

## Conference Proceedings

THE FIFTH ANNUAL  
GULF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETY SYMPOSIUM

**LOCATING THE NATIONAL IN THE INTERNATIONAL:  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE,  
IDENTITY, POLICY, AND PRACTICE**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

The Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES) held its fifth annual symposium under the sponsorship of the Higher Colleges of Technology, the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research, and Middlesex University Dubai from April 8 to 10, 2014. Entitled “Locating the National in the International: Comparative Perspectives on Language, Identity, Policy, and Practice,” the symposium was held at the Dubai Women’s College in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

It consisted of a pre-conference workshop, one keynote address, four featured panels and eleven breakout sessions with over 55 presentations by both invited speakers as well as those who had submitted abstracts. The speakers came from a wide variety of countries including the UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Switzerland, England, Australia, Germany, and the United States, and represented different voices in the education sector, such as policymakers, academics and researchers, school providers and leaders, consultants, and teachers.

The purpose of this year’s GCES symposium was to examine issues relating to language and cultural heritage in the context of the creation of inclusive and outward-looking educational spaces. As countries in the region seek simultaneously to preserve traditions and culture while embracing modernity, challenges inevitably arise, particularly in the education sector. Delivering the keynote address about acting both locally and globally in the classroom was Professor Tony Townsend from the University of Glasgow.

The featured panels and breakout sessions addressed the following topics:

- Accreditation in Higher Education in the MENA Region
- Arabic and Identity Formation
- Assessment Issues in Schools
- Education Administration
- Identity, Employment, and Inclusion in the Arab World
- Influences and Role Models in Shaping Identity
- International Trends vs. Regional Realities

- Intersection of the National and International in Higher Education
- Local Interpretations of International Education
- Perspectives on Student Learning and Curriculum
- Reforms, Policies, and Shaping Identity
- Research and Education
- Teacher and Student Identity

In addition, the symposium brought together over 175 participants working in a range of organizations across the Gulf states and beyond, all of whom shared an interest in comparative education in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Following the symposium, speakers were asked if they would like to submit a 1,500 – 3,000 word paper on their presentation. This volume is the compilation of those papers that were submitted. While it does not cover all of the presentations that were made at the symposium, slides for some of the other presentations are available on the GCES website ([www.gulfcomped.ning.com](http://www.gulfcomped.ning.com)).

**Dr. Christina Gitsaki**, President

**Dr. Kay Sanderson**, Vice President

**Dr. Natasha Ridge, Soha Shami, and Susan Kippels**, Secretariat Representatives

**Susan Kippels, Jae Won (Brian) Chung, Mastewal Taddese, and Hee Eun Kwon**,  
Proceedings Editors



The Gulf Comparative Education Society

## المقدمة

عقدت الجمعية الخليجية للتربية المقارنة المنتدى السنوي الخامس لها برعاية كليات التقنية العليا و مؤسسة الشيخ سعود بن صقر القاسمي لبحوث السياسة العامة و جامعة ميدلسكس في دبي من 8 إلى 10 أبريل 2014. تحت عنوان " تحديد موقع الوطنية في الدولية: منظورات مقارنة على اللغة، والهوية، والسياسة، والممارسة، " عُقد المنتدى في كلية دبي للطالبات في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

وقد تضمن المنتدى ورشة عمل تحضيرية ما قبل المؤتمر، وكلمة إفتتاحية رئيسية واحدة، و أربعة جلسات متخصصة، وإحدى عشر جلسة جانبية قام خلالها أكثر من 55 متحدث ومتحدثة بتقديم العروض والملخصات. وقد حضر هؤلاء المتحدثون من بلدان عدة مثل: الامارات العربية المتحدة، و الكويت، وسلطنة عمان، والبحرين، وقطر، وسويسرا، والمملكة المتحدة، وأستراليا، وألمانيا، والولايات المتحدة الأمريكية ومثلوا أصوات مختلفة في قطاع التربية والتعليم، مثل صانعي السياسات، والأكاديميين، والباحثين، والمدراء والقياديين في المدارس، والمستشارين، والمعلمين.

وتتطرق ندوة هذا العام إلى دراسة المسائل المتصلة باللغة والتراث الثقافي في سياق الإبداع الشامل و بشكل ظاهري التطلع إلى المساحات التعليمية. وفي حين أن دول المنطقة تسعى إلى الحفاظ على التقاليد والثقافة وفي الوقت نفسه فهي تحتضن الحداثة، مما ينشئ تحديات حتمية، ولا سيما في قطاع التعليم.

وتناولت حلقات النقاش والجلسات الجانبية المواضيع التالية:

- دور التأثيرات و القدوات في تشكيل الهوية
- الإتجاهات الدولية مقابل الواقع الإقليمي
- الهوية والعمل والإندماج في العالم العربي
- الإعتماد في التعليم العالي في منطقة الشرق الأوسط
- تقاطع الوطنية و الدولية في مجال التعليم العالي
- وجهات نظر حول تعليم الطلاب والمناهج الدراسية
- هوية المعلم والطالب
- التفسيرات المحلية للتعليم الدولي في الكويت
- البحث و التعليم
- إدارة التعليم
- الإصلاحات والسياسات و تشكيل الهوية
- اللغة العربية و تشكيل الهوية

• قضايا التقييم في المدارس

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، نجح المنتدى بجمع أكثر من 175 مشارك ومشاركة يعملون في مختلف المنظمات في جميع أنحاء دول الخليج والعالم أجمع والذين لديهم إهتمام كبير في التربية المقارنة في دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي.

بعد الندوات سأل المقدمون إن كانوا يودون تقديم ورقة عمل تتضمن من 1500 3000 كلمة حول العرض الذي قاموا بتقديمه خلال المنتدى وذلك لأنه من المؤمل إصدار مجلد حول جميع أوراق العمل التي تم تقديمها. وفي حين أن المجلد لا يغطي جميع العروض التي تم تقديمها خلال المنتدى، إلا أنه سيتم توفير شرائح العروض الإلكترونية على موقع الجمعية الخليجية للتربية المقارنة ([www.gulfcomped.ning.com](http://www.gulfcomped.ning.com)).

الدكتورة كريستينا جيتساكي الرئيس  
الدكتورة كاي ساندرسون نائبة الرئيس  
الدكتورة ناتاشا ريدج و سهى شامي و سوزن كبلز الأمناء  
سوزن كبلز و جاي وون ( بريان ) تشونغ و مستيول تيديسي وهي يون كون محرر المجلد

# **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EMIRATI COLLEGE STUDENT EDUCATION: INFLUENCES LINKED TO INEFFECTIVE CAREER PREPARATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

Georgia Daleure, Rozz Albon, & Khaleel Hinkston  
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## **Introduction**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is ranked as the world's 27<sup>th</sup> largest economy by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with an annual growth rate of 3-4% each year since 2005 (Quandl, 2014) and a vibrant private sector capable of generating thousands of new jobs each year (Sharif, 2013). In the growing economy, overall unemployment rates have remained relatively low at 4% or less each year since 2005 (Quandl, 2014); while Emirati youth unemployment has climbed steadily from 7.8% in 2005 to 11% in 2012 (Quandl, 2014).

Heavy dependence on foreign labor masks high Emirati youth unemployment because only about 20% of the total UAE population—about 1.8 million out of the estimated 9 million people—are UAE nationals (World Bank, 2014). Sharif (2013) cautions that the youth employment rate will likely rise annually as a growing number of Emirati first time job seekers enter the workforce. Why is Emirati youth unemployment so high when abundant jobs are available in the private sector and when the majority of workers are not UAE nationals?

Researchers agree that there are five main issues linked to high Emirati youth unemployment (Al Ali, 2013; Behery, 2009; Elamin 2011; Shallal, 2011; Sharif, 2013; Toledo, 2013):

1. Many Emiratis perceive that public sector employers offer superior salaries, benefits, working conditions, and job security than private sector employers.
2. There is a shortage of desirable public sector jobs.
3. Some Emiratis who work (or have worked) in the private sector have reported issues including low job satisfaction, feelings of isolation, cultural insensitivity, and little flexibility to accommodate family issues. These factors make private sector employment unattractive.
4. Emiratis face low financial pressure to accept jobs that do not meet their expectations because the government provides generous benefits and subsidies (adequate public health care; public education at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels; financial assistance for marriage expenses, and housing subsidies) to Emiratis regardless of work status.
5. There is an abundance of educated and experienced foreign labor is available and willing to work in the private sector for less compensation and under less favorable working conditions than most Emirati employees.

Attempting to increase Emirati participation in the private sector, the government established policies and labor laws to (Al Ali, 2013; Sharif, 2013; Toledo, 2013):



1. Equip Emirati employees with desirable skills and qualifications
2. Provide incentives to employers who hire and train Emirati employees
3. Penalize employers that do not meet established labor guidelines

To date, however, almost no attention has been given to the less tangible, yet crucial, issue of understanding and reshaping the unfavorable attitudes, beliefs, and opinions that some Emiratis have regarding private sector employment

This paper presents findings from a study which investigated family involvement in Emirati college students' education – referred to in this paper as the *Family Involvement Study*. The study found that some family influences, although well-meaning, may be contributing to counter-productive perceptions toward private sector employment (Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, Ajaif, & McKeown, 2013).

