



Preface

Tatweer Petroleum Company Profile

In December 2009, Tatweer Petroleum – Bahrain Field Development Company W.L.L. assumed responsibility for the stewardship and revitalization of the mature Bahrain Field and the execution of all activities related to the petroleum operations pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Development and Production Sharing Agreement (DPSA). The DPSA, dated 26th April 2009, entered into between the National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA) and Occidental, Mubadala, and The Oil and Gas Holding Company (nogaholding).

As of July 2016, the Company is wholly owned by nogaholding, the business and investment arm of NOGA of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which acts as the steward for the Government's investment in a diversified range of energy-related companies.

The Company's primary goal is to increase the production of oil and the availability of gas to meet the future energy demands of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in line with the nation's Economic Vision 2030.

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Conference Paper

News Sites and Fake News in the Egyptian Political Transformation 2013-14: Aljazeera.net Case Study

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Abstract

Online activities allow users to benefit from, and engage with, news and information in a more complex way than was possible with old news settings. However, many have expressed concerns about the effects of false news stories, or 'fake news', circulated largely via online services on public view. This study examines the news sites' behaviour and the attitudes of elite Egyptian academics towards information provided by the *aljazeera.net* news site during the Egyptian political conflict and the transformation from former President Mohamed Morsi to current President Abdul Fatah el-Sisi. A total of 450 elite academics were surveyed online to evaluate news and information about the political conflict and the transformation in Egypt through focusing on how they became informed about such news, their perceptions of news via the *aljazeera.net* site and their evaluation of whether the network has misused information regarding this period. The results indicated that the *aljazeera.net* site used different, false and 'fake news' techniques mainly in support of the pro-Morsi position during the transition to el-Sisi. Respondents indicated that misinformation was clearly provided by *aljazeera.net* in different formats, though some highlighted the importance of accessing news from online sources. Respondents indicated that online content can be easily spread among users with no significant third-party filtering, fact-checking or editorial judgment. This raises questions about who becomes the arbiter of truth.

Keywords: Fake News, Misinformation News, Online News Sites, *aljazeera.net*, Mohamed Morsi, Abdul Fatah el-Sisi, News Propaganda, Social Networking Sites, Online Audiences

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1. Background

The early months of 2013 witnessed large protests against Mohamed Morsi, the fifth President of Egypt (from 30 June 2012 to 3 July 2013) over alleged decisions that the Egyptians considered to support *Brotherhoodism* over other political forces, as well as other decisions alleged to threaten Egyptian national security (Rashdan, 2015). There were also sectarian incidents in Abbasia, Achim and Aswan and clashes in Port Said because of judgments against those involved in the “massacre” of Port Said Stadium, which forced Morsi to impose a state of emergency and a curfew in the canal cities area (Abaza, 2013). In April 2013, a movement called “Tamarod” (“Rebellion” in Arabic) launched a major campaign to obtain Egyptian signatures calling for the resignation of President Morsi and for early presidential elections. By June 29, 22,134,465 signatures had been collected calling for the end of the Morsi regime and a mass protest was called to confirm the signatures (Monier and Ranko, 2013). As a result, the Defense Minister, Abdel Fatah el-Sisi, announced on July 3 that the Egyptian Army had ousted Morsi, that early presidential elections would be held and that a roadmap had been established to complete the country’s constitutional institutions. In January 2014, the new Egyptian constitution was adopted after the Supreme Elections Commission announced the final result of the referendum and el-Sisi was elected (Kingsley, 2014; Sanyal, 2015).

The June 30 Revolution is seen as a distinctly popular event that expressed the wishes of the vast majority of Egyptians and it is now described as “online democracy” which enabled the Egyptians to participate politically and to advocate the January 25 Revolution in a way that did not involve the state media (Monier and Ranko, 2013; Rashdan, 2015). The online platforms have enabled people to express their views openly. Following the 2013 Egyptian election, a specific concern arose related to the effect of false stories or “fake news” circulated on news sites and the way in which news is spread and widely shared on these platforms. Statistically, evidence has shown that Egyptians are now addicted to online sites which are most popular among those aged 18-24, followed by those aged 25-34, with more males (64%) than females (36%), for example, using Facebook on a daily basis (Cairoscene, 2014). Likewise, more online activities now take place involving different segments of society. It is argued that aljazeera.net became heavily involved in the period of political transformation through giving much support to Morsi’s party, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), over others. This is because aljazeera.net has its own agenda in dealing with such issues

and this raises concerns over the ethical issues arising from media organisations providing accurate news and information. The network *deliberately* attempted to create confusion and instability in Egypt by feeding hate and division between locals. This study aims to examine the behaviour of elite Egyptian academics regarding information provided by the aljazeera.net site during the political conflict and the process of transformation between former President Mohamed Morsi and current President Abdul Fatah el-Sisi. It examines respondents' perceptions of the network's news and information during this period in order to understand online audiences' perceptions of misused information and "fake news" concerning Egypt.

2. Related Work

Misinformation, or "fake news", is not a new phenomenon in modern society in terms of threatening democracy and freedom (Zhou, Wellman and Yu, 2011; EBU, 2018). For example, the term was highlighted by news media in coverage of Donald Trump's election in 2016 (Silverman and Singer-Vine, 2016; Titcomb and Carson, 2018) and the UK's Brexit vote in June 2016 (Briant, 2018) with concerns about the credibility of online content being raised, especially after widespread reports of social sites sharing false stories and allegations that "someone" paid them to do this (Wojdyski, 2016). "Fake news" is not entirely a new phenomenon – in fact, "fake news", or lies, biased news and propaganda, has been known for more than a century (Chomsky, 1991). Such phenomena appeared in the late 19th century, but were not rapidly spread – as a result, their corrosive effect on electoral politics and democratic processes was not great due to the lack of digital means of distribution (Wardle, 2017; Briant, 2018).

In Arab regions, "fake news" has also found its way into mainstream media, largely through their journalists' over-reliance on online sources or through lack of information about an event, especially in wartime and during conflicts. For example, some well-known mainstream media, such as Al-Jazeera TV and Al-Arabiya TV, have recently produced false information through *deliberately* made-up news stories to divert the public for various reasons, especially during and after the 2011 Arab uprisings (Buciantti and el-Richani, 2015). In his book, *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann states that we inhabit a cave of media misrepresentations and distortions of reality. As a result, neither press nor public can discern the truth. Nigel Oakes said that "truth is for those who don't have 'the balls' to lie in order to win – citizens are reduced to levers and tools, and value is placed only in fetishizing the levers of power" (as cited in Briant, 2018). Indeed, Winston Churchill said that "in wartime, truth is so precious that she

should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies” and, in the US, the George W Bush aide, Ron Suskind (2004) wrote that “we’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality”.

2.1. Types of “fake news”

To understand the current information ecosystem, three elements can be broken down regarding misinformation or “fake news” and how these are spread via online platforms, as Wardle (2017) highlights: (1) the types of content being created/shared; (2) the motivations behind such creation/sharing; and (3) how the content is disseminated. Baym (2005: 261) adds that “fake news necessitates assumptions about some kind of *authentic* or *legitimate* set of news practices”. This means that, when users believe that a news site is journalistic in nature, they can be exploited and persuaded to believe untrue things (e.g., the aljazeera.net site). Wardle (2017) further argues that, when considering whether information is false, there are seven distinct types of problematic content and we should think about these when viewing media content (see e.g., Silverman and Singer-Vine, 2016). These are: (1) satire or parody where there is no intention to cause harm, but there is potential for people to be fooled; (2) misleading content used to frame an issue or an individual; (3) imposter content when genuine sources are impersonated; (4) fabricated content where new content is 100% false and designed to deceive and do harm; (5) false connections when headlines, visuals or captions do not support the content; (6) false context when genuine content is shared with false contextual information; and (7) manipulated content when genuine information or imagery is manipulated in order to deceive.

Furthermore, the internet has hugely contributed to the proliferation of new forms of partisan media (e.g., websites, blogs, tweets, posts) and, with the emergence and popularity of social media sites, news partisanship has become more popular than ever (Vargo, Guo and Amazeen, 2018). In some Arab countries, some politicians/religious leaders, via their partisan media, have used false information alongside state media to manipulate public opinion. For example, the Qatari authorities showed great support for the MB party in Egypt due to its ideological views and allowed MB members to use the channel as a platform with which to divert Egyptians. As a result, its one-sided coverage and alleged bias has badly affected the channel’s reputation (Williams, 2014). To show its support for the MB party, the channel, for example, fully allowed Yousf al-Qaradawi, a pro-MB preacher, to post his views (Smoltczyk, 2011).

Some believe that Qatar's Al-Jazeera has played a provocative role with the aim of overthrowing a number of Arab regimes, implementing creative chaos, dividing the Arab region by spreading sedition and instigating unrest in Arab countries. We argue that aljazeera.net sets the agenda of other media outlets, newspapers, television and radio due to its long-standing media coverage around the world. We consider that aljazeera.net was able to construct the Egyptians' perceived importance of interconnections between issues regarding Morsi or el-Sisi. However, the channel effectively became a supporter of violent groups and this affected its media credibility in a large number of Arab regions (e.g., Egypt). In fact, the channel possesses the potential, in terms of material and technology, to enable it to falsify public awareness and fall into lies and deception. The channel promotes the claims of division, e.g. in Iraq, Syria and Libya. It uses its site to attack others, especially when its offices are closed, such as in Syria and Egypt. It uses its own "electronic militias" to support its allied groups (e.g., in Syria, Libya and Yemen). The channel clearly led the assault on the Egyptian army, as confirmed by leaked documents during the January 25 Revolution where it played a confirmed role in destroying Egypt by igniting the flames of sedition among Egyptians and through its bias towards the MB party. These matters are of great concern in the Arab world. This study is underpinned by the following questions: **(RQ1)** How have elite Egyptian academics adapted/perceived the more diverse provision of news information from aljazeera.net? **(RQ2)** Have they become more aware of misinformation or false news from specific news services? The study reported in this paper has provided an up-to-date analysis of online content provided by aljazeera.net, and used by elite Egyptian academics, in an attempt to map out the way in which news and information in the region is being perceived.

3. Method

3.1. Respondents

Data were collected from 450 elite Egyptian academics who are specialists in media and communication studies and who teach in public/private Egyptian universities. These were: Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University (public), Faculty of Information, University of Beni Suef (public), Mass Media and Communication Technology Faculty, South Valley University (public), Media Studies Faculty, American University in Cairo (private), Media Studies Department, German University in Cairo (private), Faculty of Media and Mass Communication, October 6 University (private), Faculty

of Media and Arts, Pharos University in Alexandria (private), Faculty of Media and Communication Technology, University of Misr for Science and Technology (private) and Media Department, Canadian University (private). Out of 450 responses, 32 were dropped for not completing the questionnaire, leaving the study with 418 respondents (as shown in Table 1 below).

TABLE 1: The sample characteristics.

Gender	N	o%
Male	309	73.9
Female	109	26.1
Age		
26-35	79	18.9
36-45	144	34.4
46-55	100	23.9
56-65	68	16.3
> 66	27	6.5
Education level		
Professor	90	21.6
Asso. Professor	127	30.5
Ass. Professor	114	27.3
Lecturer	66	15.8
Ass. Lecturer	21	5.0
Specialised		
Journalism	86	20.6
PR and Ads	120	28.8
TV & Radio	115	27.5
New Media	97	23.0
Residence		
Urban	296	70.8
Rural	122	29.2

3.2. Procedures

Data were gathered through an online survey, googlesurvey.com, with a questionnaire containing a total of 13 questions. Before proceeding, it is necessary to bear in mind that, because the data were gathered via an online survey, the generalising and the findings are limited to those participants who voluntarily undertook the questionnaire. The questionnaire was simply designed with questions measured on closed options. The validity of the instrument was tested by reviewing the questions to ensure that the words/phrases were linguistically clear.

4. Findings

4.1. Views on news content

Respondents were generally asked about their opinion regarding news and information content on the aljazeera.net site and whether they thought that the network posted any misinformation about Egypt during the aforementioned period. The majority of respondents (62.7%) believed that the network often posted misinformation about Egypt, while 30.9% said that they “don’t know” or “don’t think so” (6.4%). This is an indication that our respondents were aware of “fake news”, or fabricated news content, posted about their country.

Respondents were also asked, more specifically, about the aljazeera.net news site’s coverage of events and issues in Egypt from June 2013 to July 2014. A total of 34.3% of respondents believed that aljazeera.net “betrayed” or manipulated the public with news and information when covering the events. Some (27%) felt “very betrayed”, while 13.6% of respondents believed that the coverage was “very objective” or “just objective” (9.5%) in posting news and information about Egypt during this period, with 15.5% of respondents stating that they “don’t know”.

Those who believed that aljazeera.net posted “fake news” during this period were asked how the network posted this news and information. The respondents considered that the network was able to post “fake news” via the following: pictures (89.1%), videos (82.2%), news sources (79.6%), links (49.5%), news stories (42.5%) and news context (36%). Respondents also added that the network commented via news events (38%), via social media sites (15.6%) and through selected speakers (14.4%). When respondents were asked about the scope used by aljazeera.net to post “fake news”, 60% said that the network covered security and military news topics, 58.9% said political news, 39% said sports news, 26.3% said economic news, 24.4% said cultural news and 20.6% said social news. This shows that the network used a large variety of means of spreading “fake news” or misinformation. It seems that the network broadcasted/posted false news which was believed to harm national security, causing the network to be subject to persecution, as Rashdan (2015) indicates.

4.2. Reasons behind misinformation news

To determine whether Egyptians were aware of the reasons behind the posting of misinformation news, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with six

generally reasoned items associated with posting “fake news” about Egypt on a five-point scale (1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree).

TABLE 2: Different reasons for posting “fake news” (n = 417).

The network posted misinformation ...	SA	DK	SD
to support the MB party	66.9	8.2	25.0
to cause the el-Sisis election campaign to fail	64.7	9.4	25.9
to distort the Egyptian internal image	62.9	11.5	25.6
to distort the Egyptian external image	62.8	11.5	25.7
because of the network’s policy of distorting and counterfeiting news	61.9	11.3	26.9
because its nature to post misinformation news	60.9	12.2	26.9

The findings show that most respondents were in agreement about the network posting “fake news” about Egypt. For example, the majority (saying “agree strongly” or “agree”) of respondents said that they believed that the channel posted “fake news” for the following reasons: to support the MB (66.9%); to cause the el-Sisi election campaign to fail (64.7%); to distort Egypt’s external image (62.9%) or internal image (62.9%); it is the nature of the network to post “fake news” about Egypt (61.9%); the network has a policy of distorting and counterfeiting news (60.9%).



Figure 1: Most words/phrases mentioned regarding misinformation news about Egypt.

Finally, respondents were asked to write three words/phrases that came into their minds when talking about “fake news” about Egypt (Figure 1). Most of the words/phrases mentioned by the respondents were: “army/military” (40%), followed by “coup/legitimacy” (16.7%), “President Morsi” and “the legitimate president”

(15.8%) and “the police, security and intelligence” (13.5%). Less frequently used words were: “el-Sisi” (8%), “Egyptian media” (5.8%), “poverty” (4.7%) and “religious institutions/al-azhar” or “Church” (3.2%). Al-Jazeera here seems to focus on the media elite in its misinformation news about the sovereign institutions in Egypt such as the army, security, the elected president (el-Sisi) and other media and religious institutions.

5. Discussion

In response to **RQ1**, an online survey of elite Egyptian academics, which investigated news sites and fake news information in the Egyptian political transformation of 2013-14, provided evidence that news information content provided by some news sites, such as aljazeera.net, was described as false and as misinformation. There is no doubt that the internet, via news sites, has been widely patronised by Arabs and it is clear that widespread use of such news sites to access news and information stories about Egypt has allowed such news stories to be disseminated quickly, with reports that the majority of Egyptians get news and information via different platforms such as aljazeera.net (Dennis, Martin and Wood, 2016). Respondents also indicated that the network somehow “betrayed”, or attempted to manipulate, the public about the political situation.

Focusing on news information delivered by aljazeera.net, the study found that the network superseded indigenous local and national Egyptian media services by creating and taking part in producing news and information about the political situation in Egypt during this period and supporting the MB party (**RQ2**). In doing so, the network used different materials to post false news about Egypt, such as pictures, video clips, news sources, news links and news stories, with the specific intention of competing with the local media. However, the local authorities were able to control the flow of information and refuted information about Egypt posted by aljazeera.net. The network also used a wide scope to post misinformation news about Egypt. For example, it used security and military news topics, political news, sports news and economic news. Such news and information posted on the network was seen as a threat and as harmful to national security, which caused the network to be shut down (Rashdan, 2015).

The reasons for aljazeera.net posting misinformation about Egypt in the same period are clear. As indicated by the respondents, support for the MB party, the desire for the el-Sisi campaign to fail and the desire to alter Egypt’s internal/external image were the most cited rationales behind misinformation news. This indicates that the Egyptian

elites were fully aware of the types of news and information posted by the network. Three factors could be at play. First, the views of the network and its news content were easily identified as misinformation and false news. Second, the manipulated content lacked strong supporting evidence. Third, the Egyptian elites were fully aware of the media fabrication and of how news could be produced to divert and influence audiences.

Several words/phrases were mentioned by the respondents regarding misinformation news posted by the network covering the news and information about Egypt. The words/phrases most used were "army/military", followed by using "coup/legitimacy" and words mentioning President Morsi as being the legitimate president. This can be seen as interference in the local affairs of Egypt and as an outrage by the new government of el-Sisi.

6. Conclusion

Since late 2010, news sites have been seen as important tools in mobilising and organising Egyptian users throughout the uprising (Dennis, Martin and Wood, 2016, 2017). Their impact suggests that those concerned with the quest for democracy and peace should pay more attention to the explicit and implicit effects of these social media (Zhou, Wellman and Yu, 2011). "Fake news" is seen as stories that are generally false or fabricated. However, such news became very popular at certain times e.g., during elections and wars. "Fake news" is the most visible element in the online information disorder in which e.g., some social media have huge influence on users' access to information (EBU, 2018). News stories range from hoaxes and propaganda to disinformation purporting to be real news, which now frequently circulate more on new media (social media) to drive web traffic and amplify their effect. Some stories are seen as completely false and created for financial, religious and political gains (Wardle, 2017). News and current affairs are central to public-service media and are seen as an essential element in informing the public and helping them to understand the world around them. This means offering a wide choice of quality news and information, impartial information and pluralistic views.

With the emergence and popularity of accessing news and information via the internet, news sites' coverage became more popular among Egyptians than it had ever been before (Vargo, Guo and Amazeen, 2018). However, the internet, via news sites, facilitates the spread of misinformation which targets users already engaged in conversation on a particular issue (e.g., the ousting of Morsi). This study has shown that

participants indicated that aljazeera.net posted false news in a professional manner to support the Morsi campaign against el-Sisi during 2013 and 2014. The importance of these findings is that the participants were able to identify the concept of “fake news” or misinformation news when they referred to the content that is fabricated for political direction and intention or for ideological views. They were also aware of the widespread use of news and information via the internet and networking sites and of the ability of users to get access to a huge quantity of information without gatekeepers or filters. This means that users have to fast-check and find true information for themselves and trust those news sources that they perceive to be credible, as Flanagin and Metzger (2000) indicate.

Despite the recent hostility and disagreement between Al-Jazeera and the Egyptian authorities, the network has been working intensively on different Egyptian matters and has tried to interfere with the public and influence them on every aspect of Egyptian life and current affairs. Regarding the period analysed here, the study found that the relationship between Egypt and Al-Jazeera has become a negative one. The network lost its main office in Cairo due to allegations of producing and trying to manipulate Egyptians about what is going on in their country. The lack of objective news and use of political propaganda affected the network’s reputation among local people. This could help the local media to fill the gap and to replace the news and information coming from aljazeera.net. In fact, it seems that the Egyptian media were strong enough to refute aljazeera.net’s news and information, especially during this period.

To sum up, although this paper has provided a more recent analysis of online content provided by aljazeera.net, its findings should be considered in light of its limitations. For example, the study was conducted at a time when there was popular discussion in Egypt about misinformation news and false news and this could have influenced the outcome. The raising of the “fake news” issue in Egypt regarding the political transformation could have affected public debate and the subsequent survey findings. Second, participants (in the survey and interviews) could have misremembered or tailored their responses in a way that would paint them in a favourable light. This paper identified news and information provided only by aljazeera.net to determine how news and information was being perceived by Egyptian elites only. Future work could explore more in terms of both news sites and population.

7. Authors' Bio

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Conference Paper

Impact Measurement of Programs Provided By Charity Civil Society Organizations for Community Development in Bahrain

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to elaborate an analytical analysis of the contribution of charity civil society organizations working in the Kingdom of Bahrain for community development purposes. A thorough literature survey of the field of public policy analysis and program evaluation reveals that many evaluation models exist for this purpose. The framework of programs evaluation proposed by the authors Marceau et al. (1992) and Marceau (2012) is a useful tool to reach the general objective of this research project. The methodology of this research is a case study of the Social Charity Organization of Sadad. A questionnaire was elaborated for this purpose that investigates the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the program. The results of this research project provide a good understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of charity civil society organizations working in the Kingdom of Bahrain regarding the principle of community development and citizen-life improvement proposed by the National Economic Vision of Bahrain 2030.

Keywords: Impact Measurement of Program, Charity Civil Society Organizations, Community Development, Regression Analysis, Correlation, Kingdom of Bahrain

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1. Introduction

The Economic Vision 2030 focuses on shaping the vision of the government, society and the economy, and aiming to build a better life for every Bahraini. Partnership between civil society organizations and local government has a significant responsibility to enhance the process of community development in Bahrain (Document of E-Government Portal – Bahrain 2030: The Economic Vision 2030). The Ministry of Labour

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and Social Development in Bahrain is providing a detailed Civil Society Organizations Directory working in different fields for development purposes in the country.

A thorough literature review demonstrates the scarcity of researches dedicated to the subject of our research. Therefore, the importance of this research paper originates from the novelty of the study, besides; the results of the research will provide a good understanding of the effectiveness and efficiency of charity civil society organizations working in the Kingdom of Bahrain regarding the principle of community development and citizen-life improvement proposed by the National Economic Vision of Bahrain 2030.

After a detailed literature review of the field of public policy analysis and program evaluation we may conclude that many evaluation models were elaborated by different authors. The framework of programs evaluation proposed by the authors Marceau et al. (1992) and Marceau (2012) is a useful tool to reach the general objective of this research project.

2. Research Problem: NGOs in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Upon our observation of the NGOs working in Bahrain we may illustrate that many organizations do not dedicate importance to the evaluation of their programs nor they possess the pertinent techniques to ensure the evaluation activities.

In Bahrain, civil society organizations play a vital role for the development of community. The Ministry of Social Development was established under the Royal Decree No. (73) in 2005 to manage the social activities and the work of NGOs in Bahrain (Document of Ministry of Social Development – Our Social Services: Empowering the Individual.. Advancing the Society).

The directory of the Ministry presents all the NGOs operating in Bahrain where there work varies between different fields including the private institution, association, amateur and hobbies, human rights, development services to the populations and regions, public, students, Palestinian issue, elderly, friendship with communities, charities, family, relief, environment and natural resources, education and training, national development, foreigner communities and societies, Islamic, youth, vocational, animal care, physical and psychosomatic health, child and juniors, scientific, social responsibilities, talent innovation and creativity, cooperatives, women, Arabian Gulf, churches, clubs, disability and anti-corruption (Document of Ministry of Social Development-NGOs Directory).

Upon the last update on 26/7/2018 of the directory of Charities Societies provide by the Ministry of Social Development there are 112 NGOs working in this field (Document of Ministry of Social Development – Charities Societies).

3. Research Objective

The objective of this research is to elaborate an analytical analysis of the contribution of charity civil society organizations working in the Kingdom of Bahrain for community development purposes. The research aims to evaluate the impact of these organizations in order to participate in the economic reform which goes in parallel with the National Economic Vision of Bahrain 2030.

4. Research Methodology

The objective of this research is to elaborate an analytical analysis of the contribution of charity civil society organizations working in Kingdom of Bahrain for community development purposes.

The methodology of this research project is a case study of the Social Charity Organization of Sadad. The organization is providing a number of programs for the development of Sadad village situated in the western shore of Bahrain governed by the Northern Governorate administrative region. The selection of this organization is justified by the reason that Sadad is one of the smallest villages in Bahrain which suffers most from vulnerability and poverty.

We selected one of the most significant programs in the field of health care provided by the organization to the population of Sada village. The population of this research is 1200 and we distributed a pre-prepared closed ended questionnaire to a random sample of 200 persons who got the program services. The number of the persons who answered the questionnaire was 147 persons.

The framework of programs evaluation proposed by the authors Marceau et al. (1992) and Marceau (2012) is a useful tool to reach the general objective of this research project. A questionnaire was elaborated for this purpose which investigates the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the program. The answers were analyzed by employing a rating scale indicators varying from 1 to 5 as the following: 1: Very poor, 2: Poor, 3: Fair, 4: Good and 5: Excellent (Appendix 1).

5. The Role of NGOs for Community Development

The role of civil society organizations are swiftly increase in the world (Holanquist 1984), and (Briton 1987). NGO's has been established to encourage the citizens to develop themselves through self – initiative and motivation, with guidance from government. The community members are involved in formulating, implementing and evaluating the programs, while the government provides the necessary support for their activities (Gboyega, 1992: 231).

Sustainable development has developed over the past few decades as a fundamental paradigm for community development. However, as Bradshaw and Winn (2000) have stated, sustainability is embedded largely in an environmental perspective, mostly in the developed countries. Though, the objective of sustainable development is to reach equilibrium between three pillars - social, economic and environmental – of communities (Sneddon 2000).

6. Programs Evaluation Theory

Recently, programs evaluation gained its significance in the field of public policy analysis in order to investigate the role of programs and policies anticipated in society and community development (Beaudry and Gauthier, 1992; Crête et al., 1994; Knoepfel et al. 1998, 2001, 2015).

Programs evaluation has been emerged between two different consecutive paradigms. The traditional group of thoughts, adheres to the positivist paradigm while the subsequent group, has been developed in the constructivist paradigm (for more details see Bussmann and Knoepfel, 1998; El Dessouky, 2016).

Since then, different model of programs evaluation has been proposed by many authors to precisely identify the unit of analysis of each program evaluated. One of the pertinent known models in this field of study was introduced by Marceau et al. (1992) and Marceau (2012). The researchers proposed specific elements in consistent questions regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programs (elements are presented in Appendix 1).

For the authors, the program relevance is possibly be measured when we succeed to recognize if the interventions answer a specific need and when the resources used are appropriate. The effectiveness of the programs might be reached when the objectives are reached. The efficiency of the programs questioned the relationship between the results observed and the resources used. And the impact of the programs interrogated

the outcomes of the interventions regarding: the citizens, the economy and the society (Marceau et al., 1992; Marceau, 2012).

7. Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of the impact of the health care program provided by Saddad organization is showing the following results.

TABLE 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the study.

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Impact	4.2338	.66213	147
Relevance	4.4320	.69339	147
Effectiveness	4.2490	.73189	147
Efficiency	4.3367	.49454	147

Table (1) presents the analysis of the mean and standard deviation of 147 persons who answers the questionnaire.

TABLE 2: Correlation of Variables.

Correlations					
		Impact	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Pearson Correlation	Impact	1.000	.767	.709	.604
	Relevance	.767	1.000	.712	.539
	Effectiveness	.709	.712	1.000	.658
	Efficiency	.604	.539	.658	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Impact	.	.000	.000	.000
	Relevance	.000	.	.000	.000
	Effectiveness	.000	.000	.	.000
	Efficiency	.000	.000	.000	.
N	Impact	147	147	147	147
	Relevance	147	147	147	147
	Effectiveness	147	147	147	147
	Efficiency	147	147	147	147

Table (2) presents the correlation between the dependent and independent variables of the study. The analysis indicates that there is no full correlation between all the independent variables.

Table (3) presents all variables/entered removed of the study. The analysis reveals all variables of the regression equation: Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency. We

TABLE 3: Variables Entered/Removed.

Variables Entered/Removed ^b			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Efficiency, Relevance, Effectiveness	.	Enter
a. All requested variables entered.			
b. Dependent Variable: Impact			

may notice that the entire independent variables were included in the regression equation and no variable was excluded.

TABLE 4: Variables Entered/Removed.

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.813a	.660	.653	.38985	.660	92.715	3	143	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Efficiency, Relevance, Effectiveness									
b. Dependent Variable: Impact									

Table (4) presents the Model Summary of the study. The results confirm that the correlation coefficient value is (0.813) which can be considered as high value. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient square is (0.660) which affirms the relevance of the suggested model. The Adjusted R Square is more accurate than the correlation coefficient which confirms that the suggested model is consistent with the research problem of this study. The Std. Error of the Estimate is (0.38985) is very low which approves that the more this indicator is low the more the error of the model is low.

