the legal experts realize the importance of resorting to scientific disciplines to solve their cases, it is evident from the results of the questionnaire that there is a desire of lawyers for the course of forensic sciences to be a compulsory course during their studies due to the importance they have seen on the ground.

Conclusion

Nothing can establish the foundations of justice in societies as far as revealing the truth that has become within reach by the development of science⁵. From here appears the importance of studying forensic sciences for law students, a course that is lacking in our Jordanian university. With the awareness of those working in the legal field of this, it has become necessary to design a special curriculum for forensic sciences for law students, and we mean by a special curriculum that the presentation of information is consistent with the legal mentality, and this is what many writers who have written books in forensic medicine have directed especially for law students (for example See: Batrawy, 2004)⁶.

From this standpoint, we call on law faculties in Jordanian universities to amend their study plans to include at least a compulsory course in forensic sciences aim to introducing law students to modern scientific evidences.

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