In the study, 1,173 male and female Emirati students attending a federally funded post-secondary institution responded to a 66-item online survey, and 30 of their randomly selected guardians were interviewed by phone. Students and guardians were asked about family involvement in the students' post-secondary educational experiences, program selection, and career preparation. The findings of this study contain keys to developing initiatives which may promote a more realistic expectation of the current and future UAE workplace leading to increased Emirati employment in the private sector.

### **Generational Gap Descriptions**

The social structure in the UAE and in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is based on tribal familial affiliations, in which opinions and viewpoints of family elders heavily influence the decisions of younger Emiratis (Alabed & Vine, 2008). At the same time, the recent rapid and progressive economic developments in the region caused social transitions in which each consecutive generation was raised with a vastly different set of social circumstances than the preceding generation. The *Family Involvement Study* revealed that there is a generational gap between the education and work experience of young adults and those of their parents, and grandparents.

Table 1 provides an overview of the social transitions that have influenced and defined the educational and vocational experiences of each generation (grandparents, parents, and young adults). Table 1 is followed by a discussion of the specific contexts of the three generations.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Generational Groupings**

Grouping	Age Range	Characteristics of Experience
Grand-parents	Around 65 years old or older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults before nationalization (1971)</li><li>• Experienced harsh conditions before the rapid economic development</li><li>• Most Emiratis lived transitory lifestyles</li><li>• Agrarian economy stalled</li><li>• Obtained public sector jobs with little or no education during the initial infrastructure development stage</li></ul>
Parents	Approximately 35 to 50 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adults during the high growth phase (1980s – 1990s)</li><li>• Experienced improved lifestyle during rapid economic development</li><li>• Shift to sedentary lifestyles</li><li>• Obtained public sector jobs with basic education (mainly military and police)</li></ul>
Young Adults	Approximately 16 to 25 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coming into adulthood in globalized knowledge economy with stabilizing economic growth (mid-2010s)</li><li>• Experienced multicultural and technologically rich environment with substantial subsidies for Emiratis</li><li>• High youth unemployment – preferred public sector saturated yet avoid available private sector employment</li></ul>

**Source:** Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, Ajaif, & McKeown, 2013

### **Grandparents' Generation**

Prior to unification in 1971, the UAE was devoid of modern social and physical infrastructures. After being a regional trade center for thousands of years, the economy of the area now known as the UAE stagnated in the early twentieth century due to a sharp decline in demand for natural pearls in the early 1900s (Alabed & Vine, 2008; Alsayegh, 2001). Most of the area's inhabitants were nomadic herders living a transient lifestyle with women producing all immediate needs of the families including preserving food, sewing clothes, carrying water, caring for the elderly, and other activities essential in the harsh desert environment (Alsayegh, 2001).

In the few settlements of each region, the main economic activities included trading locally produced agricultural products and handicrafts for necessities such as textiles and foodstuff (Alsayegh, 2001). Women from affluent families managed their households with the aid of servants, while the less affluent women often participated in commercial activities such as selling fish in the markets caught by their husbands (Alsayegh, 2001).

Healthcare consisted of traditional practices with occasional visits from missionary doctors or nurses for which inhabitants would travel great distances (Harrison, 2008). Education consisted of religious and cultural teachings transmitted orally by family members at home or informally in neighborhood mosques (Alabed & Vine, 2008; Alsayegh, 2001). The skill set of this generation was mainly related to trading, fishing, pearling, and other local industries for which little formal education was needed.

### **Parents' Generation**

Immediately following unification in 1971, the leadership used revenues from newly discovered oil resources to develop a basic social and economic infrastructure (Alabed & Vine, 2008). By the late 1990s, many Emiratis had migrated from rural areas to cities to take part in the government's development efforts and to receive generous benefits such as housing subsidies, free healthcare, and free education (Alsayegh, 2001).

Alabed & Vine (2008), Alsayegh (2001), and Toledo (2013) concur that a wave of Emiratis educated at the primary and secondary levels in the fledgling education system eagerly left school to accept public sector posts that offered relatively short working hours (7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.), generous salary and benefits packages, and other incentives. Others joined the police or the military, earning relatively high salaries despite low education levels. Yet, despite the surge of Emiratis into the workforce, an influx of expatriate labor at every skill and education level was needed to facilitate the increasing rate of economic expansion (Al Ali, 2013).

Improvements in healthcare contributed to drastically decreasing the maternal, child, and infant mortality rates and resulted in rapidly increasing young Emirati population (Alsayegh, 2001) as exemplified by census figures (cited in Sharif, 2013) showing that in 2005 51% of the Emirati population was age 15 or younger. In *The Demography of the Arab World and Middle East from the 1950s to 2000s: A survey of change*, Tabutin and Shoumaker (2005) supported Sharif (2013) and added that other lifestyle trends occurred including the emergence of nuclear family structures, later marriage for women, and women having fewer children.

By the early 2000s, technology - including Internet, computers, and mobile phones - had become an important part of the UAE's burgeoning economy (Al Abed et al., 2008) and fresh graduates of federal universities and federal technical colleges equipped with technology skills expected to find jobs. In 2002, the federal government approved a plan to "emiratize" federal government jobs in various ministries to absorb the increasing numbers of educated, yet unemployed, Emiratis (Al Ali, 2013).

### **Young Adults**

By the end of 2009, 64% (approximately 42,000 of the 66,000) of public sector employees were Emiratis (Sharif, 2013). In other words, the public sector, with only 11% of the country's jobs, employed 80% of the working Emiratis and had little capacity to absorb more. Table 1 illustrates a clear generational gap between the older generations (grandparents and parents) and young adults. The older generations had access to an

array of public sector jobs that required only basic education, yet provided relatively high salaries and generous benefits. Young adults must have higher education qualifications and more extensive work experience than their predecessors and must consider employment in the private sector.

### Discussion of Generational Gap

Further interpretation of Table 1 illustrates the multi-dimensional aspects of the generational gap. The educational level progresses from general literacy in the grandparents' generation to primary/secondary education in the parents' education, then to higher levels of more technologically sophisticated education in the young adults' generation. The grandparents' livelihood was based around agrarian activities in which both males and females participated. In the parents' generation males worked mainly in the public sector with salaries which were substantial enough to allow women to manage the households without working outside the home. With added financial pressures associated with a modern lifestyle, the income of young adult females is increasing to sustain the lifestyle that has become expected in Emirati society (Sharif, 2013).

Table 2 reveals the generational gap in education, showing that about half (50%) of the participants' parents received primary education or less. Less than one third of the parents completed secondary education. Only about 20% of the parents experienced tertiary education. Evidence suggests that older generations' experiences related to education, especially tertiary, were limited.

**Table 2: Parents' Education Level**

Responses	<u>Father's Education</u>		<u>Mother's Education</u>	
	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
I don't know	129	11%	89	8%
No education	161	14%	202	17%
Primary school	287	25%	317	27%
Secondary school	343	29%	355	30%
College/university graduate	212	18%	196	17%
Master's qualification or higher	41	3%	14	2%
	1173	100%	1173	101%

Note: percentages were rounded

Table 3 illustrates the generational gap in work experience and shows that 50% of the fathers and 84% of the mothers of the participants were retired, not working, or unknown at the time of the study. Of all the fathers who were employed at the time of the study, 43% were employed in the police or the military. Students counseled about program and career choice by well-meaning elders may receive advice that is based on the elders' own personal experience and not on knowledge of the contemporary UAE workplace expectations.

**Table 3: Parents' Employment**

Responses	<u>Father's Employment</u>		<u>Mother's Employment</u>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	37	3%	12	1%
Not working or retired	549	47%	972	83%
Working	587	50%	189	16%
	1173	100%	1173	100%

Despite vast differences between the economic environments of young adults and those of their predecessors, Emirati college students often choose to study areas that do not match their skill sets and aptitudes. They do this in order to gain credentials perceived to be valuable in public sector employment "so they [can] follow in their parents' footsteps" (Ahmad, 2011, p.1). In the *Family Involvement Study*, 72% of the students in the study believed that their *family would find them jobs when they graduate* and 64% reported that their *families influenced their program decision*. There is a clear tendency for the members of the older generations, who had favorable public sector working conditions, to encourage young adults to go into the public sector, without realizing how much the job market has changed. The issue has become so important that the GCC countries have recently been implementing measures to root out poor hiring practices based on family influence (Al Ali, 2013). If families continue to actively encourage young Emiratis – especially females who need parental or spousal permission to work (Al Ali, 2013) – to seek only public sector positions, little can be done by educational institutions or policymakers to increase private sector employment.

### **Preparation for Academic and Workplace Success**

Results from the *Family Involvement Study* suggest that families of students who continued onto post-secondary education were supportive of their students' education (Table 4), but were not fully aware of the commitment of time and effort needed for high academic achievement (Table 5).

**Table 4: Study Constructs Indicating Family Support for Post-secondary Educational Persistence**

<b>Q#</b>	<b><i>(Agree/Strongly Agree or Always/Most of the Time)</i></b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Q56	My family encouraged me to go to college.	97%
Q49	My family provides money for food every day.	95%
Q36	My family provides the computer, printer, paper, and other tools I need to study.	92%
Q52	My family is very interested in my academic progress.	91%
Q48	My family insists that I respect my teachers and follow the college rules.	88%
Q40	My family stresses the importance of good grades.	84%
Q37	My family ensures that I am at college in time for my	82%
Q29	My family is complimentary when I get good grades.	76%
Q34	I tell my family when I have a project, paper, or test to	67%
Q45	My family encourages me to speak to my teacher, counselor, or supervisor when I have a problem at college.	62%

Table 4 shows that most students experienced strong general support, including strong family encouragement to go to college, strong financial/logistical support, and abundant emotional support (Q56, Q49, Q36, Q52). Items that indicated interaction on specific aspects of the college experience (Q34, Q45) received much less agreement.