TABLE 5: ANOVA Analysis.

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.274	3	14.091	92.715	.000a
	Residual	21.734	143	.152		
	Total	64.009	146			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Efficiency, Relevance, Effectiveness						
b. Dependent Variable: Impact						

Table (5) presents the ANOVA analysis of the study. The results reveal that (sig=000) which is less than 0.005. In this case, we will reject the null hypothesis and we will accept the alternative hypothesis which confirms the significance of regression.

Accordingly, it is possibly to determine the existence of correlation between the dependent and independent variables suggested in the model of our study.

TABLE 6: Coefficients.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.165	.295		.561	.576
	Relevance	.483	.067	.506	7.231	.000
	Effectiveness	.210	.071	.232	2.959	.004
	Efficiency	.239	.087	.178	2.730	.007

a. Dependent Variable: Impact

Table (6) presents the coefficients analysis of variables which illustrate the unstandardized and standardized coefficient as well as the Std. Error. The results demonstrate the multiple regression equation as the following:

$$\text{Impact} = 0.165 + 0.483 \text{ Relevance} + 0.210 \text{ Effectiveness} + 0.239 \text{ Efficiency}$$

The results confirm that the multiple regression equation is significant.

8. Conclusion

The objective of this research is to elaborate an analytical analysis of the contribution of charity civil society organizations working in Kingdom of Bahrain for community development purposes. The methodology of this research project is a case study of the Social Charity Organization of Sadad. We selected one of the most significant programs in the field of health care provided by the organization to the population of Sada village. The research investigated the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the program.

In general, we may conclude that the health care program provided by Saddam organization to its community is a successful program regarding the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Moreover the program reached the intended outcomes and recognized a significant impact to the community development where it is operating.

The relevance of the program succeeded to address the health care needs of the community through its ability to identify these needs, its ability to indicate the rational purposes of the program, its ability to address current crucial needs of citizens and its ability to provide appropriate resources to the program.

The effectiveness of the program is approved through its ability to meet the desired objectives, its ability to achieve the intended short, medium and long term intended outcomes, and its ability to produce worthwhile results.

The efficiency of the health care program provided by Saddam is reached through its timely and correctly accomplishment of outputs with its appropriateness of inputs. The appropriate planning of costs and budget in addition to the recourses best uses was a curtail factor to the success of the program.

The impact of the health care program was significant to the community development in Sadadd village through the ability of the program to improve the overall health of the governorate's citizens. This improvement was attained through the achievement of the planned goals, objectives and outcomes. Furthermore, the program succeeded to improve the health care problem of the targeted population through valuable and beneficial results/outcomes to each citizen in particular and to the society in general. The sustainability of objectives was a crucial factor to reach a significant impact of the program.

9. Recommendations

The success of the decision-making and policy formulation of the NGOs for community development requires a great attention to be devoted to study and to respond to a specific need of the community. Moreover, it is crucial to provide and to diversify the resources required during the implementation process of the intended programs.

The accomplishment of the role of the NGOs regarding the community development depends on the effectiveness of the programs they are providing. The decision and policy makers of NGOs, in order to succeed, they have to precisely identify and have the capability to reach the objectives, results and outcomes of their programs in the short, medium and long term.

In order to succeed in their role of community development, the NGOs have to dedicate great importance for timely and correctly accomplishment of outputs through the appropriate uses of its inputs. The appropriate planning of costs and budget in addition to the best uses of recourses are crucial factors to succeed.

The impact of the NGOs programs has to be significant to improve a particular issue endangering the community citizens through the appropriate planning of goals, objectives and outcomes. The decision and policy makers of NGOs have to manage their programs with the main goal to achieve valuable and beneficial results/outcomes

to each citizen in particular and to the society in general. Correspondingly, the sustainability of objectives has to be taken into fully consideration by the NGOs in order to realize a significant impact of their programs.

Appendix (1)

Element	Questions	Rating Scale				
		1 (Very Poor)	2 (Poor)	3 (Fair)	4 (Good)	5 (Excellent)
Relevance of the program	1. Ability of the program to address identified needs.					
	2. Ability of the program to indicate rational purposes of the initiated program.					
	3. Ability of the program to address crucial needs to the citizens.					
	4. Level of resources used is typically appropriate.					
Effectiveness of the program	1. Ability of the program to meet the desired objectives.					
	2. Ability of the program to achieve the intended outcomes in the short term.					
	3. Ability of the program to achieve the intended outcomes in the medium term.					
	4. Ability of the program to achieve the intended outcomes in the long term.					
	5. Ability of the program to produce worthwhile results.					
Efficiency of the program	1. Level of the relationship between input and output was timely and correctly accomplished.					
	2. Level of the relationship between input and output was implemented by cost effective ways.					
	3. Level of input and output has being delivered on budget.					

4. Level of resources used has being delivered to produce the output as planned.		Rating Scale				
Element	Questions	1 (Very Poor)	2 (Poor)	3 (Fair)	4 (Good)	5 (Excellent)
Impact of the program	1. Ability of the program to improve the overall health of the governorate citizens.					
	2. Ability of the program to achieve the planned goals.					
	3. Ability of the program to achieve the planned objectives.					
	4. Ability of the program to achieve the planned outcomes.					
	5. Ability of the program in alleviating the problems of the target population.					
	6. Level of results/outcomes were valuable and beneficial to the citizens.					
	7. Level of results/outcomes were valuable and beneficial to the society.					
	8. Level of program objectives are likely to be sustained.					

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Conference Paper

Analysing Mathematical Abilities of High School Graduates

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Abstract

In this paper we are trying to differentiate the level of mathematical abilities of high school graduates in Bahrain schools. The mathematical abilities that we are trying to analyse are conceptual understanding, content knowledge and problem-solving skills. content understanding focusses on performing algorithms, while conceptual understanding focus on comprehending the concepts and relations. Problem solving needs both. We will prepare test items to measure graduates on different mathematics content domains. This research will try to identify students' weaknesses in mathematical and suggest ways to improve the understanding in mathematics.

Keywords: Conceptual understanding; content knowledge; problem solving.

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1. Introduction

Even after passing out from high school, it is being noted that students do not possess conceptual understanding in all math content domains, which might affect their fluency in problem solving. Problem Solving is one of the major processes defined in the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards for School Mathematics (NCTM 2000). Problem solving can provide opportunities for students to apply content knowledge in all the mathematics domains. Children must learn both fundamental concepts and proper procedural knowledge for solving problem solving in all the domains of Mathematics content. The National Research Council (2001) set forth in its document Adding It Up: Helping Children Learn Mathematics a list of five strands, which includes conceptual understanding. Conceptual understanding helps students avoid many critical errors in solving problems, particularly errors of magnitude. *Procedural fluency* refers to knowledge of procedures, knowledge of when and how to use them appropriately, and skill in performing them flexibly, accurately, and efficiently.

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The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between conceptual understanding, content knowledge and problem-solving skills in the high school graduates in mathematics content domains.

A good starting point for us to understand conceptual understanding is to review The Learning Principle from the NCTM Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (2000). As one of the six principles put forward, this principle states:

2. Misconceptions

When students systematically use incorrect rules or correct rule in an inappropriate domain we can realize that there are misconceptions. The knowledge about understanding of mathematical concepts has been enriched by the combination of experimental, survey research and observational studies and these have challenged the theories about how children think and learn in various mathematical domains (David Wood, 10998).

The ideas about how students develop 'misconceptions' are emphasized by most of the empirical studies on learning mathematics during the last many decades. Piaget's repeated demonstration in the late 1970s that children think about the world in very different ways than adults resulted in educational researches, and people began to listen carefully what students were saying and doing on a variety of subject matter tasks (Smith J. P., 1993).

3. Mathematical Abilities

According to NCES (National Centre for Education Statistics) the following are considered as Mathematical abilities.

3.1. Conceptual understanding

Students demonstrate conceptual understanding in mathematics when they provide evidence that they can recognize, label, and generate examples of concepts; use and interrelate models, diagrams, manipulatives, and varied representations of concepts; identify and apply principles; know and apply facts and definitions; compare, contrast, and integrate related concepts and principles; recognize, interpret, and apply the signs, symbols, and terms used to represent concepts. Conceptual understanding reflects

a student's ability to reason in settings involving the careful application of concept definitions, relations, or representations of either.

3.2. Procedural knowledge

Students demonstrate procedural knowledge in mathematics when they select and apply appropriate procedures correctly; verify or justify the correctness of a procedure using concrete models or symbolic methods; or extend or modify procedures to deal with factors inherent in problem settings. Procedural knowledge encompasses the abilities to read and produce graphs and tables, execute geometric constructions, and perform non-computational skills such as rounding and ordering. Procedural knowledge is often reflected in a student's ability to connect an algorithmic process with a given problem situation, to employ that algorithm correctly, and to communicate the results of the algorithm in the context of the problem setting.

3.3. Problem solving

Students demonstrate problem solving in mathematics when they recognize and formulate problems; determine the consistency of data; use strategies, data, models; generate, extend, and modify procedures; use reasoning in new settings; and judge the reasonableness and correctness of solutions. Problem-solving situations require students to connect all of their mathematical knowledge of concepts, procedures, reasoning, and communication skills to solve problems.

This research follows the strands are intertwined and include the notions suggested by NCTM in its Learning Principle. To be mathematically proficient, a student must have:

- Conceptual understanding: comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations
- Procedural fluency: skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately
- Strategic competence: ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems
- Adaptive reasoning: capacity for logical thought, reflection, explanation, and justification

- Productive disposition: habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy.

And The National Assessment of Educational Progress definition for mathematical abilities is conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, and problem solving. So; in this research participant will write a test to determine the mathematical abilities they have to answer the following questions:

1. What percentage of Mathematical abilities' does the recent high school graduates show in different mathematics domains?
2. What are students' misconceptions while solving conceptually orientated tasks involving different mathematical domains?
3. Is there a correlation between the conceptual understanding and problem solving in Mathematics?
4. Is there any differences between the Mathematical abilities test score and high school students' GPA, and specializations?

4. Literature Review

For decades, the major emphasis in school mathematics was on procedural knowledge. Rote learning was the norm, with little attention paid to understanding of mathematical concepts. Rote learning is not the answer in mathematics, especially when students do not understand the mathematics. In recent years, major efforts have been made to focus on what is necessary for students to learn mathematics, what it means for a student to be mathematically proficient (Hull & Miles). The debate over conceptual understanding versus procedural knowledge has caught the eye of many teachers in school systems all around the world. Conceptual understanding is the comprehension of not only what to do, but also why you do it. Procedural knowledge, also known as imperative knowledge, is the knowledge exercised in the performance of some task. In both cases, students understand how to complete an assignment, but the way they think about it differs. One thing that many teachers agree on is that students must learn mathematics with understanding, actively building new knowledge from experience and prior knowledge (Cummings, 2015).

The national assessment of educational progress NAEP identify the mathematical abilities as procedure knowledge, conceptual understanding and problem solving. While the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) identifies these three

types of understanding as three of the main strands to be mathematically proficient (NCTM, 2000). NCTM defines problem solving as a strand involves students in applying four other processes: Reasoning, Communication, Connections, and Representation which provide opportunities for them to apply content knowledge in all the mathematics domains. While conceptual understanding helps students avoid many errors in solving problems, and procedural knowledge helps them to use the knowledge of procedures, the when and how, appropriately and develop skill in performing them accurately and efficiently.

Students must learn both fundamental concepts and proper procedural knowledge for solving problems in all mathematics content domains. The knowledge about understanding of mathematical concepts has been enriched by the combination of experimental, survey research and observational studies and these have challenged the theories about how children think and learn in various mathematical domains (Wood, David J. 1998). The ideas about how students develop 'misconceptions' are emphasized by most of the empirical studies on learning mathematics during the last many decades. Piaget's repeated demonstration in the late 1970s that children think about the world in very different ways than adults resulted in educational researches, and people began to listen carefully what students were saying and doing on a variety of subject matter task (Smith J. P., 1993). This help in understanding their misconceptions and why they do them. A misconception is the result of lack of understanding or in many cases a misapplication of a rule or mathematical generalization (Spooner, 2002).

Learning with understanding is essential to empower students to solve the new kinds of problems they will inevitably face in the future, but even after passing out from high school, it is being noted that some students do not possess conceptual understanding or problem solving skills in the five content domains; which are: Number and Operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Data Analysis and Probability.

According to Hasnida, C., & Zakaria, E. (1991) the goal in mathematics teaching has shifted towards an emphasis on both procedural and conceptual understanding. The importance of gaining procedural and conceptual understanding is aligned with the objective of mathematics education. Using a survey method, they carried out a study in the secondary schools and the data were analyzed descriptively to determine students' procedural and conceptual understanding of mathematics. Pearson's correlation was used to determine the relationship between procedural and conceptual understanding. The findings revealed that the students' level of procedural understanding is high whereas the level of conceptual understanding is low. They suggested that a

reformation in teaching is needed to boost conceptual understanding among students to minimize the use of procedures and memorization.

Jazuli and other (2017) mentioned that most students find it difficult to understand and to apply the concept of mathematics in a real-world context. They argue that the difficulty is due to the conventional learning strategy used, which is unable to improve the students' ability. They done an experimental study aimed to discover the implementation of a contextual learning strategy to improve mathematics conceptual understanding and problem-solving. The two above-mentioned issues have been examined by using a pre-test and post-test, and compared by using a control group with conventional learning. The results showed that the contextual learning strategy significantly affects the conceptual understanding and the ability to solve problems in mathematics subjects.

Johnson & Alibali, (1999) suggested that procedural knowledge may influence gains in conceptual knowledge by helping children to identify and eliminate misconceptions. Conceptual knowledge may influence improvements in procedural knowledge by improving problem representation and facilitating adaptation of known procedures in problem solving.

Children must learn both basic concepts and correct procedure to solve problems. Mathematical competencies depend on their ability to connect the knowledge of fundamental mathematical concepts and procedure to real life situations. Observations show that students who possess procedural knowledge alone couldn't solve real life problems as they lack in conceptual understanding. They were unable to connect the concepts to the problem-solving situations.

This research measures the level of mathematical abilities of high school graduates in Bahrain schools. Mathematical abilities are conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge and problem-solving skills. While procedural understanding focusses on performing facts and algorithms, conceptual understanding reflects a student's ability to reason and comprehend mathematical concepts, operations, and relations which will be helpful in solving nonroutine problems. Test items were prepared, validated and administered to recent high school graduates on five mathematics content domains: Number and Operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement and Data Analysis & Probability, where students demonstrate their conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge and connect them to solve problems in various real-life contexts. Correlating their performance in the test and their high school GPA this research is trying to identify the cause of the weak conceptual understanding and the difficulties in

problem solving and suggesting ways to improve different type of understanding to be proficient in mathematics.

Conceptual understanding is a phrase used widely in educational literature. Even though conceptual understanding and procedural fluency are two different terms, they are inseparable. Children's conceptual understanding affect the procedures they adopt in solving problems. Children with greater conceptual understanding tend to have greater procedural skills and they are better problem solvers. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2003) delineates specifically what mathematical abilities are measured by the nationwide testing program. Those abilities include conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, and problem solving.

4.1. Conceptual understanding & procedural knowledge

Concepts are the building blocks of knowledge (Charlesworth, 2012). Conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge are essential to develop skills in problem solving (Geary, 2004). These skills contribute towards the processing of information effectively in solving problems. The five strands of mathematical proficiency, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning and productive disposition, by Kilpatrick, Swafford and Findell (2001) presents the interdependence of the five components of learner's mathematics proficiency in problem solving. It starts with a clear grasp and understanding of the concept, to acquisition of mathematical concepts, strategic knowledge, which is required to help children devise and monitor a solution, is vital for solving problems successfully (Mayer, 2008).

Conceptual knowledge is in general an abstract knowledge addressing the essence of mathematical principles and relations among them, while procedural knowledge consists of symbols, conditions, and processes that can be applied to complete a given mathematical task (Hiebert & Lefevre, 1986). Procedural knowledge is meaningful only if it is connected to a theoretical fact. Faulkenberry (2003) suggests that conceptual knowledge is rich with relations, and refers to the basic mathematics constructs and relations between the ideas that illustrate mathematical procedures, and gives it a meaning. On the other hand, procedural knowledge addresses the mastery of mathematical skills, acquaintance of the procedures to determine the mathematical components, algorithms, and definitions. Many researchers suggest that both conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge are important components in understanding mathematics (Desimone et al., 2005; Hiebert et al., 2005).

For instance, in understanding of area measurement, procedural fluency, and reflections on the accuracy of solutions for measuring areas, represents higher-order thinking skills (Lehrer, 2003). While investigating children's conceptions of Area Measurement and their strategies for solving Area Measurement problems, Huang, Witz (2012) found that children who had a good understanding of the concept of area and the area formula (by using the property of multiplication) exhibited competency in identifying geometric shapes, using formulas for determining areas, and self-correcting mistakes. The children who had a good understanding of multiplication underlying the area formula, but misunderstood the concept of area, showed some ability to use area formulas. Conversely, the children who were unable to interpret the property of multiplication underlying the area formula irrespective of their conceptions of area exhibited the common weaknesses in identifying geometric shapes and differentiating between area and perimeter. The general concept of area refers to the amount of a 2-D region within a boundary, while area measurement concerns measuring the quantity of a surface enclosed within a 2-D region (Lehrer, 2003). This incorporates the prior concept of area and measurement skills. The strategic knowledge of area measurement contains a conceptual understanding of basic facts and the knowledge of efficient strategies in solving problems with justified reasoning. Though there are various ways to solve area measurement problems, appropriate use of formulas based on conceptual understanding can be considered an efficient strategy (Lehrer, Jaslow, & Curtis, 2003).

Moreover, it is noted by Siegler, & Alibali (2005) that when comparing fractions with physical models, students could easily see the largest fraction. When the physical model was not being used, some students still had to draw the model to compare size of fractions. In order for fraction and decimal number sense to be acquired, there are three foundational concepts agreed upon by researchers (Barnett-Clarke, Fisher, Marks & Ross, 2010). These concepts along with conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge, cognitive theories, and instructional theories will create a suggested path of tasks to develop fraction and decimal number understanding and gain understanding for long term application (Van de Walle, 2007; Watanabe, 2006).

According to Hasnida, C., & Zakaria, E. (1991) the goal in mathematics teaching has shifted towards an emphasis on both procedural and conceptual understanding. Their research revealed that the students' level of procedural understanding is high whereas the level of conceptual understanding is low and hence they suggested that a reformation in teaching is needed to boost conceptual understanding among students to minimize the use of algorithms and memorization.

Conceptual understanding can be measured in various ways, mainly involving providing definitions, explanations and reasons. Conceptual knowledge in a domain usually requires knowledge of many concepts. Procedural fluency can be measured by checking the accuracy or the procedure of solving problems. When interested in how flexible procedural knowledge is, researchers assess students' knowledge of multiple procedures and their ability to flexibly choose among them to solve problems efficiently (Star & Rittle-Johnson, 2008; Verschaffel, Luwel, Torbeyns, & Van Dooren, 2009). This flexibility of procedural knowledge will be a result of conceptual knowledge. The positive correlations between the two types of knowledge have been found in almost all domains. For example, in Number and Operations (Canobi & Bethune, 2008; Jordan et al., 2009), fractions and decimals (Hallett, Nunes, & Bryant, 2010; Reimer & Moyer, 2005), estimation (Dowker, 1998; Star & Rittle-Johnson, 2009), and equation solving (Durkin, Rittle-Johnson, & Star, 2011).

4.2. Problem solving

Problem Solving is one of the major processes defined in the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards for School Mathematics (NCTM, 2000). Problem solving involves students in applying four other processes: Reasoning, Communication, Connection and Representation. Jonassen (2003) defines problem solving as an individual thought process because the previously learned law can be applied in solving problems in any situations. It is also deemed to be a new type of learning and is the result of application of knowledge and procedures of the problems (Mc Gregor, 2007).

Problem solving can also provide opportunities for students to apply content knowledge in the areas of Number and Operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Data Analysis and Probability. Problem solving provides a window into children's mathematical thinking and thus is a major technique of assessment.

According to Jawhara (1995), problem solving activities can open opportunities for students to learn freely. In their own ways, students will be encouraged to investigate, seek for the truth, develop ideas, and explore the problem. These features are necessary in order to face the challenges of future (Lim et al., 1999). Kilpatrick et al. (2001), Pugale (2004, 2005), Suh and Moyer-Packenham (2007) and Ginsburg (2012) concluded that the increase on the levels of cognitive demand, mathematical intricacy and levels of abstraction balances the procedural fluency of students in problem solving tasks is based on their ability to use intellectual knowledge and skills in interpreting the problem.

Many mathematics skills are involved in problem-solving. However, large numbers of students have not acquired the basic skills they need in mathematics. As a result, many students were reported to face difficulties in mathematics particularly in mathematics problem solving (Tay Lay Heong 2005). The ability to use cognitive abilities in learning is crucial for a meaningful learning to take place (Stendall 2009). There are two major steps in problem-solving: transforming the problem into mathematical statements or equations and calculation of the required statements. Difficulties faced among students were more noticeable during the first procedural step in solving problem compared to the other. Polya (1981) stated that problem-solving is a process starting from the minute students is faced with the problem until the end when the problem is solved. Garderen (2006) stated deficiency in visual-spatial skill might cause difficulty in differentiating, relating and organizing information meaningfully.

Lack of many mathematics skills cause difficulties in problem solving. Difficulties in mathematics skills were classified into number fact, arithmetic, information, language and visual-spatial skills (Garnett 1998; Nathan et al 2002). Students are required to apply and integrate many mathematical concepts and skills during the process of making decision and problem-solving. Conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge are essential to develop skills in problem solving (Geary 2004). Language and spatial skills are also important to interpret and to tackle information effectively.

5. Research Aims

The research aims to:

- Analyze students' work according to 5 mathematical domains and three types of mathematical abilities.
- Find out the root cause of students' misconceptions and errors.
- Suggest ways to improve the conceptual understanding and problem solving skills to reach to mathematical proficiency.

6. Research Method

- Quantitative approach: By using a test comprised of questions from five domain in mathematics (Numbers & operations; Algebra; Geometry; and Measurements; Data Analysis & probability). Test consisted of 60 questions; 20 to test

students' conceptual understanding, 20 to test students' procedure knowledge and 20 for students' problem-solving skills.

- Qualitative approach Interviews were conducted to collect data about students understanding. Interviews were semi structured. We have interviewed the participants who are lacking any one of the mathematical abilities and most recurring misconceptions.

After students takes the test, it will be corrected, and the results will be analysed to find out the different type of abilities they have.

Interviews will be conducted with sample of students. Depending on the students' response and type of errors committed in the test items, we will interview them to identify the root of the misconception. Then we might suggest one or two ways of teaching those concepts of mathematics to avoid misconceptions in future.

Test results will be analysed using different SPSS tests as the following:

Classified students' test score based on the Mathematical ability level.

Classified students' test score based on the accuracy level (getting 0-3).

Classified students' test score based on the mathematical domain.

Classified students' high school GPA (Below average, Average, & Above average).

High school GPA – 3 Mathematical proficiency level scores – Correlations, Pearson, Spearman, or Scheffe's test.

High school GPA – High school specialization (Science, Commercial, & Others) – ANCOVA.

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Conference Paper

Attitudes and Preferences of Local Visitors Toward Ecotourism Sites in Bahrain

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Abstract

The tourism industry has become one of the most considerable economic sectors in the world. Gulf countries especially Bahrain included tourism as one of the most important exports that will help to diversify the country GNP dependence on oil exporting only. The main concern of ecotourism is to encourage the local inhabitants to involve in tourism activities, and stresses on conservation of nature by educating the visitors how to protect and respect the culture visited. This article is a behavioral-oriented study that investigates and explains the preferences of tourists toward selected tourism sites in Bahrain. It is composed in twofold: first, it presents the research approach and the selection of the analyzed sites; second, it presents the findings concerning tourists' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, tourism participation rates, and preferences toward tourism quality and levels of satisfaction. Data were collected by means of questionnaire interviews. 706 questionnaires were analyzed. Findings demonstrated the importance of the tourists' concerns in tourism planning process. The study also shows that variations in preferences and attitudes rates resulted from the differences in socioeconomic characteristics of tourists.

Keywords: Bahrain, Behavioral Approach, Ecotourism, Tourism Planning, Attitudes, Preferences

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1. Introduction

Bahrain is an archipelago of 51 Islands; with a total area of 771 square kilometers. It is the land was blessed with various geographical attributes, including a remarkable number of natural springs, which irrigated the fertile north and western belts for centuries (Samawi and Al-Sayyed, 2014). The country offers a fascinating blend of eastern and western cultures as high rise buildings vie for space with more traditional dwellings and ancient traditions and historical sites mix with modern developments

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and cosmopolitan living. Bahrain's population of around 1.42 million in 2017 consists of a significant percentage of expatriates (% 52) from all over the world, with high density of population around 1850 person per sq.km (www.cio.gov.bh, 2017).

Bahrain is rich in history and ancient civilizations have only recently been discovered by international archaeologists. Over the past decades, major archaeological work has been undertaken across Bahrain by both local and international teams. The results of those excavations produced seminal research in the settlement history of Bahrain from the first prehistoric sites and glorious Dilmun settlements, burials and temples to the extraordinary Tylos cemeteries and Islamic sites. The inscription of two Bahraini sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Qal'at Al-Bahrain, the Ancient Harbor and Capital of Dilmun in 2005 and Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy in 2012) and the tentative listing of the Burial Ensembles of Dilmun and Tylos is a clear recognition of Bahrain's enduring past (Bahrain Authority for culture & Antiquities, 2017).

The tourism industry has become one of the most considerable economic sectors in the world (Brakk, 2005). GCC countries, especially Bahrain, included tourism as one of the most important exports that will help to diversify the country's GNP dependence on oil exporting only. However, little research has been done to highlight the driving factors of tourism and its impact on economic and cultural development (Nowak, Sahli and Sgro 2005), or focused on ways to outweigh these negatives through a cautionary management of tourism and increasing tourist willingness to pay, and ultimately tourism receipts (Mowfo and Munt, 2009; Cooper and Hall, 2011). Brau and Cao (2006) pointed out the key issue of how to assess the transformation of tourist sites and destinations as the result of a rational attempt to respond to tourist attitudes.

Bahrain is experiencing rapid growth in tourism facilities, despite limited resources, physically and in Labor force. In study was done by World Tourism & Travel Council (WTTC, 2017), about the economic impact of tourism on the Gross Domestic Product GDP in Bahrain, they found the direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in Bahrain in 2016 was \$1447 million, which represent 4.2% of GDP. This present is forecasted to increase by 1.5% in 2017. These results are a reflection of the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agencies, airlines, restaurants, leisure activities, and shopping. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was \$ 3553 million (10.4% of GDP) and is expected to grow by 3% in 2017. The study showed that travel and tourism in Bahrain generated 30,000 jobs directly (4.1 % of total employment, but the total contribution of travel and tourism was 78,000 in 2017, (10 %) of total employment.

The year 2015 is set to be a milestone for sustainability in Bahrain, as governments are called upon to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The new agenda is transformative, people-centered and with bold and ambitious targets. The proposed sustainable development goals, comprise 17 goals. That will frame the global development agenda for the coming fifteen years. Tourism can contribute to sustainable development by minimizing poverty, hunger and offering more job opportunities for local communities (UNWTO, 2015).

2. Study Methodology

A common theme in tourism, recreation and natural attractions research has been to understand the preferences of individuals regarding the choice selection of destination. Several behavioral models have been developed that address these perceptions - behavior relation (Szell and Hallett 1V, 2013). These general linear models of attitudes and behavior focused on single behaviors. The benefits of this approach approved to be valuable to understand the social psychology of individuals.

Some studies has emphasized the role of NGOs in developing tourism, and preserving the environment (Butcher, 2007), also it helped decision makers to develop strategies and marketing policies to attract sizable waves of tourists and recreations. Therefore, tourism planners and marketers have recognized the need to target homogenous components of a heterogeneous market as well as the individual perception or the market as a whole.

Behavioral oriented research in tourism focuses on the analysis of the attitudes, preferences, motivations and satisfactions of tourists towards the various tourism sites. This approach of study may help to inform tourism planners of the activities preferred by their clientele. Najjar, Donnell and Samawi (1992) emphasized the importance of showing what users prefer rather than what recreation and tourism managers believe users prefer. The value of tourism sites exist only in the minds of tourists.

3. Sample of the Study

Data base for this study was part of data collected in (2014) in conjunction with the assessment of tourist views on six Eco tourists sites in Bahrain. The data was collected by the means of questionnaire interviews. 706 questionnaires were distributed to recreations and tourists at various resorts, clubs, hotels and beaches. These sites are Al- Bander resort, Hawar Island, Al- Hamala beach; Marina Club, Yacht Club and the

Sailing club (Figure 1). In this study the data was analyzed by tabulating the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of tourists as well as their preferences and evaluations of the recreational activities within the six sites.