**Table 5: Study Constructs Indicating Family Not Fully Aware of Behaviors Needed to Achieve Academic Success**

<b>Q#</b>	<b><i>(Agree/Strongly Agree or Always/Most of the Time)</i></b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Q65	I would do better if I had more support from my family.	68%
Q47	My family shows disapproval if I miss college when I am not ill.	62%
Q30	My family shows disapproval if I get bad grades.	53%
Q41	My family tries to limit the amount of time that I can visit with friends when I have college the next day.	52%
Q38	My family encourages me to get enough rest to be alert in college each day.	49%
Q33	My family checks to see that I've done my homework and other academic tasks.	33%
Q44	My family supports my participation in college clubs, activities, or sports.	29%
Q46	My family hires a tutor to help me with my college work.	15%
Q35	Someone in my family will quiz me to help me study before a test.	10%

Data shown in Table 5 indicate that families may not be fully aware of factors that lead to academic success, as most students indicated that they would *do better if they had more support from their families* (Q65). No more than half the families were engaged in monitoring or supporting behaviors (Q30, Q41, Q38, Q33, Q44, Q46, Q35) that are associated with developing effective study skills. If families are not aware of how to provide guidance for academic success, students are not likely to acquire the appropriate study habits.

Leadership skills, critical thinking skills, punctuality, high attendance, teamwork, and the ability to link learning to practice are considered soft skills desired by private sector employers. According to Al Ali (2013), Behery (2009), Shallal (2011), Sharif (2013), and Toledo (2013), Emiratis often lack of soft skills, a major complaint from private sector employers that may have its roots in the home environment. Low family support for students to participate in college clubs, activities, or sports (only 29%) helps explain why most students (81%) do not participate in extracurricular activities. Families provide all financial and logistical support for most students, which without, students would be unable to pay fees, buy uniforms, travel to competitions, and do other activities. The demonstrated low family support for extracurricular activities combined with low student participation rates, suggest that students are not encouraged to develop the soft skills necessary to be successful in the rapidly changing modern workplace.

Data from the *Family Involvement Study* suggest that families were either unconcerned or unaware of the link between good attendance and academic success. Only 62% of the families expressed *disapproval if students missed college when not ill* with non-medical reasons for missing classes given as: *family obligations* (29%), *other (including bereavement)* (29%), and *slept in or didn't feel like it* (23%). Behaviors learned and practiced in home and educational institutions form the behaviors that students take into the workplace. If families are not aware or supportive of the behaviors needed in the modern work environment, students are unlikely to acquire them.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To reshape and develop more productive attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about the modern workplace, policymakers must include the Emirati society as a whole. Post-secondary institutions must create initiatives to raise awareness about the skills necessary for success in the modern workplace among students and their families. Labor policymakers must work with private sector employers to improve working conditions for all employees that would ultimately attract more Emirati employees. Private sector work environments must be made more culturally appropriate by giving employees more personal space in mixed-gendered work areas and more flexible work schedules enabling all employees to better balance work and family responsibilities.

The leadership of the country stresses in the *UAE Vision 2021* document that “efforts to prosper will not come at the expense of Emirati’s strong and healthy emotional balance” (UAE Government, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, traditions, culture, and language must remain “a crucial matter of national pride and social stability” (p. 7). Preparing Emirati youth for

private sector employment is essential to providing a sustainable employment culture for future generation Emiratis, as well as promoting the economic vision of the country.



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# **FACTORS INFLUENCING EGYPTIAN YOUTH'S IDENTITY**

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## **Abstract**

This paper uses a single casestudy to explore the relation between gender, age, socio-economic background, and parental education on the national identity of Egyptian youth. In this research paper, I focus in-depth on a convenience sample of 25 adolescent students in an international school. I used both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate various aspects of the Egyptian national identity. The study includes a questionnaire and interview with two parents whose children showed variation in answers. A T-test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to measure the significance of the study's sample age, gender, and parents' education on a national identity level. The results show that these variables reveal no significant difference, and that family puts the foremost importance on implementing values and beliefs that help enforce the national identity. However, other factors that were revealed included the relevance of media, technology, peer influence and these are discussed in the paper.

## **Introduction**

Many theorists define national identity as the person's subjectivity and sense of belonging to one country or to one nation (Dahbour, 2002; Grever et al., 2008; Smith, 1991). National identity is a feeling that humans share with another group of people, regardless of one's citizenship status. It is not an inborn trait. Various studies have shown that a person's identity is a direct result of the presence of elements from the common points in people's daily lives such as, national symbols, languages, national colors, history, national consciousness, culture, blood ties, music, and media (Guibernau, 2004; Parmenter, 1991; Bostock & Smith, 2001). The purpose of this paper is to explore and discover the reasons behind the perplexity and dilemma the Egyptian youth encounter with respect to their sense of belonging and national identity. It investigates if gender, socio-economic background, and parents' education impact children's national identity.

## **Literature Review**

In order to understand the sense of Egyptian identity in adolescents, it is crucial to highlight some of the significant periods in Egypt's history that contributed to forming Egypt's identity. Exploring Egyptian identity through history is vital as it is linked to Egypt today. For centuries, Egypt passed through different influential regimes. Each civilization and culture had its own impact, shaping the society with its traditions, values, and beliefs.

From 3100 B.C. to 322 B.C., Egypt was ruled - thus influenced - by the Pharaonic Civilization. From this period until the 1952 revolution, Egypt was occupied by foreign powers, starting from Alexander the Great then the Roman Empire from 30 B.C. to 640 A.D..

Under the Romans Christianity became the official religion of Egypt. Later, in 640 A.D., Amr Ibn El Aass conquered Egypt and declared an Islamic era. Following this, the Turks invaded Egypt and the Mamlouk period began. After the Turks, Napoleon Bonaparte conquered the Mamlouks in 1797. The French were resisted by Egyptians and eventually driven out by the British and Turks in 1801. The British governed Egypt from 1882 until the 1952 revolution (Shalaby & Dinana, 2008).

Ultimately, all of the various civilizations that governed Egypt had their fingerprints on different aspects of the Egyptian society, including religion, traditions, culture, economy, education, and belief. An example of this was clearly manifested during the era of Gamal Abdel Nasser (1954-1970), when the Arab identity, *El Kawmeya El Arabia*, was emphasized in an attempt to suppress the western identity that was prevalent at the time. Nasser was seeking a wide umbrella to unite the Arabs.

After Nasser's death (1970), the Muslim Brotherhood began to expand and mobilize politically, earning a certain legitimacy within society. This resulted in a shift to a stronger religious national identity due to the strong co-ordination and leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. President Anwar El Sadat followed Nasser and during his rule, Egypt was boycotted socially by the rest of the Arab World because of the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement signed by. The treaty detached Egypt from the Arab nationalism that was previously called for by Nasser.

Sadat's rule (1970-1981) was followed by the era of Hosni Mubarak, with the rise of various Islamic fundamentalist groups and extending to the *Salafyeen* (Ghoneim H, Al Ahram weekly), the people who desire to strictly abide by the Qur'an and hadith as the sole criteria for judging. Hardy (2002), a Middle East Islamic affairs analyst, describes Egyptian identity at this time as suffering from 'a crack' due to terrorism and violence, particularly as Islamic extremist groups emerged in the 1980s with violence directed to ministers and foreign tourists (Hardy, 2002). Post-colonial theory reveals a shift in identities, as previously colonized countries often struggle to form their national identities.

### **Education and Identity**

During colonialism in Egypt, schools were historically only attended by the elite of the society. During the British occupation (1882-1922), the strategy of the British was to keep the majority of Egyptian citizens illiterate, ensuring that the Egyptian minority blessed by the elite education were indebted to the British for their social status and success (Larink, 2013).

After the 1952 revolution led by Nasser, education was made free for all citizens. However, while leaders and policymakers wanted free education, the quality of education deteriorated due to overcrowded classrooms, lack of infrastructure, funding, and teacher training (Larnik, 2013). This decline in quality of the Ministry of Education (MoE) schools opened a new education market for private schools with foreign curriculums to compete against public schools. An adverse effect of this was that an increasing number of youth began to associate their pride with their enrollment in foreign schools and foreign

languages, while disliking and abandoning their mother tongue, Arabic. In turn, the small privileged small sector of society enjoyed a better quality of education in a well-equipped class. Eventually, the homogenising of foreign curricula negatively affected the national identity.

### **Methodology**

This research answers the following question:

*Do gender, socio-economic background as well as parents' education have impact on their children's national identity?*

For this study, I focused in-depth on a convenient sample of 25 adolescent students in an international school. These students were enrolled in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) program following the Cambridge curriculum. I implemented both quantitative and qualitative methods to further investigate a variety of aspects surrounding Egyptian identity. The survey questions entailed qualitative data such as sociability with friends and feelings towards Arabic language lessons.

The questionnaire was distributed to a small sample of students to measure their sense of belonging to Egypt and examine factors that influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Some demographic questions such as age, gender, father's education, and mother's education were used in the questionnaire to measure their impact on identity. The objective was to find out the most prevailing factor of influence on identity.

## Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 demonstrates the demographic data of the studied sample.

**Table 1: Demographic Data of the Studied Sample**

	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
14	1	4
15	13	52
16	11	44
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	14	56
Female	11	44
<b>Father's education</b>		
Bachelor	16	64
M.Sc. or M.A.	4	16
Ph.D.	5	20
<b>Mother's education</b>		
Bachelor	20	80
M.Sc. or M.A.	1	4
Ph.D.	4	16

Table 2 represents the percentage distribution of the studied sample with respect to the answers on the questionnaire provided.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Question Responses**

Question	No.	%
1. Is your personality affected by your parents?		
NO	6	24
YES	19	76
2. Do you enjoy Arabic lessons?		
NO	21	84
YES	4	16
3. Are you proud of your nationality?		
NO	0	0.0
YES	25	100.0
4. Would you like to immigrate to another Country?		
NO	15	60
YES	10	40
5. Are you a member of any community service organization?		
NO	21	84
YES	4	16

YES		
6. Do you think history is part of Egyptian identity?		
NO	3	11.5
YES	22	88.5
7. Do you enjoy socializing with friends?		
Disagree	0	0.0
Agree	25	100.0
8. Do the way you talk, walk and dress affect your relations?		
Disagree	8	32
Agree	17	68
9. Do you accept ups and down in your life?		
Disagree	3	12
Agree	22	88
10. Does religion influence your identity?		
Disagree	2	8
Agree	23	92
11. Do you have specific goals to fulfill?		
Disagree	3	12
Agree	22	88
12. Do you think you can have a role in developing Egypt?		
Disagree	8	32
Agree	17	68
13. Do you think gender has an impact on identity?		
Disagree	8	32
Agree	17	68
14. Do you think money shapes identity?		
Disagree	18	72
Agree	7	28
15. Are you interested in the current events in Egypt?		
Disagree	8	32
Agree	17	68
16. Do you like to be a member in any political party?		
Disagree	17	68
Agree	8	32
17. Would you mind contributing part of your daily allowance to a needy person?		
Disagree	8	32
Agree	17	68

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of the identity level with respect to the studied sample. The minimum score was 17 while the maximum score was 34. The average score was 25.5. Scores below 25 represent a high identity level. The majority of the sample (84%) were categorized as high scoring below 25, while 12% revealed moderate identity level and 4% revealed low identity level at a score higher than 25.5 as depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of the Sample Identity Level**

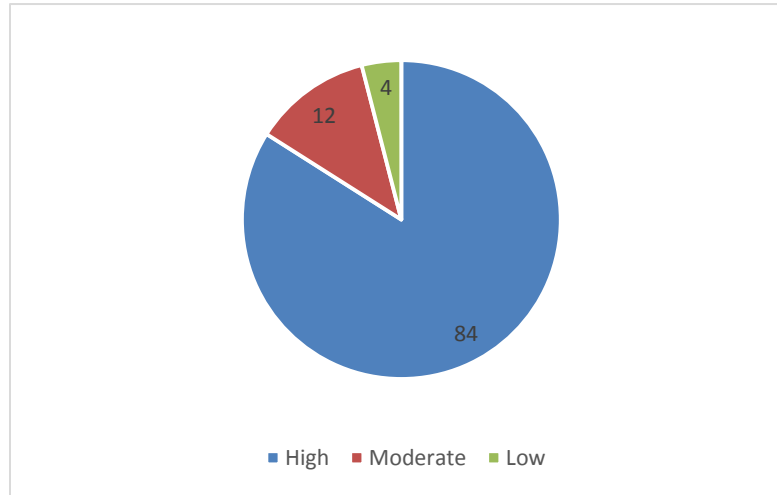


Table 4 represents the distribution of the studied sample regarding the factors that most influence the way they see the world. The results show that family was the most important factor in the sample. The next factor was media, followed by technology, and then peer influence.

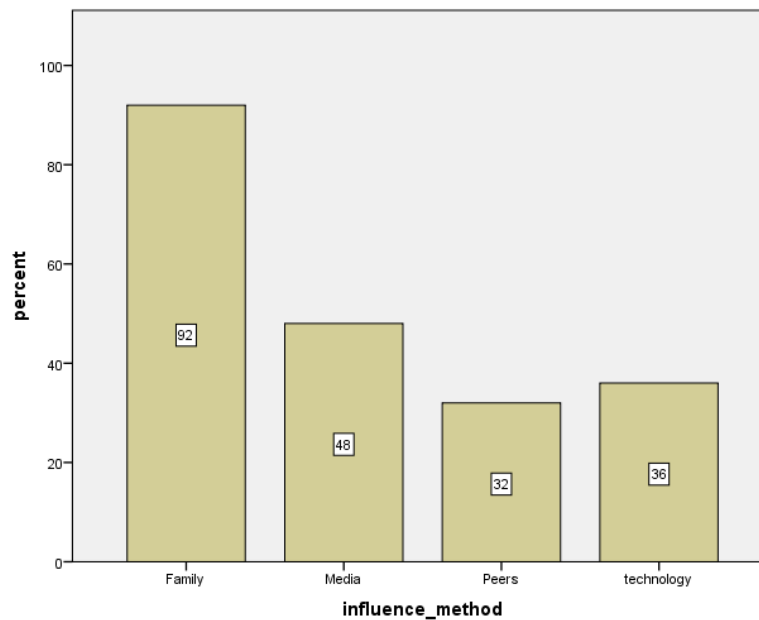
**Table 4: Distribution of the Factors that Most Influenced the way the Sample Saw the World**

	Number	Percent	Rank
<b>Influence method</b>			
Family	23	92	1
Media	12	48	2
Technology	9	36	3
Peers	8	32	4

The scale of ranking was from 1 to 4, with 1 representing the highest influence and 4 representing the lowest influence. The following figure shows the percentage of each influence method according to the respondents.



**Figure 2: Distribution of the Factors that Influences the Way the Sample Saw the World**



### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS. Table 5 illustrates the results of the relation between the study sample age, gender and parents' education on identity level. A T-test was used to analyse the significance of gender and it revealed that gender has no significant difference on national identity.

The Kruskal–Wallis test was used to analyze the significance of age, fathers' education, and mothers' education on identity level. The results showed no significant difference.

**Table 5: Significant Difference of Analyzed Variables**

	Test of normality	T-Test (sig. P value)	Kruskal-Wallis Test (sig. P value)
<b>Independent variable</b>			
Gender	Normal	0.298	-
Age	Not normal	-	0.780
Fathers' education	Not normal	-	0.453
Mothers' education	Not normal	-	0.772

Two contradicting cases were selected from the above sample for further investigation. I selected one student whose sense of national identity was strong and one whose national identity was weak. In addition, I chose one boy and one girl to provide equal gender

representation. I also interviewed their parents to find out the reasons behind their sense of belonging. From the interviews, both mothers claimed to have tried their best to instill a love of Egypt to their children. For example the mother of the student with strong national identity, said, *"I try to be a good model for my daughter,"* while the mother of the student with weak national identity, said, *"your mother is not the most wonderful woman, but still you love her. Also, your country is not the best country but still you have to love it."* However, the latter ironically predicted a better future for her son outside Egypt, despite her emphasis on an Egyptian identity. The interview questions are available in the Appendix.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Although the statistical analysis did not reveal a direct relation between national identity and gender, education of parents, and age at a statistically significant level, the results cannot be extrapolated to the Egyptian population as the study has various limitations. Firstly, the sample was a sample of convenience of one small class in a private school. Secondly, all of the surveyed students come from the same socio-economic background. Thirdly, the surveyed students were financially and socially dependent on their parents. As the students age, they may adopt different values that could have different outcomes on their national identity. Additional studies in this area are recommended.

Youth should be the focus of empowerment to the government, providing youth with quality education and reinforcing civic virtues, such as the importance of citizenship and a sense of belonging. National education plays a pivotal role in shaping the national identity, which is imperative for a prosperous nation. It ensures loyalty and therefore supports the development of a nation. Since schools play a vital role in instilling and developing the national identity of the youth, they should actively implement measures, activities, and curriculums that encourage youth participation in civic matters and political engagement. These measures will help the Egyptian national identity survive.

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### **Appendix**

- Contact the author at [n\\_shalaby@aucegypt.edu](mailto:n_shalaby@aucegypt.edu) for a sample of an answered identity questionnaire.
- Interview questions for mothers
  - Q1. What values do you think are important in affecting our children's sense of identity positively?
  - Q2. Do you encourage your child to take part in community service?
  - Q3. Do you agree to send your child to take part in international youth programmes?
  - Q4. How do you enforce love towards Egypt?

# **YOUTH AND FEMALE INCLUSION IN THE ARAB WORLD: ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYABILITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

David Jones  
*The Talent Enterprise*

## **Abstract**

Given the Middle East's demographic 'youth bulge' of young job-seekers entering labor markets over the next decade and the growing job readiness of the relatively young female population with high educational backgrounds, it is crucial to understand what it takes to engage, motivate, and develop this future workforce. This understanding will better enable the region's public sector to harness the knowledge, energy, and productive potential that the youth and women of the Middle East bring to the table.