This study analyzed questionnaires distributed at the following six sites:

1. Al- Bander Resort which is popular destination for relaxation. It is located near Sitra Bay, it has a good facilities related to beach activities, 44 chalets and 36 cabanas, 5 restaurants, marina and 10 swimming pools, and interesting beach, health club, water sports. Al- Bander attracts more than 75000 visitors yearly.
2. Bahrain Sailing Club is located in Al Jazayer Beach, few kilometers away from Al Areen Wildlife Park. It attracts people who enjoyed water sports; it has many facilities for swimming and skiing activities.
3. Bahrain Yacht Club which is located on Sitra Bay close to Al- Bander, the club attracts visitors and members who enjoyed water sports facilities, such as swimming, fishing, and diving. Besides other facilities such as restaurants and cafeterias that attracted many recreationist in summer time.
4. Hawar Resort, is situated 24 km away from the southeast of Bahrain mainland. The site is a 45 minute exciting boat ride away. On the site, there are 60 spacious accommodation units, besides restaurants and café and many other outdoor activities.
5. Marina Club. It offers marine facilities and many water sport activities such as boating, swimming, scuba diving and other services such as restaurants.
6. Al Hamala Beach, which is located near Al Jezra village on the way to King Fahd causeway. This site attracts visitors who enjoy swimming, fishing, and diving.

The 706 questionnaires were distributed among the six sited unevenly, due to the variation of size: Al-Bander resort (26.8%), Hawar Island (19.1%), Al- Hamala Beach (18.8%), Marina club (12.9 %) Yacht club (12.7%) and the Sailing club (9.6 %).

4. Questions of the Study

The study presented a number of questions in order to identify the characteristics and preferences of the ecotourism sites in Bahrain. These include:

1. What are the preferences of recreational activities in Bahrain?

2. What is the degree of satisfaction towards ecotourism activities in Bahrain?
3. What are the means to educate tourists about the concept ecotourism?
4. What are the levels of interest in Knowing about ecotourism in Bahrain?
5. What are the levels of interest in taking part of ecotourism in Bahrain?

5. The Importance of the Study

With a growing interest to spend leisure time in nature related facilities and increasing awareness on environment, ecotourism has become one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry in the world (UNWTO, 2001). The declaration of the year 2002 as International Year of Ecotourism by World Tourism Organization reflects the importance of ecotourism in the global industry. It provides better linkages, reduces Leakages of benefits out of a country, creates local employments, creates the multiplier effect and fosters sustainable development. The main aim of developing tourism in Bahrain is mainly to encourage local communities through the creation of sustainable income-generating tourism activities, while conserving the sensitive ecological and cultural resources in their environments (WTTC, 2017).

5. Marina Club which is situated in Manama city, so close to Bahrain

6. Literature Review

Szell and Hallett IV, (2013), the study focused on attitudes and perceptions of local residents and tourism toward protected area of Retezat national park- Romania. Romania was one of the first countries to use scientific actions for the protection of its natural forests, and Retezat National Park is one of Romania's oldest national parks, the results of the study showed that local residents have low levels of awareness and concern, and hold negative perceptions of conservation within the national parks, due to restrictions imposed on access to natural resources. Approximately 75% of tourists stated that they would support conservation within Retezat National Park by paying higher entrance fees, while 64% of local residents stated that they are not in favor of supporting conservation efforts within the protected area. Thus, significant differences between local residents and tourists are evident. The study found out that tourists have significantly more positive attitudes and would be more willing to pay to support conservation efforts within the protected area when compared with local residents.

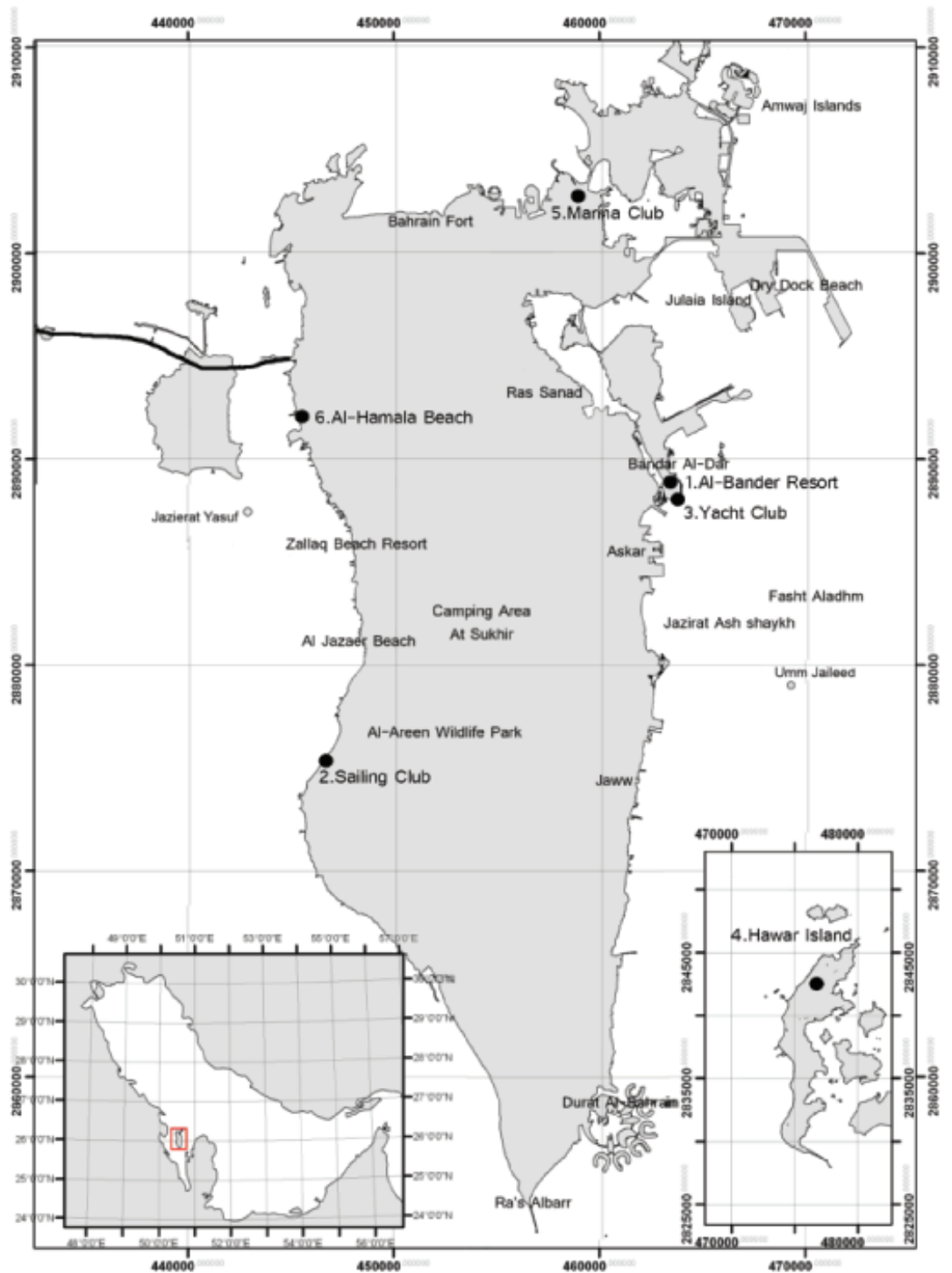


Figure 1: Tourist Study Areas in Bahrain.

Biru, Tessema and Urge, (2017). The aim of the study was to understand the perception and attitude of local people towards livestock wildlife interaction in order to optimize both livestock production and biodiversity conservation in protected areas in Awash National Park in Ethiopia. An Interview to 180 randomly selected households,

re Awash National Park, Ethiopia presenting ethnic groups living around the park, was conducted from August to December 2015 using a semi-structured questionnaire. The study found out that 73% of the households would be ready to live in harmony with the park. However, 85% of park staff considered the community as a threat, due to high livestock grazing pressure and illegal park resource use. Overall, community attitude towards wildlife significantly varied due to educational level, income source, and distance of household from the park. The majority of respondents showed positive attitude towards wildlife, implying a better chance to mobilize the community for conservation activities in the park. Thus, expansion of formal and adult education as well as livelihood diversification strategies that could benefit the pastoral community to improve community attitude towards wildlife so that both wildlife conservation and livestock production can be optimized.

Manu and Kudder, (2012), about Community-Based Ecotourism and Livelihood Enhancement in Sirigu, Ghana. The general aim of the study is to ascertain the livelihood enhancement opportunities brought in the wake of Ecotourism development in Sirigu whilst the specific objectives were to: Identify the income generating and assess the participation of female and focus on the role of stakeholders.

Data was gathered using tools such as interviews, questionnaire administration while secondary data was obtained from the Ghana Tourism. A sample size of 440 respondents was obtained from the community making use of both purposive and simple random sampling techniques. One of the recommendations suggested by the study is to held awareness campaign to target Ghanaians to help stimulate domestic tourism. This will increase domestic arrivals at the destination leading to increase in revenue in the community.

Chiutsi and others about the theory and practice of ecotourism in Southern Africa, (2011). The ecotourism theory suggests that economic development and natural resources conservation are compatible goals. Accordingly, recent definitions of ecotourism have centered on conservation, education, ethics, sustainability, impacts and local benefits as the main variables.

The study uses the data and experiences of two Southern African countries, South Africa and Zimbabwe to assess the practice of ecotourism. The evaluation criteria hovered on issues to do with the theoretical frameworks informing ecotourism development, ecotourism Effects on communities, conservation practices, employment and financial sustainability of the ecotourism ventures.

Through this study, it can be concluded that lack of consensus on what ecotourism represents has led to many tourism products and services designed under the banner

of ecotourism, yet they represent everything against conservation and communities' development.

7. Characteristics of the Sample

706 questionnaires were analyzed; however the size of population varies among analyzed variables due to the missing answers for different questions. Table 1 shows selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the surveyed sample. The sample population was mainly dominated by males (64.6%) and within the age category of young adults: (51.4 %) were 19-35 years old; married (57.9 %); Bahraini (45%); highly educated (45.5 % with college degree; and 22% with graduate degree); and represent the lower middle income population (41.6 %) earn less than 500 BD; and 26.9 % earn between 500 BD and 1000 BD. These findings reflect the fact respondents were chosen as leaders of their groups and that most visitors came in family groups. The data in Table 1, also suggest that visitors to these sites are generally well educated, family-oriented young adults, who represent a low-to-middle income, Bahraini population who may not be able to afford the costs of other fancy private outdoor ecotourism sites and resorts. Thus, the analyzed sites can be remarked as recreational sites for local tourism and can be supported or subsidized by the government. The non-Bahraini visitors represent the expatriates who work in Bahrain (13% Asians, 17.4 % Europeans; 6.4 % Americans; and 9.9 % Arab Nationals), and can be included within local tourism. The small percentage of non-Bahraini Gulf states nationals (8.3%) are mainly from Eastern Saudi Arabia; besides others from the other Gulf States.

To foresee the level of the recreation use likely to be placed upon the ecotourism sites, it is useful to analyze the travel behavior of visitors in order to gain an understanding of how often visitors use recreation facilities and determine the variables that most affect the frequency of use. Literature suggest that typical tourists now consider travel distance and road network as the most important factors in the selection of recreational site, especially during the weekends, holidays in summer. In this study (table 2), was found that the majority of respondents were driving their own car (78%), 58% undertaking short day trips during the weekends, and 30% during holidays to proximate resort like to Al-bander Resort. These high percentages as indicated in Table 2 are largely a function of the accessibility of the analyzed sites and the time and mode of transportation. Families prefer to have a one day trip during weekends and holidays as opposed to the time need for extended trips (19% for two day trips; and 11% for 3 and more day trips).

TABLE 1: Demographic and socio-economic variables.

Variables		Count	%
Gender	Male	456	64.6
	Female	250	35.4
Marital status	Single	265	37.5
	Married	409	57.9
	Others	32	4.6
Age in years	Less than 18	38	5.4
	19-35	363	51.4
	36-59	285	40.4
	60 and over	20	2.8
Education Level	Less than high school	45	6.4
	High school	184	26.1
	Graduate	322	45.5
	Post graduate	155	22
Monthly Income/BD	Less than 500	262	41.6
	501-1000	169	26.9
	1001-1500	92	14.6
	1501 and more	106	16.9
Family size	Less than 2	62	8.8
	3 to 5	389	55.1
	6 and more	255	36.1
How many people accompanied	None	222	31.5
	One	94	13.3
	Two to four	315	44.6
	Five and more	75	10.6
Nationality	Bahrain	318	45
	Asians	92	13
	Europeans	123	17.4
	Americans	45	6.4
	Gulf States	58	8.3
	Arabs	70	9.9
Occupation	Military	61	8.7
	Students	83	11.8
	Professional	126	17.8
	Officer	70	9.9
	Private	237	33.6
	Business	94	13.3
	Others	35	4.9

Table 2 also shows that recreation participation in Bahrain is common during the four seasons of the year with slight concentration during summer 40%.

TABLE 2: Travel Behavior of Visitors.

1. Number of visits:	No.	%
Less than 3 times	265	56
4-10 times	142	30
11 and more	68	14
2. Group structure:		
Alone	161	34
With family	213	45
With friends	101	21
3. Mode of Travel		
By car	551	78
Bus	193	
Paid Boat	89	12
Private Boat	47	7
4. Season of Visit		
Summer	282	40
Autumn	141	20
Winter	134	19
Spring	148	21
5. Days of Visit		
weekends	409	58
Holidays	212	30
Week days	85	12
6. Length of Stay		
One day	496	70
Two days	135	19
Three and more	75	11

8. The Study Results and Discussions

Question 1: What are the preferences of recreational activities in Bahrain?

The opportunity for several outdoor activities and services within the site appears to be a key factor because the most popular activities of respondents were swimming 71%, sports 42.4%, picnicking 35%, boating 29.3 %, sightseeing 26.1 %, photography 25.6 %, and fishing 23.8%. These activities reflect the recreational orientation of the

TABLE 3: Preferences of Recreational Activities in Bahrain.

Activities	Frequencies	Preference %
Sightseeing	184	26.1
Hickling	102	14.4
Picnicking	247	35
Sports	299	42.4
Swimming	501	71
Sunbathing	147	20.8
Boating	207	29.3
Water Ski	127	18
Photography	181	25.6
Bird watching	64	9.1
Fishing	168	23.8

Bahraini society toward the sea and open space as well as the geography and climate of Bahrain (table 3).

Question 2: What is the degree of satisfaction towards tourism activities in Bahrain?

TABLE 4: Levels of Satisfaction (%).

Items	Frequency	Degree of Satisfaction %
Entrance Fee	405	57.3
Parking	415	58.8
Picnicking	395	55.9
Restrooms	286	40.5
Cleanness	335	47.5
Staffing	376	53.2
Road Signs	327	46.3

A level of satisfaction towards services (Table 4) at the site found to be important to understanding the nature of the recreation participation. Respondents were not satisfied with the sites which lacked clean restrooms 40.5 %, lack of road signs 46.3 %, and the general cleanness of the site 47.5%. The next level of satisfaction of facilities were the number of professional staff 53.2%, picnic facilities 55.9 %, the entrance fee 57.3%,and parking facilities 58.8%.

Question 3: What are the means to educate tourists about the concept of ecotourism?

TABLE 5: Awareness of Ecotourism Objectives among tourists in Bahrain.

Means of Education	Frequency	%
Family & friends	577	81.7
TV Radio	29	4.1
Newspaper & Journals.	44	6.2
Social Media	30	4.3
Government Issues	26	3.7
Total	706	100

The six tourist sites are located on the coast of Bahrain, and thus rich with marine biology and natural plants. Therefore, the study included questions regarding the awareness of Bahraini recreationists towards ecotourism. The awareness and knowledge of ecotourism will help in protecting the physical environment of Bahrain. A lack of community awareness and negative attitude towards ecotourism is likely to lead to depletion of the environment through mass tourism. Table 5, illustrated the Bahraini tourist awareness, knowledge and interest in ecotourism. About 81.7% of the sample population reported that they got the knowledge of the concept of ecotourism through conversations with family members and friends. Only a small number of respondents reported a significant knowledge of the concept through social media (4.3%), or listening and watching an educational program in the media outlet (4.1%) or reading an article in newspaper or journal (6.2%) or receiving a flier from any governmental source (3.7%). These findings suggest a lack of the government role in educating the community about ecotourism.

Question 4: What are the levels of interest in Knowing about ecotourism?

TABLE 6: Levels of Interest in Knowing about Ecotourism.

Level of Interest	Frequency	%
Very interested	94	13.3
Interested	235	33.3
Fair	153	21.7
Not Interested	224	31.7
Total	706	100

Table 6 shows the level of interest in knowing more about ecotourism. 31.7% of respondents were not interested in knowing about ecotourism, while 21.7% were interest is fair in participating in ecotourism with reasons given as lack of time, lack of information, and busy with more important issues relating to jobs, housing, education and food availability. Those whom interested is around 33.3% and serious interest 13.3% in knowing and learning about ecotourism.

Question 5: What are the levels of interest in taking part of ecotourism?

TABLE 7: Level of Interest in Taking Part of Ecotourism.

Levels in Taking Part	Frequency	%
Very Interested	229	32.4
Interested	364	51.6
Fair	90	12.7
Not Interested	23	3.3
Total	706	100

Table 7 shows the levels of interest in taking part of ecotourism. 51.6% of respondents are interested in taking part of ecotourism, and 32.4% are very interested in becoming involved in ecotourism, 12.7% have fair interest, while only 3.3% showed no interest. The optimistic interpretation of these findings suggests a bright future for ecotourism and constantly demand for more of governmental and private sector for ecotourism. This support can be achieved through improving all means of media which help in improving the level of awareness and interest in ecotourism among residents as well as among local tourist in Bahrain.

9. Conclusion

There is low level of awareness and interest in ecotourism among local communities in Bahrain. This study proved the above mentioned statement and identified the factors which affect tourist perceptions and preference in choosing recreational sites. It also clearly shows variations in perceptions and preferences related to variations in the demographic and socioeconomic background of tourists.

This type of study is fundamental to tourism and recreation planning as a dynamic incremental process that affects the spatial structure of the economy, and the preservation of the environment as a national wealth. The ecotourism has a supply side

and demand side, and focuses on the protection of the biodiversity of tourism and recreation sites. This can be achieved by implementing environmental laws that regulate the proper use and enjoyment of these sites without damaging the natural plants and living species. Laws alone are not enough or invoking them. There should be an environmental and cultural ecology of these sites by local residents and visitors alike.

The demand side focuses on the market side of tourism, the consumers, their perceptions, preferences and awareness of tourism sites. In addition, the focus on appreciation of the physical environment and willingness to respect, and protect the environmental and cultural ecology of these sites. This can be achieved through education, awareness, value systems and customer provider combined ethics.

Ecotourism sites must be viewed as attractions to sustain the environment and entertain tourists with a sense of environmental and cultural ecology. As much as we are concerned about human rights, we must also become concerned about environmental rights. If the focus of satisfaction is limited to one side, definitely the other side will be the loser.

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Conference Paper

An Investigation into Management Response to Negative Online Reviews in Hotel Operations

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Abstract

The advent of web2 and the interactivity it allowed net surfers to communicate freely with the purpose of exchanging ideas and opinions regarding the products they have purchased has given rise to a new marketing tool identified in the literature as consumer-generated content. As travel and hospitality are amongst the highest purchased services on the World Wide Web, a multitude of sites are currently made available to travelers to express either their satisfaction or voice their complaints on hotel properties that they have stayed at for business or pleasure. In providing informational queues, these online reviews are strongly affecting traveler's pre-purchase decisions and their attitudes toward hotel choice. One factor that is considered of great effect on this decision-making process is identified as management response to reviews; regardless of their positive or negative nature. The purpose of this research is to provide an investigation into management's behavior in responding to negative online reviews and the manner in which this type of feedback is handled in a way to build customer trust as well as a venue to service recovery.

Keywords: Customer-generated Content, Online Reviews, Travel, Hospitality, Management Response, Bahrain

1. Introduction

The interactivity characteristic of web2 has allowed travelers to increasingly resort to elicit online information about travel destinations, airlines, hotels and restaurants as well as other myriad services they plan to purchase on their travel adventure. This bi-directional nature of sharing electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has changed the marketing field of hospitality and opened up new frontiers not present a few years ago. Nowadays, travelers are increasingly depending on online reviews (OLRs) to make their accommodation purchase decisions (UNWTO, 2014) where more than 50% have chosen a hotel after consulting online review sites (ReviewPro, 2014). These OLRs

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were identified as the most influential information source for travel planning (Kwok *et al.*, 2017) affecting traveler consumer behavior (Browning *et al.*, 2013), company's financial performance (You *et al.*, 2015), hotel room sales (Phillips *et al.*, 2017), occupancy rate (Viglia and Buhalis, 2016), quality perceptions (Torres *et al.*, 2014), booking intentions (Casalo *et al.*, 2015), customer satisfaction (Gu and Ye, 2014), market share (Duverger, 2013) as well as employee stress (Bradley *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, in their attempt to assess the influence of OLRs, some researchers (Li *et al.*, 2015; Banerjee and Chua, 2016; Liu and Park 2015; Radojevic *et al.*, 2015) used web crawlers in order to quantitatively determine how third party platforms use algorithms to rate hotels as to service quality, value for money and customer satisfaction. Others (Kusumasondjaja *et al.*, 2012; Rose and Blodgett, 2016), created hypothetical settings where customers were asked to imagine planning a trip and then provided with several reviews in order to measure the effect these may have on their travel choice behavior. Witnessing such a growing need of information on part of potential travelers as well as increasing concern to hotel operators, the main aim of this research is to investigate the degree of attention management has assigned to monitor online consumer generated content and how this process is handled on its part. In doing so, and in order to avoid management biased response (Niu and Fan, 2018), the research does not directly approach management but observes its consequent response behavior toward their properties' OLRs posted on third party platforms. The 'guru' "TripAdvisor" was chosen as the ground of investigation as it is considered by many to be the leading platform for travelers to voice their appreciation and/or dismay (Filiari *et al.*, 2015; Casalo *et al.*, 2015).

2. Literature Review

The growth of 'eMediaries' (Buhalis and Licata 2002) is attributed in large to answering increasing travelers demand for unbiased information. Some of these sites have become important obligatory points of passage providing authoritative opinion over a particular domain (Jeacle and Carter, 2011). Posted OLRs, also known in the literature as consumer generated content, is considered a form of eWOM, which Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, (2004) refer to as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former consumers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet". The impact of OLRs is considered more salient when the product in question is of a service nature (Kwok and Yu, 2016)

allowing no trial prior to purchase and consumption thus rendering it difficult to judge beforehand.

In the area of travel and hospitality, consumers write OLRs as a post purchase behavioral engagement to indicate their level of satisfaction and inform others about their hotel experience. Many reviews are posted in real time at the moment of, or directly after, service delivery while the experience is still fresh in mind, not tarnished by the passage of time. These reviews may incorporate stories, photos, videos and “moments of truth” that these customers have encountered during their stay. This represents a challenge as reviews provide both positive and negative evaluations, remaining on sites for a considerable time period (Browning *et al.*, 2013), and augmented by the fact that such sites are considered to be trustworthy (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015) not only in the area of travel but in many areas of endeavor as well. O’Mahony and Smyth (2010) explain that while the interfaces of these platforms may look different, they present the same three common features of: evaluation (of the product), reputation (of reviewers) and social (among reviewers, managers and users). Ip *et al.*, (2012) report that almost 33% of respondents to their survey had resorted to travel websites for travel planning and that many of these have shared their travel experience online. Those percentages have increased as online travel sites gained more popularity where Xie *et al.*, (2014), report that 53% of travelers would not commit to a hotel reservation until they check its OLRs, and that 77% stated that they would usually or always refer to such reviews before their final choice of accommodation. What compounds the importance of OLRs lies in the research findings (Cantalops and Salvi, 2014; Karakaya and Barnes, 2010) that revealed that these are perceived as more trustworthy than official destination websites.

With regard to valence, OLRs that are in favor of hotel experience were found to increase hotel bookings (Torres *et al.*, 2015), and market share (Duverger, 2013), while unfavorable comments adversely affected sales and business performance (Sparks and Browling, 2011). Nevertheless, Park and Nicklau (2015) found that people perceive reviews of extreme ratings (positive or negative) as more useful and enjoyable than those with moderate ratings. Similarly, Lee *et al.*, (2009) report that negative reviews are more useful and persuasive than either neutral or positive opinions with regard to their credibility and impact on attitude formation. Such view was expressed earlier by Chiou and Cheng (2003), who, on the basis that negative reviews are usually less in number, attributed their effect to the phenomenon of ‘scarcity’ which commands more attention and motivates consumers in resolving uncertainty.

Allied to the scarcity phenomenon, a considerable amount of research within the field of marketing suggests that because of the negativity effect (Tsang and Prendergast, 2009), negative reviews are stronger and more influential than positive reviews (Casalo *et al.*, 2015) and that their impact is more pronounced for hotel services when compared to tangible goods (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2012), hence influencing the decision making of potential guests to a greater extent.

3. Response to OLRs

Existing research has predominantly adopted a marketing perspective and extensively analyzed the impact of OLRs on consumer behavior and decisions, however, how management responds to such reviews didn't receive as much attention (Magno *et al.*, 2017; Abramova *et al.*, 2018).

Furthermore, although the literature on service recovery indicate that companies that respond effectively to customer complaints benefit from increased customer loyalty and greater profitability (Ogut and Tas, 2012); that the influence of management response is a factor that should never be underrated (Levy *et al.*, 2013); that such responses should be considered the first point of call for hotel managers (Xie *et al.*, 2016); not much research has addressed the issue of assessing the effectiveness of hotel marketers' response to OLRs (Rose and Blodgett, 2016). As a matter of fact, hoteliers have been criticized in not making enough investment in online reputation management (ReviewPro, 2014) despite the academic guidance that research has presented.

Lee *et al.*, (2012) explain that non-action strategies may allow negative reviews to stand unchallenged thereby potentially damaging reputation and image, resulting in poor satisfaction ratings and low loyalty (Sparks and Bradely, 2017) and putting a company in a disadvantageous position leading to customers loss. Lee and Carnage (2014) and Sparks and Bradely (2016) concur on the premise that the provision of a response will reduce the likelihood of readers drawing their own negative erroneous inferences. Other studies (Min *et al.*, 2015; Pelsmacker *et al.*, 2018) also confirmed the importance of responding to uploaded opinions and urged hotels to treat OLRs as a new addition to their marketing communication mix.

In addition, it is reported that management can increase the perceived helpfulness of OLRs with strategic responses (Liu and Park, 2015). Kwok *et al.*, (2015), provided evidence that managers' timely addressed response helps consumers identify the

reviews that deem helpful and thus reduces cognitive load in finding useful information. Levy *et al* (2013) highly recommend managers to provide immediate and authentic response to OLRs because effective responses were found to be positively related to customers' loyalty and perceived as more informative and reliable than those left unattended. Similarly, Rancourt (2013) expresses that the reaction to customer reviews can be more telling than the review itself and may turn the tide to a favorable outcome.

Similarly, Xie *et al.*, (2014) stated that responses by management to OLRs proves that management is listening, expressing appreciation and reinforcing the extent of care and human connection which helps building up goodwill. Gu and Ye (2014) added that addressing service failure prevents switching behavior and influences perception of justice and fairness, and improve customers' morale and attitude towards the company (Sahin *et al.*, 2017). Likewise, Pantelidis (2010), described several examples where an intervention from the company moderated and improved negative reviews and led to 'follow-up commentaries that are priceless'.

Furthermore, Zehrer *et al.*, (2011) found that negative postings were not necessarily bad if followed by a positive counter reaction, while Barsky and Frame (2009) explained that buffering complaints is a service recovery strategy that may turn tables and strengthen trust. Anderson, (2012) found that managerial response to negative reviews is more profitable than answering positive ones, while Sparks *et al.*, (2016) reported that provision of response enhanced inferences potential customers draw regarding business's trustworthiness and extent of care.

In response to this growing need, leading hotel review websites such as TripAdvisor and yelp feature dedicated management accounts where hotel managers can interact with reviewers by responding to their feedback. On both of these sites, managers may post one response to every comment thus providing a mean for engagement and interaction with customers who have been described by Litvin *et al.*, (2008) as "the opinion leaders in travel choice", "contributors to negative image projection" (Vermuelen and Seegers, 2009) and who represent a price increasing barrier to hotel operations (Ogut and Tas 2012).