This paper describes the research approaches and their results from two pioneering studies led by the author in the region through two different programs - Qudurat<sup>1</sup> and The Talent Enterprise Research on Employee & Youth Thriving Index (Aon Hewitt, 2010; Aon Hewitt 2012). The primary focus of the two studies is on diversity and inclusion of youth and women at work within the Middle East's formal economy. The research also makes a particular reference to the region's changing demographic landscape and its impact on employment and job creation.

## **Introduction**

The Middle East is one of the fastest growing regions in the world, both economically and demographically, with an emerging youth population. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region's employable population is expected to almost double by 2050, to reach 278 million from the current 145 million (Mirkin, 2010). According to Mirkin (2010) in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, "the number of children and youth is at an all-time high in the region. The increase in the proportion of 15 to 24 year olds in the total population - referred to as the 'youth bulge' - combined with the growth in the overall population has resulted in the most rapid growth in the number of young people in the region's modern history" (p. 12). This shift, especially the unprecedented rapid increase in the proportion of young people and the broader integration of women into the workforce, will have significant impact on workplace dynamics towards the achievement of the post-oil "knowledge-based economies" at the heart of the GCC's shared economic vision. Hence, the advancement of the local or national workforce is the single biggest social and economic issue in the region, and requires focused and sustained effort to support the GCC's sustainable growth and development.

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<sup>1</sup> Qudurat is a research program of Aon Hewitt. The author has intellectual property rights for continued publishing and analysis for academic, non-commercial purposes.

According to Chaaban (2010) in an Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) report, “countries with a large youth population have a unique demographic window of opportunity, as a large number of young persons would lower the dependency rate. More active young persons who work not only increase a country’s productivity, but also diminish the economic burden imposed by non-working cohorts (elderly and children)” (p. 14). Paradoxically, however, the Middle East region also suffers from the highest level of youth unemployment (International Finance Corporation, 2011) in the world, currently at over 25% on average (IFC, 2011). It is also expected that social attitudes and norms across the region may change at a faster pace due to the large proportion of youth and women entering the workplace, with increasing access to education, global media, and new technologies leading to a seismic shift in the region’s talent landscape.

According to a Booz&Co report (2011), in some of the GCC countries, females represent a better-educated talent pool than the overall population at large. For instance, in 2009, women in Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) comprised nearly 67%, 62%, 59%, 57% and 60% of all graduates in their countries, respectively (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). Figures indicate that whereas females globally outperform males in all subjects apart from the STEM subjects, female students in the GCC consistently outperform male students in all subjects at all levels of educational seniority within the region (Ridge, 2014). With higher average levels of educational outcomes and stronger indicators of work-ready skills and attributes such as greater flexibility, empathy, work preparedness, and a sense of determination (The Talent Enterprise, 2013) it is clear that women currently represent the single most significant latent talent pool available in the labor market. A broader integration of women into the workforce is highly recommended.

### **Overview of Research Studies and Broad Methodology**

This paper highlights findings from two pioneering research studies led by the author:

1. Qudurat (“capabilities” in Arabic) is the largest workplace study of its kind in the MENA region. Qudurat was designed to be a broad-based research study aimed to understand what drives an employee’s engagement and performance at work with a special emphasis on understanding national talent in the GCC region.

- The study was conducted in two waves over 2010 and 2012, with approximately 20,500 respondents (employees and students) across UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Egypt.
- It was an exploratory research project, seeking to understand what truly drives and motivates individuals in the region.
- The study design focused on 22 research variables, looking at broad areas of orientation to self, work, others, work environment, and identity.

The research design was based on five broad dimensions described below:

**Figure 1: Qudurat Research Design**

5 Broad Dimensions	Self	Work	Others	Work Environment	Identity
32 Overall Drivers	1. Grit 2. Flow 3. Goal Setting 4. Optimism 5. Pro - activity 6. Resilience 7. Self Efficacy 8. Zest 9. Responsibility and Skill	10. Accomplishment & Meaning 11. Pride in Work 12. Work Preparedness 13. Pay and Growth 14. Preference for Hierarchy 15. Job Orientation 16. Career Orientation 17. Calling Orientation 18. Mobility	19. Positive Relationships 20. Level of Support from Manager 21. Confidence in Leadership 22. Level of Trust 23. Tolerance to Diversity	24. Learning & Development 25. Level of Support from Organisation 26. Structure & Communication 27. Fairness at Work	28. Identity Alignment 29. Work Identity 30. Family Identity 31. Religious Identity 32. National Identity

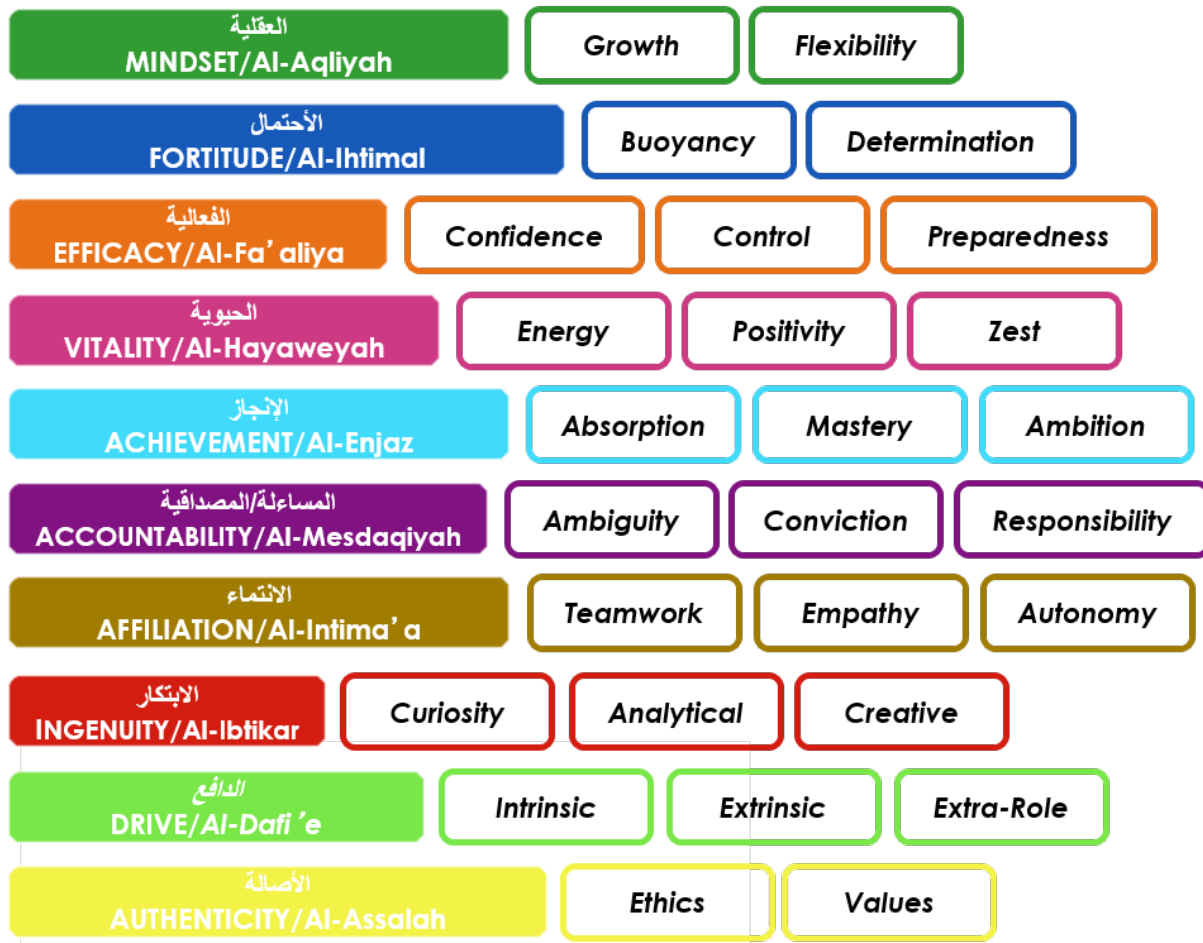
2. The Employee Thriving Index and Youth Thriving Index (ETI<sup>TM</sup> & YTI<sup>TM</sup>) are strengths-based assessments supporting employability, and are the first psychometric tools to be exclusively designed and validated in the region.

- The assessments were developed in 2012 through a process of rigorous research and analysis, including factor analysis and test construction (item analysis, reliability, validity, and norming).
- ETI<sup>TM</sup> & YTI<sup>TM</sup> are predictive of performance (academic and job) as well as productivity at work and the tools are rooted in positive psychology research.
- The assessments include 10 factors and 27 sub-factors. These are self-assessment measures.
- The n size for youth is 451 respondents and 1850 for others.

The research design for ETI<sup>TM</sup> and YTI<sup>TM</sup> is based on the following strengths and workplace orientations:



**Figure 2: ETI™ & YTI™ Research Design**



ETI™ & YTI™ are predictive of key outcomes such as performance (both academic and work), engagement, job satisfaction, and lower absenteeism. Strengths also have a key role in supporting employability by matching 'right' people to 'right' jobs.

### **Levels of Engagement at the Workplace**

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment that the employee has to the organization and its goals. This means that engaged employees care about their work and their employer, beyond the formal reward. Engagement ensures that employees strive to work on behalf of achieving the organization's goals (The Talent Enterprise, 2013). Since employees and their behaviors are at the center of business performance, ensuring that employees invest their discretionary effort in the most productive behaviors will be critical in delivering the organizational performance needed to promote employment growth within the private sector in particular.

The average levels of employee engagement from the Qudurat data suggest that the GCC region experiences the lowest level of employee engagement in the world, averaging at 49% [Graph

7.1]. This is considerably low compared to other regions such as Latin America and North America that stand at 74% and 63% respectively.

Moreover, younger respondents reported consistently lower levels of engagement than their older colleagues in the Qudurat study, displaying a concerning trend of the onset of an early mid-career crisis for the 25 to 34 year old employees. The first wave of the study conducted in 2010 had highlighted a significant concern in the engagement levels amongst the 25-34 age cohort of GCC nationals. This group still has the lowest average engagement at 40.1%, but in 2012, a significant decline in engagement levels for nationals under the age of 25 was reported at 47.7% (compared to 64% in 2010) and 43.4% for the 35 to 44 age group (which was at 49% in 2010) [Graph 7.2]. This on-going and alarming trend of low engagement levels amongst the younger generations is highly detrimental to key organizational performance indicators such as lower absenteeism, safety incidents, customer satisfaction, and overall productivity<sup>9</sup>(Kruse, 2014).

Within the Gulf nations, Saudi nationals are least engaged at 40.6%, followed by Emiratis at 41.6% [Table 7.3]. Omanis, Bahrainis, and Kuwaitis displayed more moderate levels of engagement and the Qataris were the highest at 51%. On the other hand, expatriates are most engaged in Bahrain and Kuwait, followed by the UAE and Qatar, with lower levels of engagement being reported in Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Analyzing results from The Talent Enterprise Research on ETI™, interesting insights arise with regards to various strengths and work place orientations for youth when compared to others in older age cohorts. The concept of a mid-career crisis emerges even more strongly when looking at this data. For most strengths such as Responsibility, Teamwork, Ethics, Values, Absorption, Confidence, Preparedness, and others, the youth scores significantly less (at a 95% confidence interval) than others [Table 7.4].

### **Key Gender Differences**

The Qudurat study reveals that more GCC women regard their job as a means to progress to the next role as compared to men (68% vs 62%), which suggest that GCC national women are more job oriented than their male counterparts. Also, 86% GCC women believe that the work that they do makes the community or the country a better place, as opposed to 77% GCC males who feel that way. Furthermore, GCC women report higher levels of satisfaction on their work-life balance when compared with GCC men (49% vs 39%).

The research results indicate that GCC women are more comfortable working in a diverse environment (55%) than their male counterparts (39%), especially on aspects of diversity such as gender and age. Additionally, more GCC women consider moving abroad to live and work (57% vs. 49%). Indicating that the women in the region have a broad outlook towards their professional lives.

However, it could be argued that the significant gender differences on most strengths such as Empathy, Values, Absorption, Ambition, Mastery, Preparedness, Determination, Affiliation, Authenticity, and Achievement could explain this apparent disparity [Table 7.5]. In addition, the average level of educational attainment for GCC women is also higher than that of men's, and

this may also have an impact on some of their values in the workplace. The strengths that come out stronger for males, and interestingly so, are ambition, and need for control.

### **Conclusion**

There is an urgent and growing need to focus on these two demographic groups (youth and women) as a priority, as they will form the future workforce of the Middle East region. It is critical to understand what engages them and develop strategies and plans for employing them in greater numbers, managing their expectations and their development to ensure the availability of a competitive workforce in the years to come. Some public and private sector organizations are beginning to undertake key initiatives to identify positions that can be held by female nationals and young interns and graduates over the next few years. Initiatives including graduate development programs, internships, and scholarship programs are also highly recommended to attract young graduates into the workforce, and moreover to retain and induce them to deliver their maximal contribution to organizational productivity.

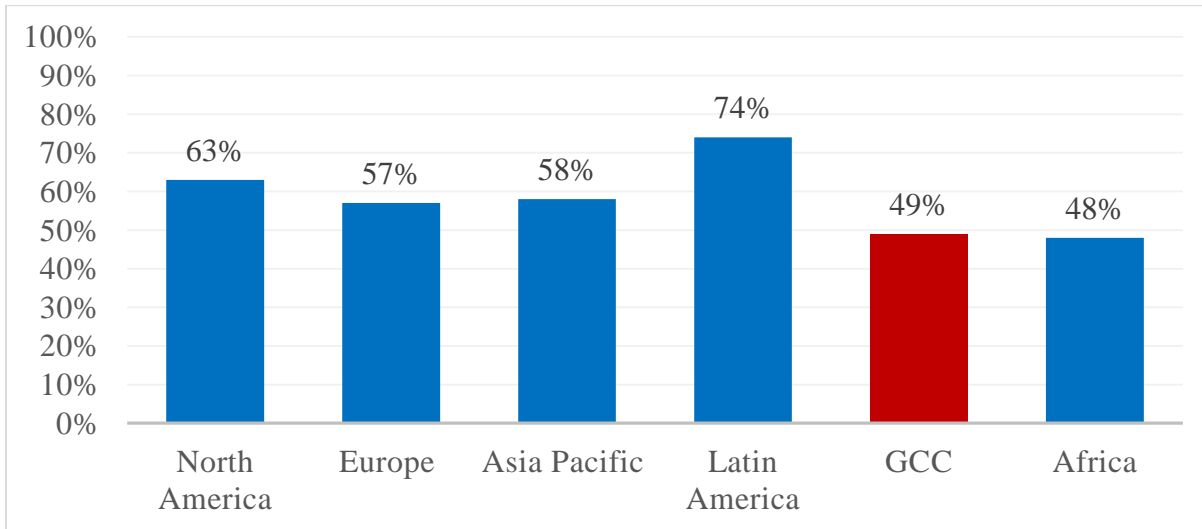
In addition, the unique nature of the GCC labor market (high rates of expatriation, positive discrimination for GCC nationals) has effectively reduced the incentives for individuals, organizations, and nation states to consistently invest in the optimum development of human capital. Specific actions could thus involve individuals taking action to improve their self-awareness of their current strengths and how to develop them, along with government interventions to reform the curriculum and delivery of educational courses, that are most relevant to the post – energy economy of the GCC. On this last point in particular, with future job growth in the region coming mostly from the commercial sector, the key priority is for action for private sector employers to make themselves more attractive for GCC nationals (in terms of talent attraction, engagement, development, and retention), whilst at the same time, GCC national workers strive to make themselves more attractive to private sector employers.

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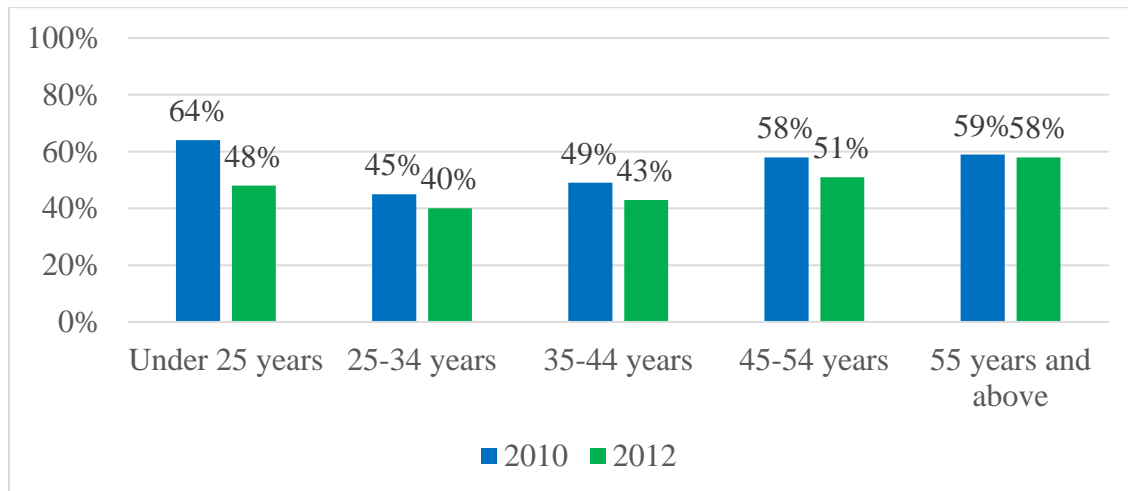
## Appendix

**Graph 7.1: Global & Regional Employee Engagement 2012 – 2013**



Data Source: Qudurat Study (N size – 14,292 GCC Overall), Jones, D.B. Distinct Triggers for Employee Engagement for GCC Nationals (Working Paper)

**Graph 7.2: Employee Engagement by Age (changes in 2012 compared to 2010)**



Data Source: Qudurat Study (N size – 2010: 2018 Nationals and 2012 - 6750 Nationals)  
Jones, D.B. Distinct Triggers for Employee Engagement for GCC Nationals (Working Paper)

**Table 7.3: GCC Region Engagement Trends**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Nationals (N)</b>	<b>Expats (E)</b>
<b>GCC</b>	49.5 %	43.7 %	56.1 %
<b>UAE</b>	49.4 %	41.6 %	56.8 %
<b>KSA</b>	46.9 %	40.6 %	51.3 %
<b>Qatar</b>	53.3 %	51.0 %	56.4 %
<b>Bahrain</b>	48.4 %	44.8 %	63.6 %
<b>Oman</b>	48.4 %	47.6 %	51.1 %
<b>Kuwait</b>	61.9 %	43.9 %	63.7 %
<b>Egypt</b>	44.8 %	44.7 %	50.0 %