4. Methodology

It has been argued that the ability of operators to respond to online reviews is understudied in the little research focusing on this behavior (Lui *et al.*, 2018; Abramova *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, recent studies (Chevalier *et al.*, 2016) have indicated that managerial

response to negative reviews is more critical than answering positive ones and represent a manifestation of the operator's capability to utilize a system that projects a service oriented strategy. As such, and towards achieving the research objectives, this study aims to explore answers to the following pertaining questions:

1. What is the degree of attention that hotel management has directed toward their online response behavior.
2. Is the hotel's competitive stance affected by the weight of negative reviews in comparison to total online customer-generated content, in both categories of TripAdvisor's ranking and the conventional star rating system.
3. How does the tendency of managerial response to online reviews affect the hotel's competitive performance in terms of its attention, acknowledgement, speed and type of response to online reviewers.

The study collected data from TripAdvisor as it is the largest and most popular online review channel for travel accommodation (Filiari et al., 2015; Casalo et al., 2015). Data collection concentrated on the responses given by the top 99 hotels ranked by the online channel in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It need be noted that TripAdvisor demonstrates two different ranking systems. The first of these lists hotels according to 'travelers' ranking' where reviewers' feedback is the determining factor influencing the ranking procedure, while the second classification ranks the properties according to their 'best value'. The first category was chosen for the purpose of this study. To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to investigate such an aspect in the growing hospitality industry of Bahrain. In this respect, registered reviewers on TripAdvisor rate hotel operations along a five point Likert type scale of excellent, very good, average, terrible and poor. As reported in other studies (Ho, 2017), a close reading of the reviews showed that only those belonging to the average, poor and terrible contained negative comments. In order to contain the research to negative feedback, this study limited its investigation to only the poor and terrible ratings, as average 'sitting on the fence' has shown to be of mixed content. The data on the top 99 hotels subject to the study were collected according to TripAdvisor's "travelers' ranking". These hotels were subdivided according to the rank they occupied into a three tier grouping of top, mid and low with each tier or group comprising 33 hotels. For comparison reasons, and in order to test for existent correlations, the analysis would, in certain cases resort to the most commonly used star rating system. All ninety nine hotels were listed on the Bahraini Tourism and Exhibition authority which is the main government body regulating the travel and hospitality businesses in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It need be noted that the

analysis only takes into consideration those reviews that were in English. As these constitute 89% of total reviews, one may not look upon this as a shortcoming but a minor limitation of the research.

5. Analysis of Results

Table 1 summarizes the frequencies of the hotels under study, showing that the top tier hotels accounted for the largest number of reviews (16824) averaging 509 reviews per hotel followed by the mid (*avg=80*) and low tiers (*avg=16*). The table also shows the same variables distributed according to the star rating of the subject hotels.

TABLE 1: Frequencies.

TripAdvisor's	No. of	Total	English	Negative Reviews		Answered Reviews		Helpful
	Hotels	Reviews	Reviews	No.	%	No.	%	
TOP	33	16824	15005	777	5%	601	77%	859
MID	33	2664	2331	419	18%	162	39%	1301
LOW	33	531	449	168	37%	9	5%	1438
Total	99	20019	17785	1364	8%	772	57%	3598
Stars	No. of	Total	English	Negative Reviews		Answered Reviews		Helpful
	Hotels	Reviews	Reviews	No	%	No	%	
5	16	11170	9890	539	5%	418	78%	392
4	54	8057	7207	685	10%	341	50%	1957
3	29	792	688	140	20%	13	9%	1249
Total	99	20019	17785	1364	8%	772	57%	3598

The aggregate results shown in table 1 shed light onto a primary question this research has presented. The first of these is represented in the relationship between the number of reviews and the position a hotel may occupy on TripAdvisor's ranking. Whether one considers the total number of reviews (*PC=.602, sig=.000*) or those that were posted in English (*PC=.593, sig=.000*), there were significant correlations signifying that the higher the number of reviews, the higher was the rank the hotel has occupied. Top tiered hotels accounted for the highest percentage of total reviews (84%) followed by mid (13.3%) and low tiers (2.6%) respectively. This staggering difference may justify the fact that some hotel properties are increasingly being concerned with enhancing the number of reviews for their businesses, sometimes to the extent of solicitation (Gossling, 2016; Magno *et al.*, 2017).

6. TripAdvisor’s Ranking vs Star Classification

At the outset, the analysis aimed to determine whether a correlation exist between the star rating of the subject hotels as bequeathed upon them by the Bahraini Tourism Authority and the rank assigned to them by TripAdvisor which the site bases on the score given to these properties by its registered reviewers. A significant negative correlation between hotels’ star rating and its rank on the list ($-.686, sig.000$) indicates that TripAdvisor’s’ ranking does not wholly parallel the star rating system and that its ranking is not rigidly commensurate with the hierarchal star classification. That is to say that, regardless of the star categorization of any particular hotel, it is the guests’ post experiential perception which determines how high the hotel is ranked on TripAdvisor. Table 2 shows a cross tabulation of the distribution of the hotels alongside their star ranking as well as their TripAdvisor’s’ position. It is noticeable that, for example, four star and three star properties were present in all three tiers of TripAdvisor’s’ ranks while five star properties had a concentration in the top rank with only minor representation elsewhere.

TABLE 2: Hotel Star Rating * Hotel TripAdvisor’s Ranking.

		Rank			Total
		Top	Mid	Low	
Stars	Three	2	5	22	29
	Four	16	27	11	54
	Five	15	1	0	16
Total		33	33	33	99

(chi sq=57.8, df=4, sig=.000)

7. Valence of Negative Reviews

In computing number and percentages of negative reviews voicing customers’ dissatisfaction, the top ranked tier had the lowest of these at 5% of total English reviews followed by 18% and 37% for mid and low tiers respectively. If the number and percentages of negative reviews signifies the level of customer satisfaction, then the correlation ($PC=.691, sig=.000$) between the hotel rank and its percentage of negative reviews sustains TripAdvisor’s’ classification denoting that the lower the number of negative comments posted on a hotel, the higher it would rank on the travelers’ site. The moderate coefficient, however, may be attributed to the fact that it is the valence of reviews which ultimately determines the hotel ranking in order to account for ‘the

good, the bad and the ugly’ feedback by registered reviewers. Similar results were congruent when results showed that there is a significant relationship ($-.541, sig=.000$) between the number of negative reviews and the star rating of the hotels where the higher the star classification the lower was the number of dissatisfied customers airing their distress. A paired sample correlation shown in table 3 implies that there exist significant differences between both star classification and TripAdvisor’s ranking and the number of negative reviews posted, yet the difference in the strength of the correlation sustains TripAdvisor’s less dependence on the star rating classification in compiling its ranking mechanism and its reliance on customers’ post purchase behavior in determining the outcome.

TABLE 3: Percentage of Negative Reviews * Rank & Star Rating.

		N	Correlation	Sig.	t	df
Pair 1	Rank & Negative Responses %	99	.812	.000	15.743	98
Pair 2	Stars & Negative Responses %	99	-.541	.000	44.028	98

8. Response to Negative Reviews

As discussed in the literature review, service recovery may be achieved through answering guests’ complaints (Sparks *et al.*, 2016). Towards analyzing this end, results indicated that a significant correlation ($PC=.908, sig=.000$) existed between the number of negative reviews and those to which management has acknowledged and answered. This supports the trending strategy of many hotel companies in dedicating their efforts into monitoring and managing online reviews whether posted on their sites or on third party platforms. Nevertheless, there was a significant difference between the hotels TripAdvisor’s rank and their tendency towards the attention and effort given to respond to guests’ complaints ($PC=-.808, sig=.000$) thus indicating that the higher the rank, the higher the reactive response of management to guests’ voiced dismay.

Within this context, attention must be drawn to the lower ranked tier where 37% of its reviews were rated as either “poor” or “terrible”. This implies a very low degree of meeting guest satisfaction which does not only place these properties at a disadvantaged rank on the travelers’ site but which may affect potential travelers’ perception of the subject hotels while flipping through the pages of the respectful site. Such

detrimental placing is compounded by the results which revealed that only a mere 5% of these negative reviews were responded to by the subjects' management.

In order to determine which of the ranks was more responsive to negative reviews, a cross tabulation showed a significant relation ($Chi\ sq=81.2, sig=.000$) between hotel rank and tendency to respond where the top ranked hotels responded to 77% of their negative comments followed by the mid group that responded to less than half (39%). A mere 5% was the feeble attempts by the third classification. This strong difference in proactive behavior was sustained and depicted in table 4 where differences between the three tiers were present.

TABLE 4: Response to Negative Reviews * Hotel TripAdvisor's Rank.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11261.657	2	5630.828	8.262	.000
Within Groups	65423.697	96	681.497		
Total	76685.354	98			

In order to gain more understanding of the underlying differences in response behavior, running correlation between the number of responses to negative interviews using the 'stars' classification rather than TripAdvisor's ranking, a significant correlation ($PC=.630, sig=.000$) indicated that the higher the star rating, the higher the attention management has given to its response behavior. The existence of this different behavior towards providing answers to negative customer complaints was supported by results shown in table 5. In this respect, cross tabulating the results ($chi\ sq=50.7, df=8, sig=.000$) showed the highest responses (78%) were attributed to the five star hotel properties followed by four and three stars respectively (50%, 9%). As such, one may determine that properties falling into the five star classification have exhibited more adherence to policies regarding customer relationship management where the customers' opinions matter even after these customers have checked out. Attention need be drawn to the fact that, generally, star rating of hotel properties is based on the tangible characteristics and features of their physical evidence rather than on their level of customer orientation. However, strategies and policies regarding customer care and, in particular, attending to customer comments, should not solely lend themselves to higher star classification as results have indicated.

TABLE 5: Response to Negative Reviews * Hotel Star Rating.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7059.389	2	3529.695	43.152	.000
Within Groups Total	7852.571	96	81.798		
	14911.960	98			

9. Helpfulness of Negative Online Reviews

This critical decline in management response may afflict harm on a hotel’s online reputation, especially as results have revealed that, in total, 3598 TripAdvisor’s’ visitors have marked these negative comments as being helpful. This may lead us to believe that, in support of earlier literature (Phillips *et al.*, 2017; Torres *et al.*, 2015), there is no reason to doubt that these negative reviews have exerted a degree of influence on the site visitor’ choice of accommodation. Running correlation between both variables, a moderate significant relationship ($PC=.441$, $sig=.000$) was found between negative reviews posted on TripAdvisor and the number of helpful ‘thumbs up’ votes these reviews have gathered. However, in order to investigate whether there existed a difference between how helpful these reviews were to different hotel rankings, results showed a significant correlation ($PC=.728$, $sig=.000$) between how helpful these reviews were and the ranking of the hotel; indicating that, to a degree, reviews on the lower tier hotels gained more helpful votes than their higher counterparts. Interestingly, when review helpfulness was correlated to the ‘star’ rating of the hotels, correlation showed a significant difference ($PC=-.597$, $sig=000$) indicating that a higher star classification attracted a lower number of helpful votes per review. Results depicted in table 6 reflect how negative reviews have been found helpful to site visitors in terms of both TripAdvisor’s’ ranking as well as to the hotels’ star classification.

TABLE 6: Helpfulness of Negative Reviews.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rank	Between Groups	46.967	31	1.515	5.333	.000
	Within Groups	19.033	67	.284		
	Total	66.000	98			
Stars	Between Groups	23.386	31	.754	2.539	.001
	Within Groups	19.907	67	.297		
	Total	43.293	98			

Finding a certain interest in these differences, a cross tabulation ($\chi^2=100.4$, $df=62$, $sig=.002$) have shown that on average, each negative comment on a top tier hotel picked up 1.1 helpful votes while the average multiplied to 3.1 helpful votes for their mid-tier counterparts and rose much further to 8.5 for the hotels falling into the lowest tier. A proposed justification to this phenomenon may rest in the fact that as many of the hotels falling into the top ranked tier by TripAdvisor are members of international chains as opposed to independent properties, one may argue that these properties enjoy a well-established image in the readers' minds, and that selective distortion might have come into play. Nevertheless, the number of site visitors' who have flagged the negative reviews ($n=1364$) as being helpful ($n=3,598$) sustains the growing importance of eWOM (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015) in shaping consumer behavior in the hospitality industry.

10. Conclusion and Managerial Implications

This study is the first to investigate hotel guests' online reviews for hospitality companies operating in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It is a timely response to the fast growing popularity of travel related information sharing platforms and travelers' increasing reliance on information posted by their peers in an effort to sustain their travel decisions regarding choice of hotel accommodation.

The study uses data from actual consumer reviews as opposed to methods of experimentation. While the latter can provide good understanding in approximating online behavior, they do not capture real behavior of hotel management responses to voiced complaints. As such, the analyzed behavior based data enhances the empirical strength of this research findings.

Findings reveal that hotel operations operating within the same sector and in the same geographic location may behave differently and incongruently in approaching and monitoring their reaction to consumer generated content. Toward this end, the sample hotels have taken different approaches in addressing online reviews. Given this disparity, more research is needed to draw the attention and guide hospitality operators to the ever increasing impact online reviews may have on their guest satisfaction, brand loyalty and financial performance.

The importance of such activities stem from the fact that as complaints and responses are publicly available, readers of online reviews can form a similar perception of a hotel's customer orientation strategies without physically interacting with employees thus vicariously testing the service beforehand. Hence, by encouraging

response behavior to online reviews, hoteliers have the chance of offsetting the demonstrably damaging effects of negative reviews and enhance their score through diluting any excessive weight these reviews may result in.

Building upon this study, future research can focus on developing sampling rules based upon heuristics such as review length and reviewer characteristics that can be used to establish research validity in social media analytics in more efficient ways. Future research can also explore the effect of management response on reviewers' perception and their attitude and behavioral reactions with regard to service recovery and consideration of repatronage after responses being posted. Others aspects worth investigation could tackle issues such as speed of response to negative online reviews and the articulation of the response style.

Finally, eWOM is expected to continue to grow due to constant advancement in technology-driven communication channels. There is a growing belief that this concept is becoming more persuasive than other marketing instruments. As such, it is heeded that hoteliers seeking better overall success in their marketing endeavors to identify ways in which they can influence it to their advantage.

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Conference Paper

The Role of Public Relations in Crisis Communication Planning in Bahraini Organisations

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Abstract

In the age of globalisation, crisis management has grown to be essential for the sustainability of any organisation. Thus, this article aims to bring original qualitative data about the role of public relations in crisis communication planning in Bahraini organisations. The contribution of this article is that it is the first research that provides an in-depth analysis of the use of strategic crisis communication planning in governmental and private sectors in Bahrain. The researcher adapts an issue management theoretical framework to analyse the role of public relations in strategic communication planning. The article raises the question of the role of public relations in strategic crisis communication from the perspectives of public relations managers in Bahrain. The researcher conducted 19 in-depth e-interviews with public relations managers in public relations consultancies, governmental and private sectors in Bahrain. The research highlights the opportunities and challenges of the practice of strategic crisis communication planning in public relations departments. The article finds that the use of crisis communication planning should be improved and connected to public relations proactive communication strategies rather than reactive strategies in Bahraini organisations. In conclusion, the article offers an in-depth theoretical discussion and practical implications for the improvement of the role of public relations in strategic crisis communication planning in Bahrain.

Keywords: Public Relations, Strategic Communication Planning, Crisis Management, Issues Management, Proactive Communication

1. Introduction

Crisis communication develops to be one of the significant areas in public relations scholarship. Coombs (2010a) stressed, "It is safe to say that crisis management has become the dominant topic in public relations research" (pp.61-62). Coombs (2014) defined crisis as "a perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important

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expectancies of stakeholders related to health, safety, environmental and economic issues, and which can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes" (p.3). Crisis management has grown to be crucial for the sustainability of any organisation; therefore, it is significant to study the extent to which communication planning plays a role in crisis management in Bahrain. Heath (2010) explained that pre-crisis stage "should embrace concerns for prevention and preparation", while the crisis stage is "concerned with response: Process and content". The post-crisis phase gives "the opportunity for follow-up communication, perhaps, for instance, offering the lessons learned from the crisis that can reduce the likelihood of recurrence, mitigate it if it does, prevent recurrence, and prepare stakeholders for that event" (Heath, 2010, 8). Coombs (2010b) defined crisis communication as "the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation. In pre-crisis, crisis communication revolves around collecting information about crisis risks, making decisions about how to manage potential crises, and training people who will be involved in the crisis management process" (Coombs, 2010b, 20). However, many organisations assigned pre-crisis management with planning operational procedures rather than developing proactive communication planning. This is stressed by Kádárová, Mihalčová, Kádár & Vida (2015) who argued that many crisis communication management plans have failed to address communication planning issues (p.1121). They suggested that "The contingency plans are in two parallel areas operational response and communications response" where "the operational response team is focusing on resolving the problem as quickly as possible" and "the communications team is responsible for informing the organizations key stakeholder groups to ensure their understanding and support can be maintained" (Kádárová, Mihalčová, Kádár & Vida, 2015, 1122).

2. Literature Review

Based on Grunig's excellence model (1992), public relations should be guided by strategic planning and should play a role in decision making through advising the CEO to improve their relationships with stakeholders. Claeys & Cauberghe (2012) explained that organisations in crisis face the challenge of reputational threats. Kádárová, Mihalčová, Kádár & Vida (2015) argued that "Companies are starting to focus on the proactive crisis management as one of the cornerstones of the crisis communication" (p.1119). They noted that "a strategy map of the crisis communication shows the achievement of corporate objective, which in times of crisis is the stability of the

company” (Kádárová, Mihalčová, Kádár & Vida, 2015, p.1122). Figure (1) suggests that crisis strategic plan should be based on coordination between management, operational and communication efforts.

Avery, Graham & Park (2016, p.74) claimed that “While crisis communication has received extensive scholarly attention over the past few decades, there is relatively little research that has addressed the level of crisis preparedness in public relations literature” (Avery, Lariscy, Kim & Hocke, 2010). Avery, Graham & Park (2016) stressed, “Prior to a crisis, and certainly during the early stages of a crisis or disaster, organisational preparation and strategic planning can reduce or limit the impact of the crisis”. (p.74). This goes along with Kitchin & Purcell’s (2017) argument that “A proactive approach has emerged from the literature; ‘Stealing Thunder’ allows an organisation to self-declare a crisis. The aim is to ensure the organisation’s reputation remains robust as the crisis response is determined already waiting to be implemented” (p. 662). Snoeijers & Poels (2017, p.65) claimed that “Following good practices in communication, when an organisation is the first to perceive an impending crisis, it has the advantage of having more time to gather information and to communicate proactively through organisational crisis communication” (Coombs, 2014; Williams, Bourgeois & Croyle, 1993).

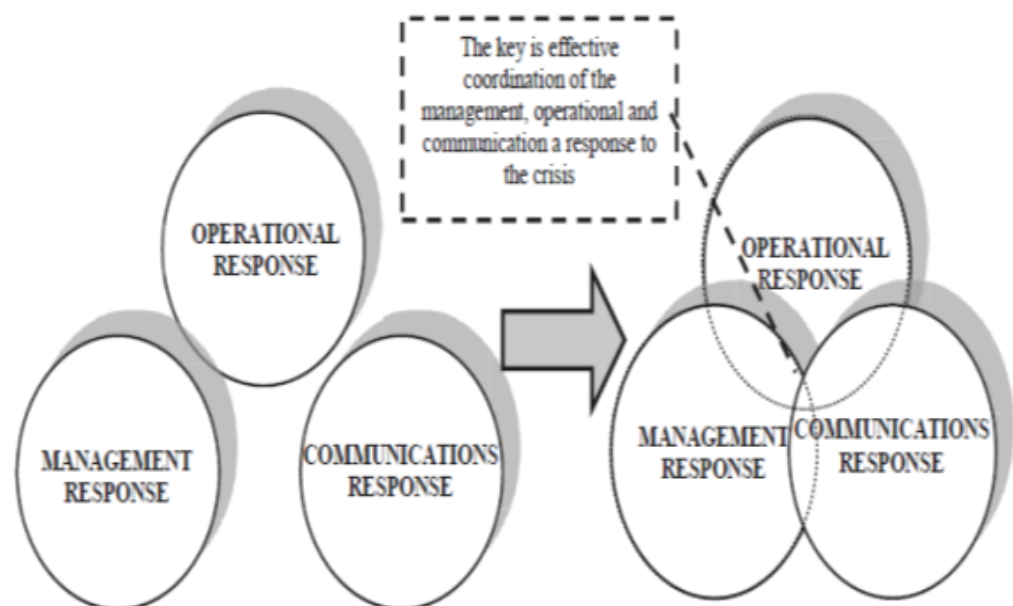


Figure 1: A strategy map based on coordination between management, operational and communication efforts (Mihalčová, Kádár & Vida, 2015, p. 1122).

Although Western literature emphasised the significance of proactive communication planning in crisis management, there is a lack of Arabic literature that focused on

the role of public relations at the issue management level. Most of the Arabic studies used case studies approach based on a quantitative methodology (i.e. Al-Ajami, 2011; Al- Mutairi, 2015; Al-Kaabi, 2014). Therefore, this paper aims to fill the gap in the literature through providing original qualitative data about the role of public relations in crisis management in Bahrain based on a proactive communication theoretical framework which will be discussed in the following section.

3. Theoretical Framework: Issues Management and Crisis Management

This research argues that crisis management starts from issues management. An & Cheng (2010) claimed, "Among the more dominant theoretical approaches in crisis communication research and practice, issues management theory (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer 2001) has received much attention" (p. 67). Heath (1997) defined issues management as the process that includes "the identification, monitoring, and analysis of trends in key publics' opinions that can mature into public policy and regulative or legislative constraint" (p. 6). Coombs (2010a) explained "Issues management is composed of efforts to identify and to affect the resolution of issues. An issue is a problem ready for resolution and typically involves policy decisions. The goal in issues management is to lessen the negative impact or to create a positive effect from an issue" (p. 54). Heath (2005) defined issues management as "a strategic set of functions used to reduce friction and increase harmony between organizations and their publics in the public policy arena" (p. 460). Coombs (2010a) explained that issues management and crisis management have a reciprocal relationship as issue can create a crisis or a crisis can create an issue (p. 55). The paper argues that crisis communication planning starts at the issues level as "clever organizations should identify the warning signs for the crisis and be prepared for various outcomes from the issues management effort" (Coombs, 2010a, p.55). Although PR practitioners can play a significant role in issues management, it is questionable the extent to which strategic communication planning is practiced in Bahraini organisations.

4. Methodology

In Western literature, Avery, Lariscy, Kim & Hocke's (2010) quantitative review of crisis communication research in public relations found that of published crisis studies, 47% focused on corporations and 26% on individuals. Only three of the 66 studies

in their sample had government agencies or departments as the contextual focus. These results illustrate the need for more research on crisis management in the public sector (cited in Avery, Graham & Park, 2016, 75). In Arabic literature, most of the studies used case studies approach using a quantitative methodology as discussed earlier. To overcome this gap in the literature, the researcher conducted nineteen long interviews that lasted 30 to 90 minutes using a purposeful sample of PR managers in governmental, private and PR consultancies in Bahrain. Some interviewees were selected by the researcher to serve the purpose of the research, while others were chosen using snowballing. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face while others were conducted by phone in the period from September 2017 to March 2018. Daymon & Holloway (2011) stressed that in-depth interviews are a trusted form of data collection in public relations research. For the reason of confidentiality, the participants preferred to keep their names anonymous. The contribution of this study is that it goes over the traditional case study approach (An & Cheng, 2010, p.81) to provide qualitative original data about the role of public relations in crisis communication planning in the cultural context of Bahrain.

5. Discussion of the Findings

5.1. The limited role of PR in strategic issues management

One of the challenging research questions is the extent to which public relations plays a role in issues management in Bahraini organisations. It is interesting that some PR managers were defensive when talking about issues management, "We don't have communication problems". A number of participants explained that research is not the responsibility of PR departments, "our role in PR is doing reports, while we have separate department for research". However, some participants showed awareness of the role of research in issues management, "market research is crucial to ensure that our programs satisfy the society's needs"; "We research the complaints and the effectiveness of our services and publics' satisfaction".

Several PR participants talked about the role of technology in crisis management at the issue stage: "We reply to the publics' complaints through the hot line"; "We conduct research through social media to know the society's needs". However, the use of social media was reactive to the issue, which raised the question of the strategic use of research in issues management. This might be attributed to the limited role of PR in taking decision regarding growing issues with the public: "We receive many

complaints from our public and we transfer them to the management". This goes along with Snoeijers & Poels' (2017) argument that "Communication professionals should have a better perception of a crisis, but they rarely find themselves in a position to have a substantial impact on the management decision to communicate during a crisis" (p.65). A number of interviewed PR participants attributed the reactive role of public relations in many governmental organisations in Bahrain to the top-management's lack of understanding of the strategic role of PR. In private PR agencies, PR participants stressed the important role of research, "We conduct research to measure the satisfaction of the public about our products and services"; "We conduct research and we have emergency plans that include public opinion and trust in the organisation". This might be attributed to the nature of PR private agencies that "are focused on helping organisations to improve in the performance of their duties, to anticipate the future and to respond in a timely manner and successfully to the demands of the environment" (Meintjes & Grobler, 2014; cited in Preciado-Hoyos, Nivia-Flórez & Correales-Rivas, 2017, p.407). However, most of the interviewed PR managers in PR agencies explained that research unit is separate from PR department in both governmental and private organisations.

5.2. The marginalised role of PR in crisis strategic communication planning

A number of studies recommended that proactive planning and issues management can reduce organisations' risks of crisis (Heath, 1998; Schwarz, 2008; Avery, Graham & Park, 2016). In their crisis management strategic plan, Kádárová, Mihalčová, Kádár & Vida (2015) stressed that "Effective crisis communication in the enterprise should be planned in advance and successfully managed, since every crisis has its life cycle, which can be influenced" (p. 119). In governmental organisations, the interviewed PR participants noted that the top-management conducted a strategic plan: "Strategic planning is important in our organisation relating it to Bahrain mission and vision to achieve strategic objectives". However, it is questionable the extent to which PR managers play a role in decision making at the crisis planning phase. Several PR managers explained, "There is a separate department for strategic planning in our organisation, while our role in PR is based on communication"; "Strategic planning is conducted by the top-management. It's not the responsibility of PR"; "We don't have strategic plan to manage crisis, but we depends on our experience in solving communication problems". In private sector, most of the participants explained that they do not have

crisis team and they stressed the role of top-management in strategic planning: “We are guided by the strategic plan arranged by the top-management”.

5.3. Limitation to reactive role of public relations in Bahraini organisations

Based on “stealing thunder” strategy, a number of participants claimed, “We have to deal with any problem quickly before media publish the news in a negative way”. However, some participants noted, “We don’t have proactive communication plans”; others argued that proactive plans are the top-management’s responsibility. A number of participants explained, “The top management guided a crisis management team constructed from all the departments”; “There’s a committee for crisis management in our organisation and there’s a representative from PR in this committee”.

It is noteworthy to highlight that most of the participants stressed the reactive role of public relations in crisis management: “Our role is to reply very quickly if any problem is raised through social media in cooperation with different departments”; “our role in PR is to restore the positive image of the organisation after crisis”; “Our role would start after the crisis in defending the organisation. We can manage any crisis without planning!”; “Our role is to “react” to any negative news and defend the reputation of the organisation”. This reactive role of public relations in crisis management in both governmental and private organisations in Bahrain marginalises the function of public relations to a mere technical tool in crisis management and impedes its strategic role in proactive crisis communication management. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight the key challenges in front of the role of public relations in strategic crisis communication planning in Bahrain in the following section.

5.4. Challenges of the role of public relations in strategic crisis communication

Several PR managers stated that corporate culture has been the most challenging barrier in front of the role of public relations in strategic crisis communication. They stressed, “We suffer from lack of information, few numbers of PR specialists, weak internal communication and the misunderstanding of PR role”. They explained that the culture of proactive communication planning is still limited in Bahraini organisations: “The management thinks that planning is costly and don’t understand the importance of planning, especially that we have many economic problems”; “There’s a lack

of understanding of PR role in crisis management and unclear crisis communication strategies". Some participants noted that routine procedures in governmental associations are one of the key challenges in front of crisis communication. They argued, "We need cooperation between all communication departments in governmental associations in Bahrain under the umbrella of national communication centre, besides arranging meetings with private sector's representatives"; "There's lack of budgets assigned to develop crisis communication planning in Bahrain".

Moreover, several participants highlighted the challenge of the limited role of PR in decision making: "Decision-making is central. PR doesn't play any role in decision making"; "In Bahraini miniseries PR's role is to execute the commands coming from the top-management". Some participants stressed that public relations suffers from "marginalisation its function" and "the negative stereotype and lack of credibility of PR in crisis communication". Besides, another participant in private sector claimed, "Management still doesn't understand the role of PR and marginalised it to a secondary, limited role in many organisations". Another PR manager emphasised, "The management still thinks that PR depends on communication skills rather than specialised qualification".