Data Source: Qudurat Study 2012 (N size – 14,292 GCC Overall)

**Table 7.4: ETI™ Strengths for Youth and Others**

	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Others</b>
<i><b>For Significance testing</b></i>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Conviction	69% <b>B</b>	57%
Responsibility	51%	59% <b>A</b>
Teamwork	43%	53% <b>A</b>
Ethics	45%	50% <b>A</b>
Values	76%	84% <b>A</b>
Absorption	39%	48% <b>A</b>
Extrinsic	81%	86% <b>A</b>
Extrarole	71%	77% <b>A</b>
Confidence	42%	52% <b>A</b>
Preparedness	61%	73% <b>A</b>
Buoyancy	47%	55% <b>A</b>
Creativity	69%	75% <b>A</b>
Flexibility	24%	39% <b>A</b>
Zest	59%	71% <b>A</b>
Optimism	52%	58% <b>A</b>
Social Desirability	54%	69% <b>A</b>
Affiliation	33%	41% <b>A</b>
Authenticity	72%	81% <b>A</b>
Drive	79%	86% <b>A</b>
Efficacy	31%	44% <b>A</b>
Fortitude	69%	74% <b>A</b>
Mindset	43%	48% <b>A</b>
Vitality	59%	68% <b>A</b>

Statistical significance testing has been done at a 95% confidence interval.

Data Source: The Talent Enterprise Research on ETI™ (N size –451 Youth; 1850 Others)

**Table 7.5: ETI™ Strengths for Men and Women**

	Male	Female
Empathy	42%	54% <b>A</b>
Values	78%	86% <b>A</b>
Absorption	42%	51% <b>A</b>
Ambition	76% <b>B</b>	72%
Mastery	78%	82% <b>A</b>
Control	18% <b>B</b>	12%
Preparedness	67%	75% <b>A</b>
Determination	75%	79% <b>A</b>
Affiliation	36%	44% <b>A</b>
Authenticity	76%	82% <b>A</b>
Achievement	69%	74% <b>A</b>

Statistical significance testing has been done at a 95% confidence interval.

Data Source: The Talent Enterprise Research on ETI™ (N size –1096 Males; 1082 Females)

# **A “CRITICAL CULTURAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EDUCATION”: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLAINING HOW THE STRUCTURES, MECHANISMS, AND PROCESSES OF THE GLOBAL, GEO-REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL ASSIMILATE IN BAHRAINI HIGHER EDUCATION.**

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## **Introduction**

Globalization is a “politically and theoretically contested concept” that refers to a series of changes across political, social, technological, economic, and/or cultural spheres (Rizvi & Lingard 2000 p.425; Torres, 2009). Globalization is known for causing changes in the characteristics and functions of higher education (Mok, 2009). In the context of higher education in Bahrain, globalization is particularly important to analyze since the impact of these changes are not uniform across, or within, different countries and how these changes occur is uncertain (Dale, 1999; Ozga & Lingard 2007; Rizvi & Lingard 2000; Vidovich, Yang, & Currie, 2007; Mok, 2009).

In the context of Bahrain, little is known about the changes to the characteristics and functions of higher education caused by the influences of the state through state apparatus, reliance on cross border education aspects of foreign expertise, or the international commercial and non-for profit higher education institutes. How these processes converge with the dynamics of culture, religion, values, and traditions is complicated and not well understood. Sholkamy (2006) notes the outdated, under theorized nature and understanding of cultures and social dynamics in the Arab world. The impact of these difficulties means that understanding the effects and the role of globalization structures, mechanisms and processes on education change remain difficult to explain and outcomes difficult to determine. This paper uses of the ‘Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education’ (CCPEE) (Robertson and Dale, 2013) as a theoretical framework to offer a comprehensive means of developing an account of the globalizing of education in the context of Bahrain higher education; as a means to establish the presence of processes and mechanisms, how they work, and with what impact.

The view of globalization taken in this paper is that it has a multitude of effects on Bahrain higher education at multiple levels, influencing processes that create change at the international level and within Bahrain. These processes and changes occur through various actors and activities (Sassen, 2013). These factors are not static, but are in a constant state of flux, shaped by power relations, political facets, and socio-cultural factors.

This paper starts by examining existing literature on globalization and then focuses on the landscape of higher education in Bahrain. The paper concludes by explaining how the CCPEE framework offers a theoretical means of analyzing the globalizing structures, processes, and mechanisms of Bahrain higher education.



## **Relationship between Globalization and Higher Education**

Traditionally, understanding the relationship between globalization and higher education came from studying the international cross-border flow of students and staff, the transnational influence of dominant institutes, higher education models (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), trade in international educational services, as well as from the discourse on research and knowledge (Marginson, 2004). Traditionally, the most dominant feature of the literature is the relationship of governmental nation state policies and higher education, with globalization processes in higher education understudied and under-theorized. This led Marginson and Rhoades (2002) to consider globalization processes as progressively integrated systems and relationships that transverse the boundaries of a nation. These systems and relationships are not only economic, but are also political, technological, and cultural. A departure from a traditional analysis of national policies led to a new analytic framework, capturing the tensions found at the crossroads of the global, regional, national, and local (Mazawi & Sultana, 2010). This allowed for more than just identification of globalization processes as it also encompassed how they occur, even though there are numerous and opposing explanations as to how best to understand these processes (Robertson et al., 2012). Mazawi and Sultana (2010) view education in the Arab World as a complicated plethora of human and political influences with multifaceted spatial articulations, be it analysis of educational processes within the borders of a nation state such as Bahrain, or wider spatial contexts such as the regional-geopolitical, civilizational, and transnational. From a spatial perspective, the Arab region is not homogenous or a harmonious ethnic, national, or linguistic geographic space (Mazawi & Sultana, 2010), which the case for higher education policy and practice across the region.

There is of course uncertainty about how, from an operational perspective, global structures, mechanisms, and processes are transmitted to the national and local (Dale 1999; Ozga & Lingard 2007; Rizvi & Lingard 2000). Using earlier frameworks such as Robertson, Bonal & Dale's (2002) pluri-scalar governance of education model, analysis of how the design and transmission of a national education policy agenda responds to pressure (Ozga & Lingard, 2007) could be considered from various scales (e.g. supranational, national, sub-national), actors (e.g. state, market, community, household) and activities (e.g. funding, ownership, provision, regulation). However, challenges exist as education policies are embedded and belong to a specific cultural world (Shore & Wright, 2011). The implications in terms of analyzing how the design and delivery of an education policy agenda responds to pressure is not complete as the pluri-scalar model doesn't take into account the complexity of relationships within the education ensemble. The education ensemble is a concept of education that involves a range of actors and institutions reflecting the fact that education represents, and is embodied, "in crucial multiple relationships with, and within societies" (Robertson & Dale, 2013 p.3). The value, therefore, of the ensemble concept is not just that it identifies and registers the range of relationships, but that it allows analysis and identification of internal relationships between the components of the ensemble.

Although efforts have been made to draw upon the cultural, political, and economy to analyze education (Robertson & Dale, 2013); there is a tendency to view the education in

terms of Western modernity. Three prominent approaches to explaining the relationship between globalization and education include 'World Polity theory' (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997), 'World Systems theory' (Wallerstein, 2004), and 'Structured Agenda' (Dale, 2000). However, these theories are difficult to apply in the context of Bahrain higher education as they focus on either the political and economic, or political and cultural, but not all three aspects combined, therefore offering only a partial understanding of the education ensemble. For example, the most prominent approach to explaining the globalization of education – world polity theory – focuses on cultural aspects as a means to achieving transnational and transcontinental presence through the global spread of modernity which is bound in Western values and linked to issues of legitimacy. Legitimate institutions are also referred to as 'myths'. For example, the concept of mass schooling is seen as a legitimate feature or myth of a 'modern' society, regardless of its actual efficacy. In relation to non-Western societies, world polity as a theory sets forward the view that Western 'myths' are victorious over any local attempts in which something happens or is done, leading to institutional isomorphism of societies around the globe (Caruso, 2008).

If educational isomorphism exists and the knowledge central to the work of education is cultural, these theories therefore neglect the theory of agency and infer the existence of a world system (Robertson & Dale, 2013). For example, in the case of Bahrain, the impact of "power configurations on state-higher education relations" and the "internal formal and informal decision making structures" in which institutes of higher education operate' (Mazawi, 2005 p. 134, citing Shaw 1996) are left unanalyzed. Ultimately there is a general lack of theories and concepts useful for analyzing, in a contextual manner, the processes of educational change in the Arab world (Mazawi, 1999).

### **Higher Education and Globalization in Bahrain**

Higher education is a relatively recent phenomenon in Bahrain and the wider Gulf states, with two noted waves in the development of higher education in Bahrain. Until the late 1960s there was no institute of higher education. The Gulf Technical University opened its doors in 1968, with an enrollment of 18 students and three staff. This institute was later merged with the University College of Arts and Science to form the University of Bahrain in 1986. During the 1986-1987 there were five institutes of higher education, with 5,633 students and 469 staff (Madany et al, 1988). More recently, during the 2011-2012 academic year, there were 32,327 students enrolled in higher education, with over 50 percent of students undertaking a business related degree and a gender ratio of 60:40 female to male (Merza, 2012). Regionally, the Arabian Gulf University was set up in 1980 as an autonomous scientific institution with the then seven participating Gulf States and a campus located in Bahrain. The philosophy of the education at this time was based on two dimensions – that of religious morals and cultural traditions combined with modern economics, technological, and scientific development (Madany et al, 1988).