Furthermore, most of the participants explained that technology is one of the recent challenges of the role of public relations in proactive crisis communication, "Our challenge in PR is in updating our communication strategies with rapid technological developments"; "More training is needed to cope with communication technology". Some participants stressed the timing challenge when the crisis occurred: "It's challenging to publish the news from our perspective before others add rumours to the news. The challenge is to make strategic decision under the pressure of crisis". This goes along with thunder stealing strategy that stressed that "when an organization is the first to perceive an impending crisis, it has the advantage of having more time to gather information and to communicate proactively through organizational crisis communication" (cited in Snoeijers & Poels, 2017, p.65; Coombs, 2014; Williams, Bourgeois, & Croyle, 1993).

5.5. Opportunities to develop crisis communication planning

Based on the interviews, PR managers highlighted a number of opportunities to improve the strategic role of public relations in crisis planning in Bahrain. To start with, several participants stressed the significance of improving the understanding of PR strategic role: "Our opportunities start when the top-management believes in the role of PR in strategic crisis communication management"; "The role of PR would be

enhanced when PR is given the chance to participate in decision making". Moreover, a number of participants explained that social media facilitated new opportunity in crisis communication in Bahrain as it helps to manage communication at the issue level: "Now it's easier to predict the crisis before happening because of the power of social media"; "Social media makes communication much easier with different publics and entities". They recommended constructing "governmental crisis team that should go through intensive constant training in crisis management".

Furthermore, conducting research plays a significant role in proactive crisis planning: "PR should develop research to develop its strategic communication role". To achieve that, both education and training are significant in crisis communication planning: "PR participants should undergo extensive training in crisis communication management". This can be achieved when corporate culture supports the role of PR in strategic communication planning. Another participant argued, "We can develop our practice through developing the strategic role of PR based on the young educated graduates". This process is based on "merging young graduates with the experience of old PR employees". This goes along with Snoeijers & Poels's (2017) argument that "the difference between a communication degree and additional training needs to be established so that organisations can benefit from more effective training programmes" (p.73).

6. Conclusion

The contribution of this paper is that it is the first paper that highlights the role of public relations in strategic crisis communication planning. One of the key theoretical findings is the importance of developing public relations research in the Arab cultural context within the theoretical framework of issues management. Although the interviewed PR participants showed awareness of the role of public relations in crisis management, public relations was limited to reactive technical function. According to Grunig's (1992) excellence theory, public relations can improve its practice through developing its proactive communication. This study finds that public relations in Bahraini organisations should develop proactive communication planning at the issue level in order to develop strategic crisis management. This requires developing supportive corporate culture starting from the top-management's understanding of the strategic role of public relations through activating the role of research in public relations to develop its function in decision making. This emphasises the significance of both training and education to improve the role of public relations in proactive communication planning.

One of the key practical implications of this research is the need for a larger national umbrella for crisis communication management in Bahrain that offers resources and training to governmental and private organisations in Bahrain. Moreover, the research finds that social media is a promising weapon to develop strategic communication at the issues management stage. Future research should study the role of social media in issues management stage in the cultural context of Arab Gulf and the extent to which it has developed two-way communication at the issues level. Moreover, there is a need for further quantitative and qualitative research to study crisis communication in the Arab Gulf from a cultural angle.

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Conference Paper

Perceptions of Assistant Principals' and Principals' of Bahrain Government Schools about the Impact of the Bahrain Teachers College Educational Leadership Program on Their Performance

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Abstract

This article examines the perceptions of school assistant principals and principals who completed the Bahrain Teachers College higher diploma of education leadership program about its impact on their performance. The study sample consisted of 141 program graduates from 9- cohorts. A multilevel concept in measuring the impact of the educational leadership program on the graduates' performance was employed. The framework consisted of 4 levels: self-learning, changing others, embedding changes in school practices and sustainability of change and scaling up the school performance. The study questionnaire was designed on the basis of this framework. Results show that the Educational Leadership program positively affected its graduates' performance in the 4 levels. The majority of the program graduates agreed that the program positively affected their personal qualities, leadership styles and practices to support school development, school staff, students' performance and school ranking. The majority of the program graduates also agreed that the program positively affected their skills in dealing with curriculum innovations, professional development, research, strategic planning, staff appraisal, communication with community, using ICT, improving students' learning and applying educational ethics.

Keywords: Education Leadership, School Principals' Performance, Leadership Styles, School Practices, Leadership Skills

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1. Introduction

This article addresses the perceptions and practices of the assistant principals and principals in Bahrain government schools about the impact of the Educational Leadership Program (ELP) offered by the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) on the performance of their roles and responsibilities in schools. It aims at finding out to what extent have school leaders' personal qualities, leadership styles, and knowledge and practices changed after completing the BTC higher diploma of education leadership program.

The Educational Leadership Program has been offered, since 2008, through Bahrain Teachers College to train the assistant principals and principals in the Bahraini public schools. Since the implementation of the program, there has been no thorough evaluation of its impact on school leaders and their respective schools' performance. Such information will help BTC to revise the program requirements for the purpose of improvement and alignment with the school leaders' needs, the Ministry of Education's expectations, and international best practices.

The Education Leadership Program offered by BTC covers 10 topics, namely; curriculum innovations, professional development, educational research, strategic management, staff appraisal, communication with community, home-school relations, using ICT, improving students' learning and applying educational ethics.

2. Literature Review

The quality of a school leader influences instruction inside the classroom and plays a key role in improving students' achievement and school improvement (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to prepare school leaders to implement and sustain improvement and change in schools for the success of the educational reform processes. Researchers have emphasized the importance of school leaders as key factors in developing teachers' performance and supporting students' learning and success (Leithwood & Duke, 1999 and Leithwood et al., 2004). The rapidly changing social, economic and political contexts indicate that educational systems should adapt its current practices and approaches to redefine school leaders' roles, responsibilities and the way these leaders are being prepared and trained to face such challenges (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008).

Various studies provided a list of practices and characteristics of effective school leaders. A large-scale study across different school systems by Barber, Whelan and

Clark (2010) highlighted a common set of beliefs, attitudes, and personal characteristics which effective leaders possess. These beliefs and characteristics include: a major focus on students' academic outcomes, being adaptable to context and people, developing self-awareness and being able to learn, willing to take risks and challenging existing orthodoxies and behaviours and finally being optimistic and enthusiastic. In addition, Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) developed a list of 21 categories of responsibilities of school leaders that are related to students' achievements. Cotton (2003) described 26 behaviours of principals of high achieving schools; of which were the importance of shared leadership and focusing on instruction. Williams (2009) used a pre-post design to study how principal interns acquired skills to improve student learning. He found that "values, knowledge, and performance have long been recognized as essential constructs for school effectiveness". Accordingly, common expectations for leadership preparation programs are to provide real-world practice in real school settings and to equip school leaders with such common effective characteristics, skills, attitudes and dispositions.

Modern school leaders are required to play roles that would result in improving students' achievements, through engaging in building visions, implementing organizational reform and change, leading instruction, curriculum and assessment development, analysing budgets, facilitating managing and administering special programs, making resource-allocation decisions, and building school-community relations (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Silins et al., 2003 and Leithwood and Jantzi's, 2006). Therefore, a growing focus in many countries around the world on the development of appropriate preparation and training programs for school leaders to meet the complex needs of schools and the wider education system has been taking place (Bush, Briggs, & Middlewood, 2006). In addition, many educational systems around the world have realized that in order to increase the professionalism of its school leaders' new programs should be developed instead of relying only on those leaders' natural abilities and experiences (Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011). That is to say, comprehensive and systematic preparation training, rather than inadvertent experience, is key to produce effective school leaders (Bush, 2009).

However, it has been found that not all these preparation programs would produce more effective school leaders and some of these programs fail to equip those leaders with the necessary skills to fulfil their expected roles (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Bush (2009) argued that in order to measure the impact of school leadership programs, there should be an examination of whether those programs are producing effective

leaders or not. Therefore, there has been growing tendency to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of school leaders' programs and its practices (Fluckiger, Lovett & Dempster, 2014).

There have been many attempts to respond to this need around the world, however, no such attempt was made in Bahrain to measure the impact of ELP program, which is the only program of its kind in the Kingdom. This study is an attempt to understand what is currently happening in the educational leadership in the Bahraini context, as this is the first step to diagnosing and empirically documenting practices that are in place. It also aims at measuring the acquired educational leaders' knowledge, skills and values (dispositions) of the BTC-Higher Diploma of Educational Leadership program graduates as related to promoting the success of all students.

3. Conceptual Framework

A multilevel concept was developed and applied in measuring the impact of the educational leadership program on its graduates' performance. The framework consisted of 4-levels, namely: self-learning, changing others, embedding changes in school practices, and sustainability of change and scaling up the school performance.

Level-1 of the program impact (first assumption) is concerned with the change in knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions of school leaders after completing the program. According to Osterman & Hafner (2009), Barton, L.T. (2013) and Yan & Ehrich (2009), preparation of knowledgeable and skilful leaders is essential. The second key assumption (level-2 of the program impact) concentrates on the extent to which level-1 impact is transferred to school & classroom practices both qualitatively and quantitatively. This is supported by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson (2005); Silins et al. (2003); and Leithwood and Jantzi's (2006). Level-3 of the program impact (third assumption) focuses on the extent to which level-1 & level-2 impacts are assimilated into the school routines & culture. Preparing school leaders to develop and deal with school routines have been emphasized by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) and Fullan (2007). The fourth assumption of the study (level-4 of the program impact) emphasizes the sustainability of the impact and scaling up of students' achievements and school performance. Many researchers related the effectiveness of leaders' preparation programs to students' and school achievements (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Cotton, 2003).

4. Research Methodology

4.1. The study sample

This study employed a quantitative research design. The research data was gathered by using a 108 items self-report questionnaire developed and designed on the basis of a 4-level conceptual framework (self-learning, changing others, embedding changes in school practices and sustainability of change and scaling up the school performance). The questionnaire was administered to a sample of school principals and assistant principals' who graduated from the Educational Leadership Program offered by Bahrain Teachers' College, University of Bahrain. The 108 items questionnaire has the reliability coefficient of 0.988 which is considered a high reliability.

The questionnaire was distributed to 270 school principals and assistant principals, 141 of them responded and the total number of valid questionnaires was 116 which equals 43% of the distributed questionnaires. The sample included graduates of nine cohorts of the Educational Leadership Program - the academic years 2008-2009 to 2016-17. Most of the respondents were graduates of the academic years 2012 to 2016.

4.2. The research questions

The following are the study research questions:

1. What are the principals' perceptions of their personal qualities after completing the education leadership program at BTC?
2. What are the principals' perceptions of the change in their leadership styles and practices to support their school development after completing the education leadership program at BTC?
3. What are the principals' perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changed (self-learning) after completing the education leadership program at BTC?
4. What are the principals' perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changes after completing the education leadership program at BTC affected their staff teaching and practices (changing others)?

5. What are the principals' perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changes after completing the education leadership program at BTC are embedded in their schools' routine (embedding changes in school practices)?
6. What are the principals' perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changes after completing the education leadership program at BTC affected their students' performance and school ranking (sustainability of change and scaling up the school performance)?
7. What are the principals' perceptions of the extent to which their curriculum innovation, professional development, research, strategic management, staff appraisal, school community communication, home-school relations, using ICT, improving students' learning and applying educational ethics skills are affected after completing the education leadership program at BTC?

5. Findings of the Research

The obtained data were analysed using SPSS. Results are illustrated in the following tables according to the order of the research questions stated above.

To answer Question (1) of the study: What are the principals' perceptions of their personal qualities after completing the education leadership program at BTC?, the mean, standard deviation, percent and ranking of the study sample's responses to the impact of the program on the principals' personal qualities were calculated. Table 1 summarizes the obtained results.

Table 1 shows that 83.8% of the sample considers their study in the program positively affected their personal qualities, with item 12 (I am better at listening to others) ranked highest, while item 7 (I am more willing to take risks) ranked lowest.

To answer Question (2) of the study: What are the principals' perceptions of the change in their leadership styles and practices to support their school development after completing the education leadership program at BTC?, the mean, standard deviation, percent and ranking of the study sample's responses to the impact of the program on the principals' leadership styles and practices to support their school development were calculated. Table 2 summarizes the obtained results.

Table 2 shows that 85.9% of the sample considers their study in the program positively affected their leadership styles and practices to support school development, with item 34 (I encourage my staff to express their viewpoints openly) ranked highest,

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics for Principals’ Perceptions of Personal Qualities.

No.	Items	Mean	Std. D	Percent
1	I have higher intellectual capacity	4.12	0.69	82.43
2	I am more objective in my judgment	4.16	0.63	83.13
3	I have higher ability to control my emotions well at work	4.25	0.67	85.00
4	I am more optimistic during challenging times	4.22	0.65	84.48
5	I am a better innovative thinker	4.12	0.63	82.41
6	I have higher ability to manage my time well at work	4.10	0.61	81.91
7	I am more willing to take risks	3.98	0.69	79.66
8	I am better at problem solving	4.17	0.62	83.45
9	I am more focused on achieving school goals	4.34	0.56	86.72
10	I have better understanding of people in social situations	4.28	0.68	85.52
11	I encourage the expression of different points of view from colleagues more than before	4.22	0.65	84.48
12	I am better at listening to others	4.34	0.62	86.90
13	I have higher ability in persuading others	4.16	0.70	83.28
14	I have higher communication levels than others	4.18	0.67	83.62
15	I helped my colleagues to be more motivated	4.22	0.64	84.31
16	I resolve conflicts amongst my colleagues	4.16	0.60	83.10
17	I have better at negotiation skills with others	4.16	0.67	83.28
Total		4.18	0.65	83.74

while item 23 (I ensure leadership succession as part of the school culture) ranked lowest.

To answer Question (3) of the study: What are the principals’ perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changed after completing the education leadership program at BTC?, the mean, standard deviation, percent and ranking of the study sample’s responses to the impact of the program on the principals’ knowledge and practices changed were calculated. Table 3 summarizes the obtained results.

Table 3 shows that 80.9% of the sample considers their study in the program positively affected their knowledge and practices (self-learning), with item 44 (develop a complete school vision, mission & strategic plan which are aligned with the MOE ones) ranked highest, while item 40 (perform professional presentations in English on leadership issues) ranked lowest.

To answer Question (4) of the study: What are the principals’ perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changes after completing the education leadership program at BTC affected their staff teaching and practices?, the means, standard deviations, percentages, and rankings of the study sample’s responses to

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics for Principals’ Perceptions of the Change in their Leadership Styles and Practices to support their school development.

No.	Items	Mean	Std. D	Percent
18	I know more about the various leadership styles	4.38	0.52	87.59
20	I value the importance of developing a great amount of trust among school staff	4.41	0.62	88.10
21	I focus on encouraging my staff to make better quality decisions	4.28	0.62	85.69
22	I utilize different resources of expertise available among staff	4.20	0.66	83.97
23	I ensure leadership succession as part of the school culture	4.13	0.64	82.61
24	I ensure sustainability of effective practices in the school	4.31	0.61	86.21
25	I give control of some key operational decisions to my staff	4.14	0.63	82.76
26	My staff assume better leadership responsibilities	4.27	0.60	85.34
27	I encourage shared decision-making in my school	4.28	0.61	85.52
28	I accept the outcomes of any shared decisions with my staff	4.22	0.66	84.31
33	I provide constructive feedback to staff to help them in developing their leadership competencies	4.34	0.56	86.90
34	I encourage my staff to express their viewpoints openly	4.43	0.58	88.62
35	I continuously develop my staff’s leadership potential	4.20	0.64	83.97
36	I support students to practice leadership skills in school activities	4.41	0.61	88.28
37	I promote using effective leadership skills to help my school to achieve better QAA reports	4.36	0.61	87.24
38	I encourage using effective leadership skills to help students to perform better academically	4.37	0.64	87.30
Total		4.30	0.61	85.90

the impact of the program modules on their performance was calculated. Table 4 summarizes the results.

Table 4 shows that 81.7% of the sample considers their study in the program positively affected their staff teaching and practices, with item 80 (use ICT in their classrooms as an innovative teaching and learning tool) ranked highest, while item 69 (become more engaged in school research activities) ranked lowest.

To answer Question (5) of the study: What are the principals’ perceptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changes after completing the education leadership program at BTC are embedded in their schools’ routine?, the means, standard deviations, percentages, and rankings of the study sample’s responses to the impact of the program modules on their performance was calculated. Table 5 summarizes the results.

Table 5 shows that 82.18% of the sample considers their study in the program positively affected embedding knowledge & practice in school routines, with item

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics for Principals’ Perceptions of the extent to which knowledge & practice changed (self-learning).

No.	Items	Mean	Std. D	Percent
39	Write reflective essays on selected educational issues	3.50	0.84	69.91
40	Perform professional presentations in English on leadership issues	3.12	1.08	62.43
41	Analyse my leadership roles in light of contemporary leadership models	3.97	0.61	79.48
42	Utilize leadership theories to respond to reform issues in the school context	4.06	0.55	81.21
43	Analyse the internal and external school environments using specific techniques e.g. SWOT and Value chain	4.23	0.65	84.66
44	Develop a complete school vision, mission & strategic plan which are aligned with the MOE ones	4.34	0.60	86.72
45	Find innovative ways to improve my school’s sustainable competitive advantage	4.09	0.65	81.90
46	Evaluate teachers’ practices in relation to the school’s vision	4.15	0.68	82.93
47	Understand the importance of research for improving learning and teaching practices in school	4.04	0.69	80.86
48	Learn more about various ways for analysing the curriculum	3.93	0.69	78.62
49	Learn more about my leadership role in the curriculum innovation and development	3.94	0.73	78.79
50	Learn about contemporary performance appraisal concepts	4.17	0.71	83.45
51	Improve my leadership knowledge and skills through visiting other schools.	4.09	0.68	81.72
52	Prioritize the areas of concerns in my school that need to be investigated through school research	3.96	0.74	79.13
53	Design quantitative and/or qualitative research tools to collect data related to the school research	3.82	0.73	76.4
54	Analyse quantitative and/or qualitative data related to the school research	3.85	0.82	77.07
55	Analyse the factors that impact the students’ learning	4.03	0.66	80.69
56	Understand learning theories to fulfil the quality assurance (QAA) evaluation requirements for my school	3.97	0.61	79.48
57	Understand my roles in leading home school relations	4.19	0.63	83.79
58	Deal efficiently with ethical and legal issues related to my school context	4.09	0.68	81.72
59	Deal ethically with my school staff.	4.30	0.65	86.03
60	Design professional development plan based on my training staff needs	4.29	0.63	85.86
61	Integrate professional development activities in my school strategic planning	4.22	0.66	84.48
62	Integrate technological tools to facilitate teaching and learning process	4.28	0.71	85.52
63	Use technological tools to improve communication with different stakeholders	4.20	0.71	83.97
64	Integrate ICT usage in my school strategic planning	4.22	0.70	84.48
65	Reflect on personal beliefs	3.88	0.74	77.59
66	Improve my professional values	4.27	0.73	85.34
Total		4.04	0.70	80.87

TABLE 4: Descriptive statistics for Principals’ Perceptions of the effect on school staff.

No.	Items	Mean	Std. D	Percent
67	Have more important roles in the process of school strategic planning	4.16	0.60	83.10
68	Translate school strategic plan objectives into their teaching practices	4.22	0.62	84.48
69	Become more engaged in school research activities	3.69	0.65	73.74
70	Be more engaged in the curriculum innovations activities	3.87	0.67	77.41
71	Become more involved in their performance appraisal processes	4.04	0.61	80.87
72	Benefit from implementing the ideas acquired from my Educational Study Trip visits	4.18	0.65	83.62
73	Utilize the outcomes of School research to improve their teaching practices	3.97	0.65	79.48
74	Design an action plan that integrates learning theories in the school curriculum	3.82	0.76	76.35
75	Understand the effect of cognitive individual differences on students’ learning	4.06	0.67	81.22
76	Offer innovative ways to communicate with students’ families	4.03	0.65	80.70
77	Become more aware of their ethical and legal duties	4.09	0.64	81.74
78	Improve their teaching practices through professional development activities	4.20	0.64	83.97
79	Create a learning community in school that values lifelong learning	4.22	0.62	84.35
80	Use ICT in their classrooms as an innovate teaching and learning tool	4.31	0.70	86.21
81	Implement ICT to achieve the goals of ‘King Hamad school of the future’ project	4.29	0.69	85.86
82	Create a community of shared professional values	4.21	0.67	84.14
Total		4.09	0.66	81.70

83 (using strategic educational management planning) ranked highest, while item 85 (finding innovative ways to develop school curricula) ranked lowest.

To answer Question (6) of the study: What are the principals’ [receptions of the extent to which their knowledge & practices changes after completing the education leadership program at BTC affected their students’ performance and school ranking?, the means, standard deviations, percentages, and rankings of the study sample’s responses to the impact of the program modules on their performance was calculated. Table 6 summarizes the results.

TABLE 5: Descriptive statistics for Principals’ Perceptions of the effect on embedding knowledge & practice in school routine.

No.	Items	Mean	Std. D	Percent
83	Using strategic educational management planning	4.29	0.63	85.86
84	Using research as an important tool for solving teaching and learning challenges	3.94	0.65	78.79
85	Finding innovative ways to develop school curricula	3.84	0.71	76.90
86	Using contemporary performance appraisal approaches for evaluating school staff	4.15	0.59	82.93
87	Applying teaching and learning practices acquired through the Educational Study Trip visits	3.97	0.69	79.48
88	Introducing new teaching and learning ideas based on school research	3.90	0.68	77.93
89	Raising awareness of cognitive individual differences among learners	4.03	0.60	80.53
90	Establishing effective collaboration between families, school and community	4.19	0.60	83.79
91	Adhering to legal guidelines	4.28	0.67	85.52
92	Establishing continuous professional development activities based on school needs	4.22	0.65	84.35
93	Engaging teachers in exchanging ideas in professional development seminars	4.27	0.65	85.39
94	Using ICT to facilitate the work flow of school activities and processes	4.23	0.72	84.70
Total		4.11	0.65	82.18

Table 6 shows that 82.4% of the sample considers their study in the program positively affected students’ performance, and school ranking, with item 95 (utilize strategic educational management planning to improve students’ performance) ranked highest, while item 97 (leading curriculum innovation in my school to improving students’ academic outcomes) ranked lowest.

To answer Question (7) of the study: What are the principals’ perceptions of the extent to which their curriculum innovation, professional development, research, strategic management, staff appraisal, school community communication, home-school relations, using ICT, improving students’ learning and applying educational ethics skills are affected after completing the Education Leadership program at BTC?, the means, standard deviations, percentages, and rankings of the study sample’s responses to the impact of the program modules on their performance was calculated. Table 7 summarizes the results.

According to table 7, the principals and assistant principals of the MOE schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain find that their study of the courses in the ELP at BTC has impacted their performance as school leaders. In addition, it is shown from table 7 that

TABLE 6: Descriptive statistics for Principals’ Perceptions of the effect on students’ performance, and school ranking.

No.	Items	Mean	Std. D	Percent
95	Utilize strategic educational management planning to improve students’ performance	4.24	0.60	84.87
96	Using research to overcome school challenges addressed in the QAA reports	3.87	0.70	77.41
97	Leading curriculum innovation in my school to improving students’ academic outcomes	3.87	0.71	77.39
98	Using contemporary performance appraisal approaches in evaluating teaching quality in my school	4.05	0.57	81.00
99	Applying the learned experiences acquired through the Educational Study Trip helped to achieve higher QAA rank	4.08	0.60	81.58
100	Valuing scientific research as a way to enhance student academic achievement	3.99	0.60	79.82
101	Applying of learning theories in improving students’ learning and success in my school	4.11	0.63	82.24
102	Improving home, school and community relations to positively influence the students’ performance	4.21	0.54	84.17
103	Improving students’ behaviours as a result of better home, school and community relations.	4.19	0.56	83.79
104	Improving students’ behaviours as a result of respect of ethical and legal rights respect	4.17	0.64	83.48
105	Engaging teachers in professional development activities contributed to improving students’ academic achievement	4.22	0.59	84.48
106	Engaging teachers in professional development activities contributed to improving school ranking in the QAA.	4.21	0.64	84.14
107	Utilizing ICT in the classroom contributed to enhancing students’ academic achievement	4.23	0.55	84.66
108	Utilizing ICT in the school help in achieving better QAA school rank	4.23	0.70	84.52
Total		4.12	0.62	82.40

the school community communication module has impacted them the most, while the educational research module impacted them the least.

6. Discussion of Findings

Tables 1 to 6 show that: 83.8% of the sample considers their study in the ELP program positively affected their personal qualities, 85.9% considers their leadership styles and practices to support school development positively affected, 80.9% considers their study in the program positively affected their knowledge and practices (self-learning), 81.7% considers their staff teaching and practices (changing others) positively affected, 82.18% considers their study in the program positively affected

TABLE 7: Descriptive Statistics on the Impact of the Program Modules on the Principals’ and Assistant Principals’ Performance from their Perspective.

No.	Module	Principals/assist. principals			Rank
		Mean	Std. D	Percent	
1	Curriculum Innovation	3.97	0.68	79.36	9
2	School Community communication	4.40	0.61	87.93	1
3	Information & Communication Technology	4.12	0.73	82.48	6
4	Strategic Management	4.22	0.62	84.51	2
5	Staff Appraisal	4.11	0.63	82.24	7
6	Educational Research	3.90	0.69	78.06	10
7	Professional Development	4.18	0.65	83.60	4
8	Students’ Learning	4.00	0.66	80.09	8
9	Home School relations	4.16	0.60	83.25	5
10	Ethics and Law	4.19	0.66	83.70	3

embedding knowledge & practice in school routines, and 82.4% considers their students’ performance, and school ranking (sustainability) positively affected.

The ELP program impacted school principals’ leadership styles and practices the most (85.9%), followed by their personal qualities (83.8%) and the sustainability in students’ performance and school rankings (82.4%). These last two factors are the ultimate outcomes which both the Bahrain Quality Assurance Authority and the Ministry of Education give high priority to when evaluating schools and school principals.

The fact that the impact on the principals’ and assistant principals’ leadership styles and practices came first may be attributed to that this topic is tackled directly and indirectly through many modules and activities in the program.

The school leaders placed self-learning last, this may be due to the fact that not all the covered materials in the program are relevant to their needs and challenges to lead their schools.

From table 7, the School Community communication module came in the first place as the most one that impacted the performance of the principals and assistant principals with a percentage of 87.93%, while the Educational Research module came tenth with a percentage of 78.06%. This indicates that the covered materials in some modules, especially of the educational research and curriculum innovations modules, need to be revised. We also suggest revising the activities and teaching strategies used in delivering such modules. The fact that education research module came in 10th place may also be attributed to the fact that the majority of the program participants have had limited research skills prior to joining the program.

7. Conclusion

The education leadership program offered by BTC to Bahrain government school principals and assistant principals positively affected their performance, from their perspectives. However, the program requirements need to be tuned to suit the purpose of improvement and alignment with the school leaders' needs, the Ministry of Education's expectations, and international best practices. We also recommend comparing our program impact results with the impact of other leaders' initial preparation programs in various educational systems.

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Conference Paper

A Critical Review of the Literature and Practice of Competency Modelling

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Abstract

Competency models are commonly practiced today in many organizations as they lead to significant human resource development that provides organizations with a competitive edge. Because of their immense importance, measurement and modelling of competencies has become an important research field. However, despite the extensive research, there are large research gaps regarding the empirical knowledge and applicability of competency models. This article presents a critical review of competency modelling literature and practice from the major perspectives (including applied, academic, and professional) in an attempt to shed additional light on the advantages and practices of competency modelling, as well as outlining current challenges in such a vibrant domain. The intention, in this article, was to build a coherent argument with an objective of illustrating the effective use, as well as deficiencies in this domain based on aggregated experiences of many authors across many years and settings. The author explicitly acknowledges that the approach for this critical review has many limitations, since it is experience-based rather than empirically based. Yet, it is believed that this article may provide a framework that can lead to a solid investigation of competency modelling with more rigor than they have been afforded to date.

Keywords: Competency Modelling, Behavioural Paradigm, Job Analysis, Performance, NVivo

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1. Introduction: The What, Why, and How of Competency Models

In today's global and fiercely competitive world, many organizations find that the key to gaining a competitive edge is the ability of their workforce to maximize effectiveness. An organization, however, may find that determining whether its workforce possess the abilities critical for its success is difficult, as the behaviours necessary for effective performance vary from one organization to another and within organizations

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from one role to another (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). As such, many organizations have begun using competency models to help ensuring that current and future employees possess the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) that will allow the organization to achieve its strategic goals (Kerr, 1995), and to be used as a tool for selection, training and development, appraisal, and succession planning (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999).

Dubois (1993, p.9) defines a competency model as "those competencies that are required for satisfactory or exemplary job performance within the context of a person's job roles, responsibilities and relationships in an organization and its internal and external environments". Throughout the past 25 years, the competency literature has presented competencies in generic form, in scales designed to cover behaviour in a wide range of jobs, and to be adapted for many applications (see for instance Dubois, 1993; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Mansfield, 1996; Cooper, 2000; Markus, Cooper-Thomas and Allpress, 2005; Jackson; 2009).

In 1993, however, Spencer and Spencer have raised several cautions against using one of the generic competency dictionaries. Amongst those cautions are; firstly, generic competency dictionary scales are applicable to all jobs, thus are never precise. Many competencies in generic dictionaries might be irrelevant to any given job. Even where a competency is critical to a job, several scale levels may be irrelevant.

Secondly, generic competency dictionary scales represent only the 21 most common competencies. Meanwhile, most jobs require unique capabilities or characteristics that are poorly captured or not captured at all in the generic dictionaries. Unique competencies range from about 2 percent to more than 20 percent of a job, depending on the position studied. The generic competency scales are best adapted for typical managerial and sales positions, least well for preschool teachers or creative scientists. Many jobs require unique combinations of competencies used simultaneously. For instance, organization development consultants use a high level of self-control combined with moderate levels of conceptual or analytical thinking and high levels of influence skills in leading conflict resolution sessions.

Thirdly, higher levels on the scale are not necessarily better. The scales are arranged to reflect the intensity or complexity of expression of each competency. In most cases, someone performing at higher level on a scale will also be capable of performing the lower levels, however, someone performing at the higher level on the scale, may run into as many problems as someone performing at lower level. Therefore, it is important to determine the optimal level (for each job) on each competency scale.

2. Competency Modelling Paradigms/Approaches

The social scientific study of competency began in the early 1970s. The first competency model was developed in the early 1970s by the eminent psychologist David McClelland and others at a fledgling consulting firm called McBer and Company (McClelland, 1973 and 1976). The U.S. Department of State was concerned about the selection of junior Foreign Service Information Officers (i.e. young diplomats who represent the United States in various countries). The traditional selection criteria, tests of academic aptitude and knowledge, did not predict effectiveness of a Foreign Service Officer, and were screening out too many minority candidates.

Hence, the accumulation of a cumulative body of empirically supported competency literature has only started 25 years ago. Throughout the past 25 years, many researchers have contributed to the extensive literature concerned with competency modelling and reporting by studying a variety of job fields, such as engineering, management, scientific researching, as well as technical jobs (see for instance Barrett and Depinet, 1991; Bowen, Ledford, and Nathan, 1991; Dubois, 1993; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Barrett, 1994; Lawler, 1994; Frazee, 1996; Mansfield, 1996; Marrelli, 1998; Catano, Cronshaw, Wiesner, Hackett and Methot, 1997; Cooper, 2000; Gatewood and Feild, 2001; Shippmann et al., 2000; Markus, Cooper-Thomas and Allpress, 2005; Jackson; 2009; Tripathi and Ranjan, 2009).

The competency literature covering this period can be classified into five major research paradigms, namely; behavioural, business, functional, educational and situational models. The studies cited in the literature, however, illustrate the worldwide empirical support for behavioural approach effectiveness.

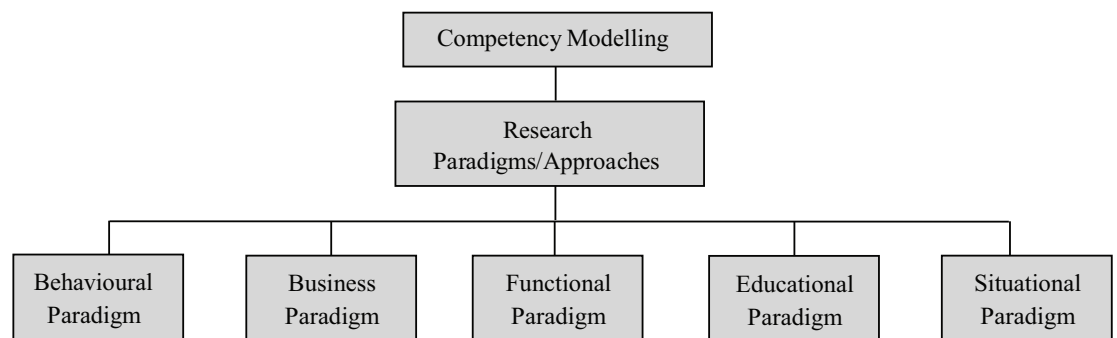


Figure 1: Framework for Competency Modelling Paradigms/Approaches.

2.1. The behavioural paradigm

The Behavioural paradigm (also known as the American or the Psychological Approach) was the first to be introduced to literature. Behavioural competency models are primarily based on outstanding performers, and were first triggered by McClelland (1973). Prominent researchers whose names are linked to the behavioural paradigm, such as McClelland, 1973; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Iversen 2000; Markus, Cooper-Thomas, and Allpress, 2005; and Jackson, 2009 viewed competence as an independent variable comprising a range of underlying traits and skills, enabling management task performance and influencing management behaviour.

McClelland's work was to be enormously influential. Of particular interest was the idea that the factors or inputs associated with individual success could be identified, and then taught to others. McClelland and Boyatzis (1980) developed a methodology for identifying competencies, based on observing behaviours of recognized top performers within particular organizations. Later then, different researchers measured competence and performance differently using the "behavioural event interviews" method, "behavioural observation" method and "360-degree ratings" method (Iversen, 2000).

Over the last 30 years, a number of empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness and validity of the behavioural approach in competency modelling, which comprises: (i) The identification of criteria defining effective performance; (ii) the identification of a criterion sample group of superior performers and a comparison group of average employees; (iii) data collection through behavioural event interviews; (iv) the identification of competencies that distinguish superior from average performers; (v) the validation of the competency model; and (vi) the application of the model to a range of HRM functions (Spencer and Spencer, 1993).

Two empirical studies that followed this approach are worth mentioning. One of these studies was published in 2000 by Patterson, et al, and aimed at defining a comprehensive model of competencies that are required for the job role of general practitioner (GP). To achieve such an aim, three independent studies were conducted, these are: (1) behavioural events focus groups with GPs (N =35), (2) behavioural coding of GP-patient consultations (N = 33 consultations), and (3) behavioural event interviews with patients (N = 21). The data collected from the three studies provided strong evidence for a competency model comprising 11 competencies, with a summary of the associated behavioural descriptions. Example competencies included empathy and

sensitivity, communication skills, clinical knowledge and expertise, conceptual thinking, and coping with pressure. The competencies derived by this study imply that a greater account of personal attributes needs to be considered in recruitment and training, rather than focusing on academic and clinical competency alone.

The second study was published in 2005 by Dainty, et al. This study aimed at comparing the behavioural competencies of two functionally disparate sets of project managers operating within the construction industry. The first comprised those with overall responsibility for the on-site production function (i.e. production-focused project managers), while the second comprised client-focused project managers overseeing project activities on behalf of the procuring organizations. The behavioural competencies of both groups were evaluated using behavioural event interviews. A total of 40 superior performing project managers were behaviourally profiled. The behavioural event interviews were transcribed and then coded using the 'NVivo' qualitative data analysis package.

The findings reveal 11 competencies that are generic in nature and underpin effectiveness in the project management role, with one additional competency apparently determined by the particular job role context of the project manager. Comparisons are also drawn with the generic management competency models, which suggest the existence of a range of behaviours specific to the project management discipline. The identification of both generic and job-specific competencies for the project management role has potentially important impact on the way in which project managers are developed in the future.

2.2. The business paradigm

The Business paradigm (also known as the Organizational or the Competitive Advantage Approach) was introduced to the literature in the late 1980s when the concept of competencies was taken up by business strategists. This paradigm, which is based on the idea of "Core Competencies" has been much cited, and contributes to the current interest of many organizations in "competencies" (Shipmann et al., 2000). It is also important, however, to distinguish between two related but separate concepts: core competencies and workplace competencies.

Core competencies are organizational competencies (Cooper, 2000). Examples for core competencies include Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs adding "Leadership and Management" courses to its Ambassadors' training programs². Core competencies can also be more generic with more quality oriented management style. On the other hand,

workplace competencies focus on individuals instead of the organization, and they vary by job position. Moreover, the unit of measure is people rather than business unit. Defining competencies at the individual level does not imply that group/organizational competencies are less relevant (DeSeCo, 2005).

2.3. The functional paradigm

The Functional paradigm (also known as the British Approach) perceives competence more as a list of tasks which one is expected to perform in a particular job role. It defines minimum levels of accepted performance on specific job/positions, and focuses on actual job outputs (Iversen, 2000; Jackson, 2009). This approach has dominated the competency work for the last couple of decades of the past century, and has been heavily criticized due to many problems above which is that work assignments/tasks are broken up into "fragments" that fail to reflect the actual work experience. Moreover, output competencies ignore process competencies. Accordingly, this approach would appear to have more limitations than behavioural approach.

2.4. The educational paradigm

The Educational paradigm (also known as the Occupational/Vocational Approach) is considered to be representing the modern competency movement, which originated from an educational discipline. While McClelland and Boyatzis (1980) described competencies, in a psychological approach, as a generic body of knowledge, motives, personality traits, self-images and social roles and skills, advocates of the educational paradigm defines competencies, on the basis of functional role analysis, as the statements of behaviour and attitude (excluding personality traits or beliefs) that are required for job role performance, and are typically assessed against commonly accepted standard/criterion (Markus, Cooper-Thomas, and Allpress, 2005; IBSTPI, 2009). Industry bodies especially those requiring technical skills, developed standards of occupational competence based on expected work outcomes.

2.5. The situational paradigm

The Situational Approach explores the factors that may influence the required competencies (Iversen, 2000). This approach was subject to a broad debate; on one side, some researchers claimed that situational factors vary dramatically that is impossible

to make a generic list of competencies that are relevant for most positions. On the other side, others believe that certain job types and levels share a general profile of competencies.

Le Deist and Winterton (2005) argued that one-dimensional frameworks/approaches of competency are inadequate and are giving way to multi-dimensional frameworks. For example, functional competencies are increasingly being added to the behavioural competencies in the USA and UK, while France, Germany and Austria, entering the same arena, appear to be adopting a more holistic framework, considering knowledge, skills and behaviours as dimensions of competence.

Regardless of the paradigm/approach, a competency model should provide an operational definition for each competency and sub-competency, together with measurable or observable performance indicators or standards against which individuals are evaluated (Markus, Cooper-Thomas, and Allpress, 2005). Accordingly, the challenge is to develop a coherent framework of competence in a context where the particular strengths of all dominant approaches are considered.

3. The Competency Concept Revealed: Its Definition, Conceptualization and Relevance

Competency definitions are numerous and no clear consensus has been reached yet (Blömeke, Gustafsson, & Shavelson, 2015). The competency concept was first introduced by McClelland (1973) who argued that competency assessment should be developed as an alternative to academic-type intelligence testing, which was failing to account for successful performance, especially in high-level executive positions. After the publication of McClelland's article in the *American Psychologist*, numerous authors have shed their light on the competency concept.

This view was then strongly challenged by Barrett and Depinet (1991) on the grounds that intelligence tests were doing a good job and there was no evidence competency testing was any better. Nevertheless, empirical evidence showed that competencies did predict occupational success (McClelland, 1998). Furthermore, consulting companies, like McBer and Company, have completed dozens of studies showing that competency assessments predict success among high-level executives (Boyatzis, 1982), though many of these studies remain unpublished.

There is still, however, confusion and debate concerning the concept of 'competence' or 'competency' that it is impossible to identify a coherent theory or to arrive at a definition capable of accommodating and reconciling all the different ways that

the term is used (Heinsman, De Hoogh, Koopman, and Van Muijen, 2007; Le Deist and Winterton, 2005). In semantic terms, competence is seen as a work-related concept (the tasks at which a person must be competent), while competency is a person-related concept defining the behaviours underlying competent performance (Woodruffe, 1991). In spite of that, many authors consistently treat the two as synonymous (Brown, 1993) resulting in lots of different definitions.

Problems emerge, however, at the level of definition, depending on whether one was a psychologist, management theorist, HR manager, or politician; it took on different emphases (Ruth, 2006). In 2009, the International Board of Standards for Training and Performance Instruction (IBSTPI) defines a competency as “a knowledge, skill, or attitude that enables one to effectively perform the activities of a given occupation or function to the standards expected in employment”. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the US Department of Education defines a competency as “the combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task” (Youn, Stepich, and Cox, 2006, p. 307).

The definitions by IBSTPI and NCES, suggest that a competency includes both means and an end. Means comprise knowledge, skills, or abilities, and the end refers to an effective performance of the activities of a given occupation or function to the standards expected in employment. Obviously, the concept of competency loses its true meaning if the end is ignored (Youn, Stepich, and Cox, 2006).

The term competence can be defined on at least three levels. The first level involves an attribute of individuals [see for example the various definitions made by Boyatzis (1982, p. 23) as well as the one by Nordhaug and Grønhaug (1994, p. 91)]. In this view, competence is specified as the responsibilities and authorities of individuals together with their potentials. At the second level, the focus is the internal organization of resources, such as knowledge (systems), routines, procedures and production technologies. The definitions by Nordhaug (1993, p. 50), by Prahalad and Hamel (1990, p. 82), and the one by Roos and Von Krogh (1992, p. 424) are excellent examples of definitions at the second level.

At the third level, competence is viewed as an attribute of the organization, meaning that the unique combination of knowledge, skills, structures, technologies and processes enables a competitive advantage in relation to rivals. Lado and Wilson’s (1994, p. 702) definition is representative for this level. This study focuses on the first level definitions, that is, on individual competences or attributes of individual diplomats. Exemplary definitions at this level (chronologically ordered) that share some common components are illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Chronological Order of Competency Definitions Evolution.

Author	Definitions
McClelland (1973)	Knowledge and skills, social role, self-image, traits, and motive. Knowledge and skills are 'threshold competencies' that are needed by all employees in order to be able to perform their jobs. Social role, self- image, traits, and motive are 'differentiate competencies' which superior performers have but average performers do not.
Boyatzis (1982, p. 20)	'An underlying characteristic of an individual which is causally related to superior performance in a job.'
Mirabile (1985, p. 31)	'Knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours required for successful performance of job duties.'
Spencer and Spencer (1993, p. 11)	'An underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation.'
Dubois (1993, p.9)	Those characteristics- knowledge, skills, mindsets, thought patterns, and the like- that, when used singularly or in various combinations, result in successful performance.
Hartle (1995, p. 107)	'A characteristic of an individual that has been shown to drive superior job performance. It includes both visible competencies of knowledge and skills and underlying elements of competencies like traits and motives.'
Blancero, Boroski, and Dyer (1996, p. 387)	'Knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes required to perform desired future behaviour.'
Mansfield (1996, p. 718)	'Skills and traits that are needed by employees to be effective in a job.'
McLagan (1996, p. 61)	'Knowledge and skills that underlie effective performance.'
Marrelli (1998, p. 8)	'Measurable human capabilities that are required for effective work performance demands.'
Weinert (2001, p. 51).	'Those intellectual abilities, content-specific knowledge, cognitive skills, domain-specific strategies, routines and subroutines, motivational tendencies, volitional control systems, personal value orientations, and social behaviours [combined] into a complex system. '
Kurz and Bartram (2002, p. 230)	'Repertoires of capabilities, activities processes and responses available that enable a range of work demands to be met more effectively by some people than by others, and not as the behaviour or performance itself.'
Jackson and Schuler (2003, p. 161)	'A measurable pattern of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviours, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.'
Shermon (2004, p. 11)	'An underlying characteristic of a person, which enables him to deliver superior performance in a given job, role or situation.'
Draganidis and Mentzas (2006, p. 53)	'A combination of tacit and explicit knowledge, behaviour and skills that gives someone the potential for effectiveness in task performance.'
Boyatzis (2008, p. 6)	'A capability or ability. It is a set of related but different sets of behaviours organized around an underlying construct, which we call the "intent". The behaviours are alternate manifestations of the intent, as appropriate in various situations or times.'

Author	Definitions
Koeppe, Hartig, Klieme and Leutner (2008, p. 61).	'Competencies are conceptualized as complex ability constructs that are context-specific, trainable, and closely related to real life.'
Tripathi and Ranjan (2009, p. 121)	'Competencies are not simply concrete actions that are easily imitated. Instead, competencies can be manifestations of some underlying intent driven by a person's basic personality, ability, knowledge and skills.'
Małachowski (in Xiong and Lee, 2011, p. 282)	'Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills which can be used as a measure of someone's intellectual performance.'
Blömeke, Gustafsson, and Shavelson (2015)	A horizontal continuum since different aspects of competence is linked with one another, act in specific situations with one another and thus, lead to observable behaviour.

When comparing the above definitions, it becomes clear that there is no uniform idea with respect to the nature of competencies (Heinsman, 2008). Clearly there is a wide range of definitions of the term competency, even among a fairly homogenous expert population, underscoring the difficulty of pinpointing a standard definition of the term. Shippmann et al. (2000) claims that this lack of consensus should not be too surprising given the multiple domains in which the term 'competence' or 'competency' are prevalent.

While the above definitions first appear to lack congruence, there are three common components to these definitions. First, most of these definitions suggest that competencies are the characteristics that underlie effective or successful job performance; second, these underlying attributes must be observable or measurable; and third, these underlying attributes must distinguish between superior and other performers. Arguably then, the author concludes that competency is: "An underlying attributes that distinguish outstanding performers from others in a defined job context. Such attributes can be measured against certain standards and can be developed through training and development programs."

As such, competence is still a fuzzy concept. The same argument can be made in relation to the neglect of organizational culture and workplace context, since generic competences may not be transferable across different knowledge domains. Since competences are centred on the individual, they are viewed as independent of the social and task-specific context in which performance occurs, yet, skill level is a characteristic not only of a person but also of a context. People do not have competences independent of context.

4. Competency Modelling Practices

Throughout the years competency models have proved to be a critical tool in many organizational functions, such as workforce selection, succession planning, and performance appraisal (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006). The main reasons of success of competency models include: 1) they can provide identification of the skills, knowledge, behaviours and capabilities needed to meet current and future personnel selection needs, in alignment with the differentiations in strategies and organizational priorities, 2) they can focus the individual and group development plans to eliminate the gap between the competencies required for a job and those available. Today, after years of introducing the first competency model, more than half of the Fortune 500 companies are using competency modelling.

4.1. Competency models versus job analysis

In the traditional approach, the job-analytic data provides the basis for a number of human resource functions (Frazee, 1996). Competency-based data has the potential for application to these same human resource functions including; recruitment and selection (Mitrani et al., 1992; Rowe, 1995), career planning (McCharen, 1996; Spencer and Spencer 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999), performance assessment (Sokol and Oresick, 1986; Spencer and Spencer 1993), training (Cobb and Gibbs, 1990; Phillips and Wallis, 1994), career development and succession planning (Dubois, 1993; Frazee, 1996; Wilson, 1995; Spencer and Spencer 1993).

Competency based approaches differ from traditional job analysis in several ways (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Lawler, 1994). Job analysis focused on understanding tasks needed to perform each task; competency approaches, however, focused on personal characteristics needed for success in a job role. Job analysis also focused on effective performance, while competency approaches focused on outstanding performance. Finally, while job analysis often led to long lists of tasks and their associated skill requirements, competency approaches distilled the results of their studies into a relatively small set of underlying personal characteristics.

4.2. Competency profiling/modelling

A significant motivator for contemporary competency profiling is addressing the contentious issue of employability (Jackson, 2009). A competency model provides identification of the competencies which have been proven to be frequent predictors of successful job performance across different types of job roles, or are needed by employees to prepare for other jobs via promotion or transfer (Tripathi and Ranjan, 2009).

Competency modelling has attracted half a century of research and evaluation (Jackson, 2009). Competencies are the building blocks of competency models (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006), and each competency in the model is defined using behavioural descriptors of proficiency levels. It is vitally important that profiling methodologies examine typical behaviours associated with identified competencies, thus facilitating effective quantitative analysis and also addressing ambiguity in the operational meaning of each competency (Jackson, 2009; Tripathi and Ranjan, 2009).

When asked to develop alternative methods of selection, McClelland and his colleagues decided that they needed to find out what characteristics differentiated outstanding performance in the position. They first identified contrasting samples of outstanding performers and average performers, by using nominations and ratings from bosses, peers, and clients. Next, the research team developed a method called the Behavioural Event Interview, in which interviewees were asked to provide detailed stories of how they approached several critical work situations, both successful and unsuccessful (McClelland, 1976).

To analyse the data from the interviews, the researchers developed a sophisticated method of content analysis, to identify themes differentiating the outstanding performers from the average performers. The themes were organized into a small set of "competencies," which the researchers hypothesized were the determinants of superior performance in the job.

From this initial study, the McBer team developed a methodology that dominated the practice of competency model building for the next 10-15 years. Key insights from the initial study are still highly useful in competency model building today; such as the focus on outstanding performers, the use of behavioural event interviews, thematic analysis of interview raw data, and distillation of the results into a small set of competencies described in behaviourally specific terms.

In 1999, Lucia and Lepsinger book *The Art and Science of Competency Models* was published introducing two general approaches for developing competency models. The first approach implies starting from scratch using data collected internally, from

interviews, focus groups, or on-the-job observations with job incumbents. The data are also analysed internally to identify the competencies seen as significant to effective performance. This approach is appropriate for developing a competency model for any job, function or role in the organization. It is time consuming but yields results that are organization-specific.

Another fast-track second approach for competency model building was highlighted, in which researchers start with an existing validated competency model. Such a model can be used as a starting point for developing a competency model for an organization. This off-the-shelf approach supplants extensive interviews of incumbents on the job. It may save time on data collection and analysis and on validating a model, but the functions and roles appropriate for it are limited, because it is generic and not developed with a specific job or position in mind. It may not address the technical skills and knowledge required for the job or position that is being considered. Generic Models are best suited for leadership and management roles that cut across several functions and for positions that require limited technical skills and knowledge.

Given the fact that most working organizations display a variety of different job types, Mansfield (2000) described three different job competency models. Firstly, the 'single job' competency model focuses on one job. Data are collected from focus groups held with job incumbents and/or their managers, and from interviews with job holders, and are categorized into a list of 10 to 20 traits or skills. This list is used to identify the specific behaviours that describe effective performers.

Recently however, in 2009, Tripathi and Ranjan claimed that while using single-job competency models will get you the best fit between competencies and job requirements, the time and resources needed to develop these highly-customized models for a wide-range of jobs can be quite excessive. Secondly, the 'one-size-fits-all' model defines a set of competencies for a broad range of jobs. Instead of gathering data, a group of individuals selects competencies from available competency models, which they believe are necessary to achieve the goals of the specific organizational unit. The strength of this approach lies in the applicability of the resulting model to a large number of employees within the organizational unit. In addition, the model's use is relatively quick and easy, compared with the single job model. The obvious disadvantage is that it does not describe the competencies that are needed in one specific job.

Thirdly, the 'multiple-job' model defines non-technical competencies that are assumed to be common to all jobs, as well as technical ones that are specific to individual jobs. Mansfield (2000) suggests that while most of these competencies

will be non-technical in nature, consideration should also be given to the technical competencies required to perform specific individual jobs.

Competency literature has reported different development practices for competency models, of which all the final outcome is essentially the same (i.e. identification of behaviours required to successfully perform a given role), the difference is, however, in the way of getting there. These approaches include:

The Job Competence Assessment Method which uses Behavioural Event Interviews (also known as Critical Incident Interviews) and observation of outstanding and average performers to determine the competencies (See Dubois, 1993; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999 for extensive description of this approach).

The Generic Model Overlay Method, in which organizations purchase an off-the-shelf generic competency model for a specific role or function (Dubois, 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). The Customized Generic Model Method, in which organizations use a tentative list of competencies identified internally to aid in their selection of a generic model and then validate it with the input of outstanding and average performers (Dubois, 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). The Flexible Systems Method, which demands reflecting not only on what outstanding performers do now, but also behaviours that might be important in the future (Linkage Inc., 1997; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999).

Therefore, the essence of the recent approaches to competence modelling is to analyse what competent job behaviour really is, and to describe it in behavioural terms (Nybø, 2004). This includes a systematic approach to the following questions: how to find the competencies needed in various value-creating processes in the organization? Which indicators should be used to measure these competencies? How to collect data about such competencies? Today, there is a rich and fast-growing literature on the subject (Mitrani et al., 1992; Dubois, 1993; Athey and Orth, 1999; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999; Schippmann et al., 2000; Vazirani, 2010).

4.3. Competency as a predictor for performance: Individual versus organizational

Competency advocates promote the use of competency models for a variety of purposes, including selection, performance management, compensation, career management and succession planning (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Gupta, 2005).

In the case of performance management, the use of competency assessments appears to be fairly widespread (McClelland, 1973; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Gupta,

2005). Empirical evidence, however, about the effectiveness of competency models, assuming that it can be developed and, furthermore, that there is a link between its development and performance is still questionable (Ruth, 2006; Levenson, Van der Stede, and Cohen, 2006). Furthermore, even if competencies are related to job performance for individuals, it is unclear if the use of a competency system can improve organizational performance (Levenson, Van der Stede, and Cohen, 2006).

Levenson et al. (2006) also acknowledged the limited evidence confirming the use of competency systems for improving organizational performance, due to the influence of contextual variables, perceived as the leadership competencies for different work sites. Similarly, Grzeda (2005) claimed that competency modelling for accurately predicting enhanced performance is less suited to more complex for senior managerial roles, while more likely to satisfy the assumptions of identifiable outputs which underpin competency frameworks in the case of junior management positions.

Recently, Jackson (2009) indicated that one way to support the vital move of the purpose and benefit of competence modelling beyond the causal relationship between competency and performance is that competency profiling must also account for controlling factors such as employer motivations for recruiting graduates, organizational strategy, and sector type. Jackson also advocated the need for future researches to identify associated behaviours with each industry-required competency in a range of organizational environments. Empirical research should aim to identify behaviours for each competency to assure homogenous interpretation of the meaning of individual competencies and their application in the workplace.

Several authors also caution against using competency models for measuring or appraising certain areas of performance and providing developmental feedback based on these assessments. As such, the competency model developed to describe jobs or occupations and promotional opportunities should be shared with all managers and staff; employee participation in development of a competency model can assist with providing awareness of the model as well as create acceptance.

4.4. Best practices in competency modelling application

The concept of competency modelling has gone from a new technique to a common practice in the 35 years since David McClelland (1973) first proposed them as a critical differentiator of performance. In 1982, Boyatzis analysed the competence assessments of 2,000 US managers to determine which characteristics of managers are related to effective performance and how these different competencies interact and affect each

other. Boyatzis found that about half of the competencies in the generated model related to “effective performance of managers in particular management jobs in specific organisations” (p. 204). He believed that these generic competencies accounted for one third of the variance in management performance, another third by job and organizational specific management competencies, and the remaining third by situational factors.

Today, almost every organization with more than 300 people uses some form of competency-based human resource management, regardless of the claims made by Barrett and Depinet (1991) who indicated that McClelland and his associates have not been able to produce any professionally acceptable empirical evidence that their concept of competencies is related to occupational success.

In 2010, Vazirani presented the outputs of a field study that was accomplished by Hewitt Associates. They studied leadership development among 373 U.S. companies, 20 of which were labelled “Top 20 Companies for Leaders”. The standout companies for leaders not only all have competencies in place, but successfully integrate the competencies into succession planning, pay formulas, and performance management. The table below presents the study outcomes.

TABLE 2: Integration of Competency Models by Companies for Leadership Development.

Competency-Related Characteristic	Top 20 Companies	Other Companies
Companies with Competencies	100%	73%
Companies that Integrate Competencies into Succession Planning	100%	78%
Companies that Measure Leader Performance Against Competencies	95%	69%
Companies that have Follow-Up Measures to Gauge Progress in Meeting Competencies	90%	65%
Companies that Use Competencies to Determine Long Term Incentive Pay	65%	23%
Companies that Use Competencies to Determine Annual Incentive Pay	60%	31%

Source: Vazirani (2010)

In 2011, a group of researchers have investigated a set of 20 best practices in competency modelling and divided them into 3 areas: (a) analysing competency information, (b) organizing competency information, and (c) using competency information (Campion, et al, 2011). For each of the best practices, they provided explanation, recommendation, and then practical illustrations from the various organizations of the co-authors. The following table illustrates a summary of some of those 20 best practices.

TABLE 3: Best Practices of Competency Modelling over the Past Two Decades.

<p>(A) Analysing Competency Information (Identifying Competencies)</p> <p>1) Considering Organizational context by identifying competencies that align to corporate strategy and foster competitive advantage.</p> <p>2) Linking competency models to organizational goals and objectives.</p> <p>3) Using a combination of traditional job analysis and competency modelling methods to allow a highly robust approach to competency modelling.</p> <p>4) Using 'future scenario' workshops to define alternative scenarios of the future-oriented job requirements, and then their competency implications are determined in a systematic manner.</p>
<p>(B) Organizing and Presenting Competency Information</p> <p>5) Defining the anatomy of a competency in which competencies are described very thoroughly by including:(1) a label/title; (2) a definition of how the competency appears on the job in terms of behavioural indicators; and (c) a detailed description of the levels of proficiency on the competency</p> <p>6) Using organizational language (this unique language may include acronyms, technology, job titles, business unit titles, products, and so forth).</p> <p>7) Including both fundamental (cross-job) and technical (job-specific) competencies when developing competency models that span across jobs (i.e. multiple-jobs competency models).</p>
<p>(C) Using Competency Information</p> <p>8) Using organizational development techniques (defined here as widespread involvement of organizational employees in the creation of the competency model) to ensure competency modelling acceptance and use.</p> <p>9) Using competencies to develop human resources systems (e.g., hiring, appraisal, promotion, compensation) by many organizations worldwide (both governmental and non-governmental).</p> <p>10) Using IT to enhance the usability of competency models (e.g. developing HR applications, which derive from the model, that is available electronically to organizational members.</p>

5. Research Deficiencies in Competency Modelling Literature and Practice

Knowledge about professional competencies is currently a major research interest. Because of their immense importance, measurement and modelling of competencies has become an important research field. However, despite the extensive research, there are large research gaps regarding the empirical knowledge and applicability of competency models.

As a final note on this critical review of the competency modelling literature and practice, it can be stated that since the introduction of the concept over thirty five years ago, competency modelling has been highly emphasized in the US literature. This is since McClelland research was originally based on preliminary results produced through surveying Foreign Service officers of the US State Department.

From the literature reviewed on competency in general and competency modelling in particular, the following research deficiencies were identified by the researcher. Firstly, with the majority of the prevailing studies on competency modelling based

on US culture, this makes a large portion of the literature on competency in general and competency modelling in particular mostly reflecting the US culture, thus less reliably applicable to other areas of the globe. As such, there is only very few studies focusing on competency modelling in non-western countries (such as the Middle East countries).

Secondly, the dominant proportion of competency studies existent in the literature is mainly concerned with exploring competency modelling approaches with little attention devoted to contextual factors affecting the selection of the proper approach, such as the kind of the organization, nature of the job/career domain or the culture in which job-holders are functioning.

This deficiency in considering contextual factors is reflected by the existence of a limited number of studies and theories addressing this issue. Moreover, and despite all this advancement in the realm of competency modelling research, five more criticisms have been made regarding the current status of the competency literature and practice.

Firstly, most competency studies have primarily focused on managerial/leadership competencies, with very little attention given to functional/job-specific competencies. Secondly, prior to 1991, there were few empirical studies investigating competency modelling. Thirdly, in contrast to applied research in competency modelling which is plentiful, basic research and theory on competency modelling remain in short supply. Fourthly, despite widespread application of competency models in measuring individual competencies, there are very few published studies of the empirical link between competencies and organizational performance. Moreover, although competency-based job performance is best studied "over time", there are not many empirical studies that are "longitudinal" in nature.

Finally, from the literature reviewed up to the date of this study, it shows clearly that although there has been world-wide research on competency modelling in many professions, there has been an evident lack of empirical studies on competency modelling exploring competencies that are relevant to particular jobs such as lawyers, diplomats, and vocational school teachers.

Competency models are now having their place in human resources practices. However, some competencies that can assist a person in being successful in their job or contributing to the competitiveness of an organization may be overlooked if the competency model solely is used to strategically select only staff that fit this model and do not rely on developmental resources to facilitate acquisition of competencies where a gap exists.

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Conference Paper

The Influence of Teacher Preparation Programmes on Bahraini Teacher Attitudes and Challenges with Inclusive Education

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Abstract

For decades, studies investigated the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards inclusive education. Several studies indicated that positive teacher attitudes could lead to successful implementation of an inclusive classroom. This study explored in-service teacher attitudes and challenges through a qualitative research design by utilising semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the experiences of teachers with inclusion. The responses of the participants were compared between teachers who have been through initial teacher education and have fewer years of experience with teachers who have not been through initial teacher education and have many years of experience. The responses showed that teachers who graduated from an initial teacher education programme had very similar perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion as teachers who have not been through initial teacher education. The teachers indicated the different levels of support required for effective implementation of inclusion and identified the benefits of inclusive education. The study provided important implications for the new initial teacher education programme in Bahrain to better prepare teachers for the challenges of inclusion.

Keywords: Attitudes, Challenges, Inclusive Education, In-service Teachers, Qualitative

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1. Introduction

For many years researchers have explored pre-service and in-service teacher attitudes towards inclusive education and identified the essential role positive teacher attitudes play for the successful implementation of inclusion (e.g. Astha & Bhargav, 2012; Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Gaad & Lavina, 2007; Dias & Cadime, 2016; Hsien, Brown, & Bortoli, 2009; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Niemeyer & Proctor, 2002; Seçer, 2010; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Weiner, 2003). Jobling and Moni (2003) indicated that teacher attitudes are crucial for effective implementation of inclusion since teacher attitudes could

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influence teachers' perceptions of their abilities, which could then determine the learning opportunities available to the students.

Foreman (2005, as quoted in Hsien, Brown & Bortoli, 2015) defined inclusion as 'the philosophy that schools should, without question, provide for the needs of all the children in their communities, whatever the level of their ability or disability' (12). Over the years researchers argued on the components of the inclusive classroom. Shyman (2015, p.361) defined inclusive education as 'a dynamic process by which students with and without exceptionalities receive their primary modes of service delivery in the general education environment'. Thus, the author suggested that an inclusive classroom does not discriminate between students based on disability, cultural background, and gender. Despite Shyman's more 'inclusive' definition of inclusion, Messiou (2017) said that the most common view of inclusive education is the one that revolved around the inclusion of special educational needs in a regular classroom.

Many teacher factors are associated with positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion such as teachers' years of experience (Stanovich & Jordan, 2002), educational backgrounds (Seçer, 2010), previous exposure and experience with disability (Dias & Cadime, 2016; Male, 2011), and teachers' gender (Astha, Sushma & Smrity, 2012; Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer, Sim, Scott, Cordier, & Falkmer, 2015).

According to Kim (2011) teacher education programmes have transformed in order to include inclusive education as part of their qualifications and accordingly prepare their students to teach diverse learners. Research in the area of teacher attitudes towards inclusion in relation to teachers' educational backgrounds, qualifications, or teacher training is scarce. Kim (2011) also explored the attitudes of pre-service teachers in teacher preparation programmes and found that teachers showed positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities and towards making the relevant adaptations to their teaching for students with and without disabilities. The study indicated that the positive attitudes of pre-service teachers could not be directly influenced through the teacher preparation programmes and could actually be the result of previous experiences of the teachers with disabled students.

Seçer (2010) indicated that generally Turkish teachers who have not received teacher training tended to have more negative attitudes towards inclusion. Additionally, Lambe and Bones (2006) found participant responses that are contradictory where the majority of student teachers in the initial teacher education programme support inclusion yet still would like to teach in a traditional system. Their research is ongoing and intends to explore student teacher attitudes towards inclusion after teaching experience with the belief that students are likely to have less than positive views

of inclusion after their confrontation with reality. Other studies have also explored the relationship between teachers' educational backgrounds and their attitudes towards inclusive education. For instance, Stoler (1992) indicated that depending on teachers' education level, teachers had varied levels of understanding of inclusion. Interestingly, teachers with a higher level of education tended to show more negative attitudes towards inclusion.

1.1. Initial teacher education in Bahrain

In 2008, a Teachers College (TC) was established by the Ministry of Education to provide initial teacher education programmes as well as postgraduate programmes for educational administrators in order to improve state primary level education. Since then, over 1000 students have graduated from the college and started teaching in primary state schools. The academic programmes in the college were specifically created to cater for teaching shortages in state primary education in the following subject areas; English, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Mathematics and Science education, and Cycle one education (Years 1-3) (Teachers College, 2016). The Bachelor in Education programme, in its current format, offers one inclusive education course at the second year where students are introduced to learning disabilities, learning styles, multicultural education, and physical disabilities they are likely to encounter in the classroom. The course also offers in depth information on differentiated instruction and lesson planning for an inclusive classroom. Given that the college was only established in 2008, the first cohort of graduates who are now teachers have less than six years teaching experience. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate the differences in teacher challenges and attitudes towards inclusive education between graduates of this initial teacher preparation programme at TC who have less than six years of teaching experience, compared to teachers in primary education who have substantially more years of experience and have not been through formal teacher training.

2. Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the differences between in-service teacher challenges and attitudes towards inclusion by comparing the beliefs of teachers who have studied in a teacher preparation programme (TC graduates) and teachers who have not been through official teacher training (Non TC graduates). The results should

provide an indication of the success of the new teacher preparation programme in preparing teachers for inclusive education and equipping them with the appropriate tools that facilitate for an inclusive classroom for diverse learners. In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative method was utilised to gain insight into the experiences of the participants.

The research questions that pertain to the study were:

1. What are teacher challenges with inclusion and attitudes towards inclusive education?
2. Is there a difference in the attitudes, challenges, and implementation of inclusive education between TC graduates and Non TC graduates?

2.1. Participants

The total participants included in this study were 12 in-service primary state school teachers. The participants included seven female and five male teachers. Nine were English teachers, one was an Arabic teacher, and one was a Cycle one teacher (years 1-3). The participants were chosen randomly based on convenience as long as both groups of TC graduates and Non TC graduates were represented. Of the 12 participants, eight taught in boys' schools, while the remaining four taught in girls' schools (state education is gender segregated). Additionally, seven of the interviewed participants were TC graduates with less than 6 years teaching experience, and five were Non-TC graduates who had more than 6 years teaching experience.

2.2. Procedure

The data collection was established with the assistance of student teachers from the second year inclusive education course. The 19 students were divided to six teams, with three to four students in each team to conduct the interviews. Each team was given the responsibility to interview one participants who has graduated from the TC, and another participant who has not graduated from the TC. The course instructor first conducted a brainstorming session with the students of the inclusive education course, who were the pre-service teachers, in order to determine the interview questions to be asked whilst interviewing the participating in-service teachers. The interview questions were finalised in accordance with the aims of the research which was to explore the attitudes and challenges of in-service teachers with inclusive education.

The student teams visited the participants in the schools where they obtained the participants' consent to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted in each of the participants' school in a private classroom and was voice recorded with the approval of the participants. All participants were informed of the purposes of the research and their anonymity was ensured. After the interviews were concluded, the student teachers transcribed the recorded interviews under close supervision of their instructor (author of this paper) and submitted them as part of an assignment to fulfil the requirements of their inclusive education course. The students also signed consent forms to participate in this research. Ethics approval was gained from the teachers college research and ethics committee to conduct this research.

2.3. Instrument and data analysis

The study employed semi-structured interviews with questions to provide insight into the experiences and attitudes of in-service teachers towards inclusion. The interview questions pertained to three main categories; knowledge of inclusive education, skills in applying inclusion, and teacher attitudes and values related to inclusion. The first section examined teachers' knowledge of inclusion where teachers were asked to define their perspectives and views of inclusive education and state the education and training they have received in the area. Secondly, participating teachers were asked about their skills in applying inclusive education, their past experiences with special needs students, and the type of assessment modifications and accommodations they have used. Thirdly, the teachers were asked questions to determine their attitudes and values towards inclusion, and whether they support inclusive education as opposed to a traditional class. The semi-structured interviews comprised some or all of the following interview questions depending on the flow and length of the interviewees' responses.

- What do you know about Inclusive Education?
- What education and/or training have you received in the area of inclusive education? Where did you receive this training or education?
- Who do you think inclusive education is for?
- What were your expectations of inclusive classrooms, versus the reality of it?
- What kind of support do you need to have in an inclusive classroom?
- Did you, at any point of your teaching career; have students with learning disabilities or special needs in your classrooms? Explain.

- What are parents' perspectives on inclusive classrooms?
- How do you assess students with special needs?
- What is your view of inclusive education?
- If given a choice, would you accept a special needs student in your classroom? Why? Why not?

The data were examined and categorised according to the common themes that emerged in the interview transcripts. The responses within the themes were then categorised for TC graduates and non TC graduates for comparison. The themes will be discussed next.

3. Results

The results revealed a number of common themes and topics identified amongst the participant responses, the responses will be categorized in two groups, the first were the responses of (TC graduates), those who have been through initial teacher education; while the second group were the responses from participating teachers who were (Non TC graduates) and did not undergo initial teacher education. A number of themes were identified through the data and they were: (1) teachers' perceptions and definitions of inclusive education; (2) teachers' attitudes and opinions of inclusive education; (3) support required for inclusion; (4) assessment in an inclusive classroom; (5) benefits of inclusion; and (6) multicultural education. These themes are supported with individual teachers' statements.

3.1. Perceptions of inclusive education

At the onset of the interviews, the teachers were asked how they defined inclusive education. TC teachers generally defined inclusive education as a class that incorporates different students such as students who are low achievers, gifted students, students' cultural backgrounds, students with learning disabilities, and other special needs students.

I think it's about integrating most of the students in the learning process and especially the one with the special needs.

An inclusive class, meaning, different levels of students, in culture, in abilities... they made it for all students, it has weak students... students with disabilities.

A lot of types of students in one class... students are not the same... I have students who need more support and attention and I also have students who are excellent.

As for teachers who are non TC graduates, they had very similar perspectives of inclusive education to TC graduates.

You mean mixing the students in one class? We have different individual cases here in our school. We have... hearing cases... low level cases... autisms.

Everyone should be included, because everyone has the right to be taught, equally... even those who have... physical disability, even the one they have they are coming from outside to our Bahrain to live here, they have the right also to be taught equally as a Bahraini... in our school there are different ethnics, they are different, we can say, abilities and some of them are visuals, some of them they can't hear properly.

Inclusive education is when we have different types of students within the classroom. It could be different races, non-Bahraini students... it could be different abilities, students with physical disabilities, students with mental disabilities, students with kinesthetic abilities.

3.2. Teachers attitudes and opinions of inclusive education

In order to examine teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, teachers were asked that if given a choice, would they support the idea of inclusive education. Most of the TC graduates indicated negative attitudes towards inclusion and suggested that extreme cases of special needs should be in special education classes. The teachers explained and said that special needs students represent a challenge with communication and need a specific form of instruction by a special needs expert who assists the teacher.

I think that those students who can't participate in some activities in the classroom, we can't join them in... but those students who are unable to...like they have cognitive problems... they need special classes.

When I started teaching everything was really different, I feel like it's hard to deal with special need students, I think that they are in another world.

This is a hard question... three years ago, I wanted to have special need student in my classroom, I always wanted to teach a special need student, but when

I came here in the school and I see the real facts I think no, they should be separated... because they need more attention, they need more activities... you need to keep your focus on the student the whole period.

Before I enter the school I was with the idea, but when I came here to the school and I saw the way they implemented this idea now I'm fully against... our Bahraini school need more guidance, more workshops about this idea.

I'm against because... I feel like they are alone and they are not really integrated with the others, and I feel personally I feel difficult to deal with them, I can't really, sometimes when they get angry or something, I can't deal with them.

Against, why? Because we... not provided with the right tools, the right knowledge and no facilities in the school.

Other TC graduates have shown more positive attitudes towards inclusion and said that with the sufficient support of a special needs expert, inclusion can be implemented. Another reason was that it is vital for special needs students to have equal rights for education and to be integrated into society.

Some extent with it... it need help if its only one the teacher she can't do it by herself... if you have 30-35 students in the class, each one is different, each one is considered special need, either it was a disability, or a gifted student, they both have a special need so the teacher alone cannot do it.

With, because these students are part of society, they have the right to learn and participate, if you want him to change then you don't isolate him, so I will include him and he will gradually change.

I'm with inclusive classroom, where all the students have the right to receive learning, this environment helps all of us, us as teachers and the students, to adjust with change and difference and learn socially from special needs who are different than the rest of us.

One TC graduate provided an interesting response. He designated that his attitude and acceptance of an inclusive classroom depends on the extent of the disability, and that he is more willing to accept students with learning disabilities than students with mental disabilities.

It depends on the type of this special need. For example, hyperactive students, we can manage this type of special needs, learning disabilities, we can work more on their disabilities. But mental disabilities or mental disorders, I guess I will refuse because they will sit in the class and they will waste their time and I have to give them more support in addition to the other students.

Non TC graduates generally displayed negative attitudes towards inclusion and justified their refusal of inclusive education for reasons it being time consuming for the teacher who needs to provide special needs students more attention as well as feeling concerned for special needs students who seem out of place.

They (other teachers) complain, they always complain... because it affects the lesson...affect the concentration of the rest of the students.

Those who are very weak, cause a problem for us... even in the class, you need special time, extra time for them, because you have a problem with also... curriculum with books, and they can't reach with students.

I think I am against it because the student sometimes feel disappointed, they don't know what's going on in the class, they can't participate because they don't know actually what's going on, they need somebody to sit with them, translate for them... I don't think I will accept them (special needs students), it's a really big responsibility.

Other non TC graduates exhibited somewhat positive perspectives of inclusion on the condition of the provision of a special needs teacher for support, as well as acknowledged the social benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities.

With for sure, if they (the school) get us a special needs teacher, and against, if they hold me accountable and I don't have any experience.

It's better for the normal students to accept these cases because after when they are grown up and they meet those people, at least they know how to deal with them, but those who have special needs also better for them.

3.3. Support required for inclusion

The teachers indicated the administrative support they needed in order to implement inclusive education from the Ministry of Education, the school administration, and special education teachers. TC graduates said:

I think they (the ministry) need to do a couple of tests before... to test the student are able to join these classes or not, not only just based on their (students) parents' wishes or the students themselves.

Give us more workshops on how to deal with these special needs students when we teach an inclusive classroom, and we need more support and more teachers that are experts in this specialization.

We need more time, we need more facilities, we need more education and information about special students.

As for non TC graduates, the teachers indicated the lack of support for effective implementation of inclusion. Some teachers suggested more guidance on how to assess special needs students and a request for more involvement from parents and the school leadership.

Parents, they should also be involved, and as well as the school here, the management they should also support us with what we want to do.

Think that if we give the teacher... many workshops or many lessons about how to deal with them (special needs students) better... about how can I deal with them, how can I assess them... they have to give us criteria to assess the students.

3.4. Assessment in an inclusive classroom

When teachers were asked about how they tackled assessment in an inclusive classrooms, both TC graduates and non TC graduates indicated similar approaches to modifications and accommodations for students.

We stay with them during the test... we provide them with the help so they can follow up with the other students.

Depends on their disability or their special needs, sometimes like if it's just learning disability, we give them extra materials, extra activities... but if they are autistic or hyperactive, they need special education.

I give them more time so they can finish the test as the regular students.

Non TC graduates had comparable responses.

By exams or tests, same as with other students, but with help... read the question for them, explain exercises.

I sit beside them... sit next to her and make my voice loud and slowly.

This boy, he can't write on the line... so everybody is writing dictation but he's not writing, so he is frustrated and I can see it in his eyes. So I magnify, I make a special notebook, big one. I modify things so they can work out with...my students.

3.5. Benefits of inclusion

Some of the participating teachers, particularly from the TC graduates group, demonstrated some positivity when they acknowledged the benefits of an inclusive classroom, particularly the social benefits that special needs students are exposed to.

Special needs students to get involved in the community... and to be... more sociable.

They (special needs students) will see themselves as normal students.

However, a non TC graduate pointed out an essential point, which was the possibility of exposing special needs students to ridicule and even bullying when included in a classroom with other students.

Because he's bigger than the other students, age and body shape, some of them (students) are bullying him, some had words like 'crazy'.

3.6. Multicultural education

Interestingly, only two of the participating teachers have mentioned multicultural education as part of inclusive education.

You can't imagine the number of Pakistani students I have in my class, those students are like half of the class so I need to deal with them and teach them.

There are some here (immigrant students), also, I have taught some, and they feel very comfortable and we never point to them as different.

4. Discussion

4.1. Perceptions of inclusive education

The results showed that both TC and non TC graduates had a similar definition and perspective of inclusive education and identified inclusion as a class that incorporates students with giftedness, low achievement, learning disabilities, mental disabilities, physical disabilities, and ethnic minorities. Even though non TC teachers did not go through official teacher preparation, perhaps their teaching experience has given them a clear perspective of inclusion. A number of studies have revealed that despite some teachers undertaking official teacher training, they were still hesitant about their knowledge in inclusive education. Abdelhameed (2015) stated that teachers who had general education training reported that they were not qualified enough to teach students with special needs. In addition, Jobling and Moni (2003) said that teachers indicated that their teacher education programme did not prepare them with sufficient knowledge, understanding and experience to be able to teach students with special needs. Their results showed that teachers felt unprepared because they did not expect to teach students with special needs. The findings of these studies reveal that despite teachers' preparation programmes, teachers still did not feel they had the sufficient knowledge to teach in an inclusive classroom. This could be consistent with the results of the study where the experience gained by Non TC teachers could have equipped them with the same level of knowledge that TC teachers have gained from their degree.

4.2. Teachers' attitudes and opinions of inclusive education

Most of the TC graduates indicated negative attitudes towards inclusion and suggested that extreme cases of special needs should be in special education classes. The teachers said that generally special education students were hard to communicate with, needed more attention, more specific instruction, consume teacher time, and that teachers needed more education and guidance on special education. The participating teachers said they would accept special needs students only if given the appropriate support through a special education teacher or teacher aid. This is inconsistent with the findings of Male (2011) who found that teacher attitudes towards inclusion are negatively related to their years of experience. Meaning, teachers with fewer years of experience tended to have more positive attitudes towards inclusion. In this case, TC graduates had less than six years of teaching experience yet still displayed

negative attitudes towards inclusion. In addition, Kim (2011) explored how different initial teacher education programmes can largely influence positive attitudes of pre-service teachers towards inclusive education since teachers were more prepared for this challenge through their education. Hsien, Brown, and Bortoli (2009) suggest that varied levels of teacher attitudes and differences in confidence and efficacy in teaching in an inclusive classroom could be attributed to the pre-service training they acquired. According to their findings, teachers who went through formal teacher preparation programmes were more likely to have positive attitudes towards inclusion. This shows another inconsistency with the results of the study since the majority of TC graduates showed negative perceptions of inclusion.

One TC graduate provided an interesting response. He designated that his/her attitude and acceptance of an inclusive classroom depends on the extent of the disability, and that he/she is more willing to accept students with learning disabilities than students with mental disabilities. This is compatible with the findings of Donohue and Bornman (2015) who found that teachers preferred not to include students with severe or multiple disabilities. Teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion typically originated from the idea that they did not believe that students with severe disabilities could actually benefit from an inclusive classroom and in turn only make it more difficult for the teacher to teach them and manage the classroom. Moreover, the participants in Gaad and Lavina's (2007) study were also less willing to teach students with severe disabilities because they were not highly confident in their abilities to teach them.

Non TC graduates generally displayed negative attitudes towards inclusion and justified their refusal of inclusive education for reasons of it being time consuming for the teacher who needs to give special needs students more attention as well as the teachers feeling concerned for special needs students who seem out of place. Other non TC graduates exhibited somewhat positive perspectives of inclusion on the condition of the provision of a special needs teacher for support, as well as acknowledged the social benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities. The mixed findings from non TC graduates did not reveal either positive or negative attitudes which was inconsistent with Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer, Sim, Scott, Cordier, and Falkmer. (2015) who found that older teachers consistently had more negative attitudes towards inclusion.

In the interviews, several teachers have indicated their interest in receiving in-service training on special and inclusive education. Male (2011) along with Sari (2007) advocated that a professional development programme and in-service training helped

change teacher attitudes to be significantly more positive towards inclusion. Interestingly, Stoler (1992) as well as MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013) revealed that teachers who have received more in-service training on inclusion tended to hold more positive attitudes toward inclusion than teachers who did not receive in-service training. Seçer (2010) also found that professional development programmes for teachers can have a huge impact on their attitudes towards inclusion and that staff development is key to the success of inclusion. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) agree and say that more training teachers receive in inclusion encourages them to prepare individualized education programmes in order to meet the different student needs in the classroom, which eventually has a positive influence on teachers' self-confidence in being able to meet the needs of their students.

4.3. Support required for inclusion

Administrative support for teachers in an inclusive environment is an essential component of success. TC graduates specified the need for administrative support in order to implement inclusive education particularly from the Ministry of Education, the school administration, and the need for special education teachers. This is mirrored in the findings of Urton, Wilbert, and Hennemann (2014) who revealed an alignment between teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and attitudes of school leadership. Consistently, Forlin (2004) as well as Gaad and Lavina (2007) reported negative teacher attitudes towards inclusion as a result of the lack of administrative support. This shows the importance of administrative support to improve teacher attitudes towards inclusion as well as their classroom practices. Non TC graduates had comparable feedback and required specific guidance on assessment of special needs students and more involvement from parents and school leadership. This is consistent with the findings of Donohue and Bornman (2015) where participating teachers reported that successful implementation of inclusion depends on the availability of the following; personal assistants, teaching materials, instructional technology, and more training in inclusion. The authors indicated that the availability of the appropriate support could shift teachers' attitudes towards more positive perspectives of inclusive education. As for more parental involvement, Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) and Gaad and Lavina (2007) proposed that teachers' collaboration with parents was an important aspect of their classroom and they encourage parent involvement. Positive relationships with families are essential for a successful inclusive classroom and teachers generally demonstrated positive attitudes towards working with families.

4.4. Assessment in an inclusive classroom

Interestingly, TC graduates and non TC graduates had a similar view of accommodations and modifications used to assist students during assessments. As indicated earlier, both groups of teachers need more guidance and possibly follow up professional development on how to assess students with special needs. Bourke and Mentis (2014) proposed an assessment framework of narrative assessment for inclusive education. The framework proposed facilitates for choice and integration which begins with normative assessment with a diagnostic purpose of students' abilities. This allows the teachers to focus on the learning goals of an individual child which then informs instruction. Teachers need an assessment framework that is contextualized and responds to the nature of learners for the successful application of inclusion.

4.5. Benefits of inclusion

Furthermore, TC graduates indicated the importance of inclusive education in benefiting special needs students particularly in the social domain. This is consistent with the findings of Odom and Diamond (1998) who recognised the advantages of inclusion of special needs students' developmental benefits, social competence, improved social skills and enhanced peer relationships. Although the non TC graduates supported the benefits of inclusive education, they have voiced some concerns as well regarding the exposure of some special needs students to bullying by their classmates. A study that examined students' perspectives of inclusive education found that students tended to experience bullying in areas that are less supervised such as the bathroom and playground. However, the disabled students insisted on their preference for inclusion saying that they acquired skills from their non-disabled friends such as defending themselves in a bullying situation (Satter & Hill, 2015). This reveals contradictory findings of the social benefits of inclusion from the perspective of teachers and students.

4.6. Multicultural education

As previously designated, only two teachers referred to the idea that ethnic minority students are part of inclusive education. This result agrees with that of Shyman (2015) that the majority of research in inclusive education does not regard ethnic minorities or multicultural education an essential element of an inclusive classroom and instead

focuses on the inclusion of students with disabilities. The need for multicultural education to be part of teacher education programmes is crucial given the great increase in Bahrain's immigrant population in recent years.

4.7. Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the small number of participants limits the ability to generalize the results. The reliability of the data is also uncertain given that the interviews were conducted by pre-service teachers at the TC teacher preparation programme. Although the interview process was monitored and the interviews were accurately transcribed and checked by their instructor, the pre-service teachers have little or no experience in regulating the interview environment, the depth of the interview questions, and asking to follow up questions for clarification. Additionally, given that the interview was conducted by pre-service teachers to in-service teachers, the nature of the interviewee responses could have been moderated by the participants to meet the experience level of the interviewers who are the pre-service teachers. The interviewees may have also provided socially desirable responses as to not disappoint or overwhelm the pre-service teachers interviewing them.

4.8. Implications of the study

One of the most important implications of this study is a necessary revision of the requirements of the TC teacher preparation programme to either review the current inclusive education course, or consider the addition of more courses related to inclusive education. This is an essential step in order to better prepare student teachers to perform at an inclusive classroom who would then provide better opportunities for all their students to learn and prosper. Additionally, follow up professional development courses are a necessity for both TC graduates and non TC graduates to keep teachers informed about the developments in the inclusive education field. One vital adjustment recommended for the Teachers College is to have more authentic assessment. For instance, practicum supervisors need to have higher expectations of their student teachers to provide an inclusive environment in their teaching practice, and that this should be formalized in the practicum assessment criteria for the consistency of standards regarding inclusion. Furthermore, the college needs to offer a special education programme alongside the general education programme to have more qualified locals that can provide the necessary support for general education teachers in schools.

4.9. Suggestions for future research

This study was possibly the first to explore the attitudes and challenges of in-service primary school teachers with inclusive education in Bahrain using a qualitative research method. A large number of studies are required in order to explore the effects of the TC teacher preparation programme in schools particularly relating to inclusive education. Studies can explore the different practices of teachers in an inclusive classroom, the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards inclusive education, the attitudes of in-service teachers towards inclusion and its relationship to their instructional practices, the nature of challenges faced by in-service teachers in inclusion, and the role of school leadership in supporting inclusion as well as its influence on teacher attitudes towards inclusion.

Although this study did not specifically address the usefulness of the TC programme, it does provide an indication of its effectiveness to prepare teachers to teach in an inclusive setting. The results generally revealed that there is minimal difference in the knowledge and attitudes towards inclusion for TC graduates and non TC graduates, which was contrary to the expectations. This could be attributed to a number of factors. For instance, the results could indicate that either the TC teacher preparation programme did not fully equip the teachers with the tools and instructional skills necessary to perform in an inclusive classroom which influenced their overall negative attitudes, or it could suggest that non TC graduates have become more aware of inclusion and its instructional practices as a result of their vast years of teaching experience compared to their novice colleagues.

In conclusion, the study revealed that there are no major differences in teachers' perspective and approach to inclusive education despite their education backgrounds. Overall, the teachers showed negative attitudes towards inclusion particularly for students with severe disabilities. It is hopeful that most teachers agreed that inclusive education is achievable with the appropriate administrative support, parental involvement, and consistent education and training for the teachers. Most of the participants agreed on the social benefits of inclusion for students but some were fearful of the possibility of subjecting special needs students to ridicule and bullying from their peers, which is important to consider. It is vital that teachers are educated on the appropriate assessment modifications and accommodation to implement for a successful inclusive environment. It is also essential for inclusive education to be defined locally by the ministry of education and the necessity to include multicultural education as a component due to the increased ethnic minority representation in schools. These means

could empower teachers with the necessary tools for a more effective and inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities for diverse learners to thrive.

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Author's Bio

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Conference Paper

Arabic Mass Media and Women Gender Stereotype: Stability versus Change "The Dream of Women Empowerment"

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Abstract

Mass media play a significant role in broadcasting information that can manipulate people's attitude and opinions. Media continue on presenting men as hard, tough, independent, sexually aggressive, unafraid, violent, totally in control of all emotions, thus creating a muscular world. So, although equality between male and female is an issue lots of people have tried to achieve, yet media reflect cultural stereotypes that depart markedly from reality. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the role of morning daily programs on woman empowerment that are broadcasted by satellite national television services in the Arabic world (Algeria and Tunisia representing West region, Egypt and Lebanon representing Middle region and Saudi Arabia and Bahrain representing Gulf region). Based on liberation theory and elimination of gender oppression, a quantitative and qualitative content analysis study was conducted to examine whether (1) media system make reality (reflects male and female balanced reality) or mirror reality (reflects male high satiates reality)? (2) socio-cultural factors that affect the role of media system in empowering women such as historical context (Past Colonial intellectual dominance-women movement). The findings showed that media system mirror reality more than make reality as males are represented in the media almost double the number as females (65% vs. 35%), and that still some fields are restricted to men, especially political fields (male 11% vs. 2% for female, sports 5% for male vs. 2% for female) and vice versa for educational fields (23% female vs. 14% for male). It seemed through the study that historical context had a great effect on women empowerment, as the highest representation of men in media was seen in the countries that were previously controlled by Britain (e.g., Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain), whereas the highest representation of women in media were of the countries that were previously controlled by France (e.g., Lebanon, Algeria and Tunisia). Also, land size seemed to affect this empowerment as the most percent of presentation of male was proved to be in the big countries compared to the smallest countries (74% vs. 54%), where female were most presented in small countries compared to big ones (45% vs. 26%).

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1. Introduction

For many centuries women was consider as the weakest part suffering from marginalization in all areas, however, there are little number of women whom took upon themselves the task of proving that trustworthy woman, if we go through history only 12 woman had been a queen in Egyptian starting from "Merneith" 2970 BC. [1] till "Shagrat al-Durr" 1250 AC. In Chinese history, "Wu Zetian" was the only woman in the history of China to assume the title of Huangdi (665-690) [2].

By the breakdown of World War II, United Nations had been established at 1945 since that no female has been general secretary. Security Council the most important body of UN and its permanent members never had female president or prime minister except 'Margaret Thatcher' 1979-1990 in UK Women are better off today, but still far from being equal. Racial discrimination between female and male is still alive in the 21st century. The female are in most cases treated as an inferior race by male, only 20 countries in the world have a woman in the head its governments. Only one lady "Liliane Bettencourt" is Among the top ten richest persons in the world.

Many efforts have been done to bridge the gap between human been parties "male and female", but the gapes still strongly a chasm. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a milestone document in the history of human rights (Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948) mention that: " Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women" [3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights Usually uses "human beings" Except only twice Mention "men & women. but equal rights for men and women in fact People around the world say they firmly support equal rights for men and women, but many still believe men should get preference when it comes to good jobs, higher education or even in some cases the simple right to work outside the home [4].

The European Union has made a great effort in gender equality, but the 2010 Euro barometer survey actually included a question tapping victim-blaming attitudes, asking whether the provocative behavior of women was a cause of domestic violence. Percentages of those respondents agreeing with this statement ranged from 33% to 86% across countries, with an EU average of 52%. Percentages were particularly high in countries such as Lithuania (86%), Estonia (84%), Cyprus (80%) and Latvia (79%). However, it is also surprising that some of the highest percentages were found in

highly developed EU countries (both in economic and in gender equality terms) such as Sweden (59%), United Kingdom (63%), Denmark (71%), and Finland (74%) [5]. To sum up “we speak a lot and do a little”.

Women in the first world still suffering strongly, so we expect more and more suffering in the Third World and Arab region. Organizational reality in Arab countries is that women struggle with patriarch call, male-dominated hierarchies that have a conservative orientation towards women. Moreover, in Arab countries, women have only recently began to join the rank of managers and are grossly under-represented at the lower, middle and senior levels women constitute 32.3% of the total workforce in Lebanon compared to 15% in Saudi Arabia Kuwait has seen women’s participation increase by 3% between 2000 and 2005 while Saudi Arabia has witnessed a decrease from 7% in 1990 to 4% in 2003 In Bahrain, women make up 36% of all the employees in the public sector, yet their participation in the workforce increased only by 2% between 1990 and 2004 [6]. Women make up one half of society. we should Empower women in our society to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies Our society will remain backward and in chains unless its women are liberated, enlightened and liberated, enlightened and educated [7].

Current national human resource development (NHRD) literature has not examined gender issues nor considered the governance regimes that shape national HRD systems. The Gulf States are all Islamic states. This means that governance arrangements are organized in accordance to Islamic Shari’a. There are varieties in the nature of governance regimes, but state and religious authorities are entwined. For a detailed discussion on Islamic states see The importance of limited gender studies in Arab States generally dates back to 1995 [8].

Traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of roles between women and men in the home, in the workplace and in society at large, with women depicted as running the house and caring for children while men are depicted as wage-earners and protectors [9]. Gender Role Congruity Theory predicts that women would be more attracted to masculine-stereotyped occupations and men would be more attracted to feminine-stereotyped occupations if the occupations were perceived as affording goals that aligned with their gender roles [10].

Difficulties in differentiating gender roles in the modern societies can be a perfect example of the negative social effects of using stereotypes. A division of gender roles is deeply rooted in the social archetypes. In the past, the patriarchy was a dominant family model [11].

The international human rights law framework is concerned with gender stereotypes which is defined as overgeneralization of characteristics, differences and attributes of a certain group based on their gender. Gender stereotypes are our social and legal status as girls and boys, women and men which create a widely accepted judgment or bias about certain characteristics or traits that apply to each gender. With gender stereotypes and biases, children regularly learn to adopt gender roles which are not always fair to both sexes. If a man or a woman act differently from how their gender is assumed to behave [12].

Mass media play a significant role in a modern world, by broadcasting information in fast pace and giving entertainment to vast audiences. They consist of press, television, radio, books and the Internet. The latter is now the most developing medium, however, TV also has a wide field of influence. By creating a certain type of message, media can manipulate people's attitude and opinions [13].

In general, media continue to present both women and men in stereotyped ways that limit our perceptions of human possibilities. Media, then reinforce long-standing cultural ideals of masculinity: 'Men are presented as hard, tough, independent, sexually aggressive, unafraid, violent, totally in control of all emotions, and above all in no way feminine. Media's images of women also reflect cultural stereotypes that depart markedly from reality. As we have already seen, girls and women are dramatically underrepresented [14].

2. Review of Literature

Inequality perceived in most of the past researches made some to study this result in the media that target mainly females versus the ones that target males. Daalmans and others (2017), conducted a quantitative content analysis to examine the differences between how men and women are presented in two Dutch channels that target women versus other two that target men as well as the nature of this presentation in terms of respect. A comparison was made and the results showed as expected that men's channels presented women in a traditional unequal image compared to what women's channels did. Differently, women's channels appeared to present an equal image for both genders. As well, men's channels showed women more than men to be working on household and caregiving tasks while women's channel showed an equal image for both genders. In general, women were underrepresented, no matter the origin of production of the program analyzed on either channels [15].

The story begins with Taylor, Laramie (2015) when he examined the impact of media gender ratios on male audience members. One hundred thirty young adult men read a series of media narratives featuring either multiple men and a single woman or multiple women and a single man as well as a measure of endorsement of traditional masculinity and measures of romantic and sexual selectivity and confidence. Men who read the abundant partners narratives exhibited greater selectivity for marriage partners relative to control participants. Partner availability or scarcity in media narratives also influenced romantic confidence, although this was moderated by endorsement of traditional masculine ideology [16].

Even as many doubt Gustafsson, Mariev; Sikström, Sverker & Lindholm, Torun (2015) try to test gender and media effect by examining how the pronouns She and He are used in a news media context. More specifically, the study tests whether He occurs more often and in more positive semantic contexts than She, as well as whether She is associated with more stereotypically and essential labels than He is. Study showed that He pronouns were about 9 times more frequent than She pronouns. In addition, the semantic contexts of He were more positive than the contexts of She. Moreover, words associated with She-contexts included more words denoting gender, and were more homogeneous than the words associated with He-contexts. Altogether, these results indicate that men are represented as the norm in these media [17].

Although Gutiérrez San Miguel & other (2014) aims to identify the gender roles represented in the Spanish television programmers produced during the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s in order to detect the social changes that have occurred throughout these periods. The study is based on a mixed method: a survey questionnaire administered to students and professors from different postgraduate degree programmers to detect the social paradigms represented on television during the aforementioned periods, as well as the values and stereotypes that underpin them. The study results were a part of a wider innovation project funded by the University of Salamanca, the results indicated to a shift in paradigms which representation of gender roles in Spain, but this evolution has been uneven. The mistreatment of women is represented in the audiovisual texts and these representations seem to be based on the loss of the traditional identity [18].

At the level gender political communication Bystrom, Dianne and Dimitrova, Daniela (2014) study shows that women running for vice president or president of the United States as major political party candidates often are covered differently than their male opponents by the media. This study examines Republican presidential candidate Michele Bachmann's television news coverage compared to her male opponents in the months leading up to the primary stage of the 2012 campaign. The analysis shows

that Bachmann received less coverage, which was more often written in the game than issue frame. She was more likely to be associated with masculine than feminine issues. However, Bachmann received less image and negative coverage than her male opponents [19].

As social factors and media can affect the treatment of the media, so Romero, Elaine & other (2014) analyzed the viewpoint of gender as a relational category, the treatment of the media to athletes in major sporting events. Method: The corpus of analysis comprised 36 photos published in the Sports Section of the newspaper "O Globo" during the year 2010 related to the impact of major sporting events. The news coverage although has given visibility to women it still put in evidence her physical attributes at the expense of her athletic performance, being this a characteristics for male athletes, making us conclude that the sports media continues to treat gender inequalities [20].

Regarding to how drama affects one's perceptions, Kharroub and Weaver (2014) conducted a content analysis study on 15 Arabic and 3 Turkish drama serials on transnational Arab television to examine how female and male characters are portrayed in these drama. The results showed that male characters were presented more than female ones and only few of the female characters (26%) compared to male characters (49%) were shown to have recognizable jobs. As well, almost half (43%) of the female were shown to work in stereotypical jobs e.g. Nurses, secretaries or teachers, where only (3%) of the male characters occupied same jobs. On the contrary, (39%) of male characters occupied recognized jobs e.g. Doctors, engineers. Compared to (7%) of female characters. Marital status affected how married female characters to be presented as not to be working outside home and only to be doing housekeeping work inside home. Meanwhile when a female producer/writer is involved in producing the drama, women are presented in a more respectful and recognized context. In general female characters in programs from conservative Arab countries were shown with less recognition and respect than characters from more liberal Arab countries [21].

Stereotyping of gender went even to the point of connecting personal characteristics to ability to do business, which made Gupta and others (2009) to do a study to examine the most important relationship between the widely shared beliefs about femininity/masculinity and entrepreneurial intentions of men and women. Data was collected through a survey on young adults in the United States, India, and Turkey. The results showed that entrepreneurship was associated more to male rather than female. As well any success for women in upper level jobs was because of how these

women see in themselves having masculine characteristics more than having feminine ones [22].

These results were even confirmed in a study conducted by Duehr and Bono (2006) to examine the relation between gender and management stereotypes or in other terms to examine if the perception to women as leaders has changed than the past 30 years or not. A sample of female/Male managers together with male/female students participated in a leadership development survey. The results showed that men are less likely to view women as having successful managerial characteristics. Though middle-aged male managers perceived stereotypes about women being a leader has changed to the sake of women, male students didn't feel the same. As age is always related to the experience one acquires through life, male managers especially who had a direct experience with female managers viewed women's stereotypes to be changing and women were viewed to be active and not passive as before. Meanwhile, in general men tend to view women as having few managerial characteristics to achieve success [23].

To understand the effect of gender stereotyping on our perception and behavior, Taylor (2003) conducted a content analysis study on the most popular books for children to examine the gender stereotypes presented in them and if they have a traditional gender role stereotypes that affects the perception of children in viewing reality around them. A sample of students were made to analyze the text, symbols, characters, use of colors and major themes in such books. The results showed that these books were presenting children with racist stereotypes about women and men (male & female). Males were shown to always do important things playing an important role in social life, while females are in a secondary place. As well, intelligence, authority and important decisions were related to men while women are shown to be followers and their social role is cooking and cleaning [24].

Thus we can say that literature in gender stereotype proved a racist reality in favor of male and against female. This stereotype showed to be deeply rooted in the society that even most popular books for children feed them with this concept. Accordingly, an underrepresentation of women in the media was evidenced not just on how frequent "she" is mentioned in the media compared to the pronoun "He", but even on the negative context she is related to. Women were shown to be tied to a traditional stereotype of being a follower, dependent on men and doing home tasks and parental care jobs in home. Any success a woman achieves on the social level (e.g. an athlete) or on the economic level (e.g. Entrepreneur/manager) or on the political level (e.g. as a political candidate) was interpreted that she has more muscular characteristics than feminine

ones. In general, it seemed that all the efforts done to address gender equality resulted in women view of themselves not in men's view to women; men seemed not to be convinced of women's capability of more than being a sexual object or a worker inside her home, unless they have a direct experience with her success.

3. Theoretical Background

Feminist research has expanded beyond its origins in Women's Studies to influence the more traditionally bounded academic disciplines, feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women [25]. Incorporating feminist and empowerment approaches in practice will provide social workers with the knowledge, values and skills most likely to promote human rights and social justice. feminism can be divided into four waves [26].

The first feminist wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the goal of this wave was to open up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage [27]. The earliest signs of feminism in the west came in the 14th century when women lead the Peasants' Revolt against British Serfdom [28]. Notably was Johanna Ferrour who ordered the violent beheading of Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury Simon of Sudbury. The first wave of feminist movement in America is often referred to as the Suffrage Movement and early feminist activists as suffragettes, because much of their activism focused on gaining the right to vote Some claimed that women were morally superior to men, and so their presence in the civic sphere would improve public behavior and the political process. However, some feminists criticize the wave metaphor because it leaves out the ongoing activism of women throughout history, including women's efforts to challenge the institutions and practices of patriarchy in the many centuries preceding the 1800s [29].

The second was in the 1960s and 1970s, The feminist movement of the 1960s and '70s originally focused on dismantling workplace inequality, such as denial of aging 1970s, feminist activists began to witness the fruits of their labors in earnest. In 1972, Wases to better jobs and salary inequity, via anti-discrimination laws. hington, D.C., established the first rape crisis hotline, and the Supreme Court legalized abortion via Roe v. Wade in 1973 [30]. This wave unfolded in the context of the anti-war and civil rights movements and the growing self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups around the world. The New Left was on the rise, and the voice of the second wave was increasingly radical [31]. In large part, the success of the feminist movement was driven

by a favorable confluence of economic and societal changes [32]. At the same time, the movement used class action lawsuits, formal complaints, protests, and hearings to create legal change. The second wave was increasingly theoretical, based on a fusion of neo-Marxism and psycho-analytical theory, and began to associate the subjugation of women with broader critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, normative heterosexuality, and the woman's role as wife and mother [33].

The third wave is described as focusing little on any type of political agenda, but putting effort toward breaking the boundaries and conceptions of gender and also being heavily inclusive of men. Third wave feminism differentiates itself from second wave feminism with the approach it offers to overcoming some of the impasses which developed in feminist theory in the 1980s. This wave of feminism is strongly characterized by the use of communication especially social media to raise awareness on women issues. Sex and gender were differentiated—the former being biological [34], and the latter a social construct that varies culture-to-culture and over time. Third wave feminism was built around being more inclusive for people of color and being who do not adhere to the gender binary, yet White Feminism and Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminism are still issues under the feminist umbrella, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements. In this phase many constructs were destabilized, including the notions of “universal womanhood,” body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity [35]. It is manifest in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism. Feminist identification served as a mediator between gender socialization (encouragement of education for marriage and family and discouragement of other-gender characteristics) and daughter present and future selves [36].

We have been in a fourth wave since 2008 – that in the environment of online social media has flourished geometrically and is poised to be the most swiftly moving wave of feminism yet – we are focused on global social justice, intersectionally representing women of all ages, races, sexual orientations, and classes, of a spirituality that includes a reflection of the feminine and a psychology that centers on self-actualization through pleasure. The fourth wave of feminism is still a captivating silhouette [37]. The existence of a feminist ‘fourth wave’ has been challenged by those who maintain that increased usage of the internet is not enough to delineate a new era. The feminist consciousness of the fourth wave has also been forged through the years of the financial crash and the coalition government, and many activists have been politicized and influenced by other movements, particularly the student campaign against fees, but also the wider campaign against cuts and the Occupy movement. Online Feminism,

a report recently published by Columbia University's Barnard Center for Research on Women, females aged between 18 and 29 are the 'power users of social networking'. According to this research, the number of women using digital spaces is increasing [38].

4. Study Purpose

In the midst of ongoing fourth wave of feminism discussions, about media and woman empowerment, this study aims to explore role of morning daily programs woman empowerment, that are broadcasted by satellite national television services in the Arabic world (West region, Middle region and Gulf region), Through quantitative and qualitative content analysis study.

5. Study Questions

This study seeks to answer a two main questions:

1. Does media system make reality (reflects male and female balanced reality) or mirror reality (reflects male high satiates reality)?
2. What are the factors which affect the role of media system in empowering women?
 - Natural factors (e.g. population - Land)
 - Or socio-political factors

(e.g., Past Colonial intellectual dominance- women movement).

6. Research Methods

Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. Quantitative research aims to is to provide a complete, detailed description of the research topic. It is usually more exploratory in nature and focuses more in counting and classifying features and constructing statistical models and figures to explain what is observed [39].

7. Content Analyses

This study was carried out through Content analysis and discourse analysis to describe the tasks which are described below

1. Social gender
 - Male
 - Female
2. Type of personality
 - Realistic
 - Cartoons
 - Artistic
3. Photoaged Location
 - work place
 - Social place
 - Other
4. Type of the job
 - Traditional functions
 - Contemporary Jobs
5. Active force
 - actor
 - Supporter
 - Marginal actor
6. Issues
 - Social issues
 - Religious issues
 - Political issues
 - Sports issues
 - Other

8. Sample

The sample consists of 7 mooring program series (weekdays), total of 56 series, from six Arab countries, Algeria and Tunisia & Egypt and Lebanon &, Saudi Arabia and the Bahrain Kingdom (the largest and smallest country in population and land, from West region - Middle region - East region).

8.1. Reliability and validity

The validity Content analyses tool was tested through judgment process (3 professors), and reliability was carried out through, "test and retest" Technique on two levels. The first level was over time and the second level through the researchers. (And the correlation coefficient across the second level) [40].

8.2. Data collection

Structured content analyses tool and definition operation manual was prepared, after pre-test and reliability and validity procedures took place, data gathering process started from 1 October 2017 to 31 December 2017.

9. Results

9.1. General results

1. Does media system make reality (reflects male and female balanced reality) or mirror reality (reflects male high satiates reality) ?

The results showed that media system mirror reality (reflects male high satiates reality) rather than making reality (reflects male and female balanced reality)

Gender Presentation in the media (Table 1)

TABLE 1

	Frequency	Percent
Male	441	65.2
Female	235	34.8
Total	676	100.0

As male characters from over all the sample were presented doubled the female ones (65.2% versus 34.8%), (Table 1).

TABLE 2: Gender * country Cross tabulation.

			country						Total
			Algeria	Tunisia	Egypt	Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	Bahrain	
gender	male	Count	74	73	108	35	90	61	441
		% within country	51.7%	57.5%	85.7%	46.7%	75.0%	71.8%	65.2%
	female	Count	69	54	18	40	30	24	235
		% within country	48.3%	42.5%	14.3%	53.3%	25.0%	28.2%	34.8%
Total	Count		143	127	126	75	120	85	676
	% within country		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Egypt was the most country where male were over presented (85.7%) followed by Saudi Arabia (75%), Bahrain (71.8%), Tunisia (57.5%), Algeria (51.7%), then the least percentage in Lebanon (46.7%)

In which a significant presentation was proved over the six countries that were included in the study where $\chi^2(5, N=676) = 56.185, p > .000$ (table 5) showing that women were differently presented by the difference of country.

TABLE 3: Types of jobs * gender Cross tabulation.

		gender		Total	
		female	male		
Types of jobs	traditional	Count	179	66	245
		% within gender	40.6%	28.1%	36.2%
	contemporary	Count	262	169	431
		% within gender	59.4%	71.9%	63.8%
Total		Count	441	235	676

The results showed that female were more tied to traditional roles (40.6%) compared to male (28.1%) and vice versa for contemporary roles as male were double presented in the media coverage (71.9%) compared to only (59.4%) for female (Table 3).

Thus the relation between type of job and gender examined in the media coverage in the present study was significantly proved where $\chi^2(1, N=676) = 10.374, p > .001$ (table 3) showing that women when presented has to be under the patronage of the government but men were brave enough to undergo and achieve contemporary jobs.

Gender presentation through the present study showed no difference on the basis of being an actor or supporter or even reflecting a marginal role. That is

TABLE 4: Active Force * gender Cross tabulation.

			gender		Total
			male	female	
Active Force	actor	Count	152	87	239
		% within gender	34.5%	37.0%	35.4%
	supporter	Count	236	119	355
		% within gender	53.5%	50.6%	52.5%
	marginal	Count	53	29	82
		% within gender	12.0%	12.3%	12.1%
Total		Count	441	235	676
		% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

when male were presented as an actor force (34.5%), female were presented with a slightly different percentage (37%). As well when male were presented as doing a marginal role (12%), female were presented in about the same percentage (12.3%) (Table 4).

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.538a	2	.764

Reflecting the above results, active Force and gender didn't prove to be significantly, as $\chi^2(2, N=676) = .538, p > .764$

This media presentation even assured the traditional view of the role of women to be tied in teaching (22.6 % female/14.1 % male) and art craft (18.3 % female/8.8 % male), while male to be in more serious rational and powerful fields like politics (10.7 % male/1.7 % female), religion (4.1 % male/0 % female) and sports (5.4 % male/1.7 % female) (table 5).

This even was significantly clear, where $\chi^2(6, N=676) = 52.66, p > .000$ indicating that there is still some jobs restricted to a specific gender.

2. What are the factors, which affect the role of media system in empowering women?

It is clear from the results that socio political factors play an important role in women empowerment in the society.

It is clear from the results that socio political factors play an important role in women empowerment in the society as past colonial intellectual dominance showed to play a significant role in this relation (table 4), where $\chi^2(1, N=676) = 48.4, p > .000$ showing that women in the countries (Tunisia, Lebanon & Algeria) that were previously

TABLE 5: Issue * gender Cross tabulation.

issue			gender		Total
			male	female	
social	Count		243	121	364
	% within gender		55.1%	51.5%	53.8%
religion	Count		18	0	18
	% within gender		4.1%	.0%	2.7%
political	Count		47	4	51
	% within gender		10.7%	1.7%	7.5%
sport	Count		24	4	28
	% within gender		5.4%	1.7%	4.1%
educational	Count		62	53	115
	% within gender		14.1%	22.6%	17.0%
cultural/development	Count		8	10	18
	% within gender		1.8%	4.3%	2.7%
7.00	Count		39	43	82
	% within gender		8.8%	18.3%	12.1%
Total	Count		441	235	676
	% within gender		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.668a	6	.000

TABLE 6: Chi Square Tests between Past Colonial intellectual dominance * Gender.

	Britain	France	Total %
Male%	78.2	52.8	65.2
Female%	21.8	47.2	34.8

empowered by France were more presented in the media 47.2% compared to those countries (Egypt, Saudi Arabia & Bahrain) that were previously empowered by Britain 21.8% (Table 6).

TABLE 7: Chi Square Tests between Region* Gender.

	West Region	Middle Region	Gulf Region	Total %
Male%	54.4	71.1	73.7	65.2
Female%	45.6	28.9	26.3	34.8

Gender was proved through the present study to be differently presented in the media by the difference of the region, where male were most presented in Gulf region

(Saudi Arabia-the Bahrain Kingdom 73.7%), followed by the middle region (Egypt-Lebanon 71.1%) followed by the west region (Algeria - Tunisia 54.4%). On the contrary, female were most presented in west region (45.6%) followed by middle region (28.9%), then the least in Gulf region (26.3%) (Table 7). In which this indicated that women were most empowered in the west region, where least empowered in Gulf region.

Thus Gender and region were proved by the results to have a significant effect where $\chi^2 (2, N=676) = 23.3, p > .000$ (table 7) showing that women were more presented in the west region 45.6%, compared to 28.9% in the middle region and 26.3% in the gulf region

TABLE 8: Chi Square Tests between Population/Land * Gender.

	Big	Small	Total %
Male%	69.9	58.9	65.2
Female%	30.1	41.1	34.8

Difference in size of the country reflected difference in how gender is presented in the media where male where more presented in big countries (69.9%) versus (58.9%) for small countries. Meanwhile female were more presented in small countries (41.1%) versus (30.1%) in big countries (Table 8).

Land/population was significantly proved to affect how gender is presented in the media (Table 8) as $\chi^2 (1, N=676) 8.872 =, p > .003$, in which countries that are classified as big (Egypt-Saudi Arabia-Algeria) men were more presented 69% compared to only half of this percent 30.1% of women, but this difference was less in small countries (Tunisia-Lebanon-Bahrain) where men were presented 58.9% compared to 41.1% of women.

10. Conclusion

This study examined if the presence of women in Arab media is reflecting the voices that are calling for gender equality in Arab countries or reflecting an in equal gender situation. Six countries were taken as a sample representing different region with different historical background. The results were consistent with what previous researches found regarding the outnumber presentation of male characters than female characters in the media [41]. As well female being tied to the field of teaching and art craft while male to be related to politics, sport and religion went along with what other researches described for specific jobs to be restricted to female like art and language,

while science, math [42]; same like what others proved that upper level jobs were related to male while secondary level jobs to female [43] especially if contributing this result to how male were presented in contemporary jobs compared to female who were shown to be tied to the traditional jobs. In other means proving what other studies went to prove that success and superiority is still tied to male gender [44]. As past colonial intellectual dominance showed to play a significant role in gender equality in our study where gender equality is less in the countries that were past empowered by Britain compared to the countries that were past empowered by France, it could be explained in terms of the statistics that showed that UK ranks as one of the worst countries in Europe for gender equality at work [45] recording it as the 11th out of 18 countries behind the US, France, Spain and Sweden. Size of land/population proving to have a relation with how gender equality is practiced in Arab Media where gender inequality was clear in big countries compared to those of small sized ones, could be explained in terms that the more the country big in land and population, the more complicated the matter and vice versa when the country is small in land/population where the gap in how male and female are presented in the media is less. Results showing that gender inequality varied across countries, is consistent with what other researchers found regarding how liberal/conservative the country is in relation to gender equality practiced in such country (jobemprint); as Female characters in Saudi (50.0%) were more likely to be shown as homemakers, compared to (25.0%) as being the least percentage found in Lebanon. The overall results of the study reveals an inconsistency of what voices call for women empowerment in Arab societies and the actual situation, where the issue of gender inequality seems to be theoretically adopted more than virtually practiced.

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