The second wave of development in higher education began in the last decade, with major reforms in Bahrain. In 1999, monarch Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa succeeded the throne, introducing major political, economic and social reforms, and established a constitutional monarchy (Bahrain Country Analysis Report, 2010). Higher education

reforms included a national policy aimed at achieving an improvement in the quality of higher education, promoting the nation as a regional center for higher education, introducing an integrated model of educational technology and strengthening the relationship between higher education and technical and continuous education (MOE, 2014). Most importantly, under the pillar of social reform, education in Bahrain was deemed an area of vital importance in the economic growth of the country, with a particular focus on improving the skills of Bahrainis through developing the education system to allow graduates to better meet the needs of the labour market (Quarshie & Albaker, 2012; MOE, 2014). Ultimately, the Bahrain education system is in the process of reform in order to address the perceived disconnect between the education system – primary education through to higher education – the economy and the workforce (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). The various policy domains are interrelated in order to achieve reform in Bahrain, whereby successful economic reform is somewhat dependent on social and education reform policy implementation (Taylor et al., 1997). Economic and labor market developments are shared features of education policies across the Gulf States. In the context of a transformation to a knowledge based economy, education reform is of key importance, with education policy often conceptualised as “the central plank of national economic planning” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000 p. 423 – 424). However, it should be noted that as developing countries focus on diversifying their economies and labour force, education becomes increasingly commoditised (Henry et al., 1999) and changes the focus of “educational practices from social and cultural concerns to those of individuals and the economies in which they participate” (Taylor et al., 1997 p.93).

Themes identified in relation to higher education reform in Bahrain include promotion of policy changes by government as part of national economic development and building of a knowledge society (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010). Other themes include increasing and new forms of accountability and quality. The measures accompanying higher education reform in Bahrain include the introduction of quality aspects such as a quality assurance agency and the development and implementation of a qualifications framework. Other measures include the introduction of a new state institution of higher education, establishment of the Higher Education Council (HEC), Education Reform Board (ERB), and the recent launch of the National Strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Research. These measures are aligned with the development of an education policy designed to achieve economic and labour reforms and the building of a knowledge based economy. Bahrain is now home to three public institutes of higher education. The private education sector is also important in the discussion of higher education reform in Bahrain as 12 private institutes opened in the last decade (Karolak, 2012). Some of these are locally owned while others have a foreign affiliation and they can be a mix of both commercial and non-for-profit (Arab Knowledge Report, 2009). The growth in private institutions is a feature across the Gulf, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, not only in the types of institutions but also the scope of programs offered (Mazawi, 2008).

## **What does Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE) Offer over Competing Approaches?**

By adopting Robertson and Dale's CCPEE, it is possible to employ a political, cultural, and economic framework that offers a wider view of the complexity of the 'structures, institutions and practices', within the education ensemble. The CCPEE allows for a bird's eye view of education and provides a mechanism to understand who has power and where power relations exist. In order to understand the education ensemble, Robertson and Dale (2013) indicated the analyst should consider the presence of four distinguishable elements. The first of these is cultural, not in terms of discourse or semiotics, but as civilization projects such as Western modernity or Islam for example. The other three elements of the ensemble include the relationship education has with global, regional, national, or local societies; the organizations that feature in the education system; and the relationship between education and economy. The relationship between education and economy is not just the capitalist or market-economy view, but the view that the education sector is an intricate economy itself.

Ontologically and epistemologically, CCPEE as a theoretical framework is underpinned by a critical realism view of the world and its stratified ontology takes into account the fact everything that happens in education ensemble is not always visible or observable. The critical realist methodology applies to the CCPEE by considering the education ensemble through the real, actual, and empirical - or 'moments' as described in the CCPEE. Taking Roy Bhaskar's (1975; 1979) critical realist approach as a philosophy of social science, Sayer (2000; 2010) and Maxwell (2012) present an ontology that conceptualizes reality, supports theorizing and guides empirical work in human science (Clark, 2008). By offering ways of thinking about key concepts such as culture, meaning, causation, conceptualization and abstraction, critical realism can provide value in addressing methodological and practical issues in seeking 'substantial connections among phenomena' (Sayer, 2000, p.27) and is particularly suited to examining research questions that are focused on understanding complexity or seeking to explain outcomes (Clark, 2008).

Not all mechanisms or processes in the education ensemble are visible, but they have real effects. By bringing together culture, economics, and politics in an ontologically and epistemologically meaningful way, a more complete understanding of the structures, mechanisms, and processes is achievable and what was unobservable becomes visible. Moreover, what was thought to be important may fade into insignificance. The concept of the education ensemble allows for an overall collective understanding of education, which can then be broken down to its individual elements. The ensemble allows for a mapping of ideas, activities, relationships, power and their associated inter-relationships, for example. The cultural or civilizational aspects are the most problematic. The casual powers of the cultural and civilizational scripts through which the education ensemble is constructed and mediated as well as the particular conditions under which they are activated are difficult to determine. By prising apart the education ensemble of the Bahrain higher education sector, a set of education questions can be developed to "study through" (Robertson et al., 2012) the layers. These questions in education are two fold in purpose: orienting the investigation and revealing the stratified ontology. The abstraction of "moments",

consisting of the “*moment of educational practice*, the *moment of education politics*, the *moment of the politics of education*, and the *moment of outcomes*” (Robertson & Dale, 2013, p. 7, italics in original) take into account the fundamentals of critical realism – the “real”, “actual”, “empirical” and layers or “stratification”.

In relation to Bahrain higher education, it was noted earlier the gender ratio of 60:40 female to male enrollments in higher education. This may lead to analysis of the education ensemble in terms of equality and equity of educational opportunities. A specific question such as “Why are there fewer male enrollments in Bahrain higher education?”, which as a *moment of educational practice*, links to circumstances (real, actual, and how they are understood) or how they are activated (by asking how, why, where). The *moment of education politics* works in response to relationships and inter-relationships across scales (higher education institutions, the state, family, international actors, religious institutes) in terms of whom decides and how is it decided who has access to higher education. It should be recognized that not everything that happens in the *moment of educational practice* is a result of a “direct consequence and response” to what happens in the *moment of education politics* (Robertson & Dale, 2013, p.8). The *moment of the politics of education* provides the ‘rules’, in response to the above question – it may consider the individuals and institutions (state, religious, primary education system for example) responding to university and institutes of higher education admission policies, but is ultimately connected with social structures such as growing Arab youth population for example. The *moment of outcomes* include not “only the immediate consequences of educational practices, policies and politics for those directly involved, but also their wider personal/individual, community/collective, social and economic qualities arising from globalizing processes” (Robertson & Dale, 2013, p.8).

In summary, the CCPEE framework gives the social analyst the means to develop an account of the globalization of education taking into account the cultural, political, and economic. The importance of this framework in the context of understanding the processes of globalization in Bahrain higher education is that, unlike other theories of the relationship between globalization and education, the CCPEE does not align itself with Western modernity in the cultural form, or capitalism as a form of economic development or the Westphalian state system as the political organization. By employing the cultural, political, and economic in a critical framework the CCPEE approach may firstly offer a means to understand the transformation of education - in particular the education reform taking place in Bahrain. Through identifying the resulting processes, mechanisms, and structures attributed to the globalization of education, the CCPEE offers some certainty over how the transmission of the global to national occurs operationally in the context of Bahrain and with what impact.

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## **AN EXPLORATION OF THE USE OF ENGLISH BY ARABIC-SPEAKING EMIRATI PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS: LOCATING ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

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The global importance of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) today is unquestioned. Widely recognized as an important feature of higher education (HE) (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004, 2009), EMI has also been identified as one of the key factors responsible for the spread of English across the globe (Coleman, 2006). The ways of using English in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has alerted linguists that English may be changing status from foreign language to second language (Graddol, 1997), an important reclassification guiding English language teaching practices. Accordingly, there have been calls for extensive research into language use in the UAE in particular (Gallagher, 2011) as well as the Arabian Gulf more generally (Charise, 2007).

The use of EMI in the emirate of Abu Dhabi is both interesting and complex. The emirate is the largest, wealthiest, and most populous in the UAE, where Emirati citizens benefit from full subsidies in public education from kindergarten to HE. The emirate is also a lure for skilled laborers and professionals from around the world seeking employment in many sectors of the economy, including education (Davidson, 2005, 2009). In this context, both Arabic and English are rendered important for intra-national communication in the UAE, and English as a valuable medium for learning.

The experience of EMI in Abu Dhabi differs by educational sector and stakeholder. For some, EMI remains a matter of debate while, for others, EMI defines how learning happens. To help illustrate this point, EMI has been used alongside Arabic since 2010 as a medium of instruction in Cycle 1 government schools. As per the New School Model (NSM) educational reforms, English is the medium through which grade 1-6 Emirati students learn English, mathematics, and science. Although this progressive approach is applied in the teaching of all subjects, the NSM is highly scrutinized for an overemphasis on English literacy at the expense of Arabic proficiency (Salem, 2010). However, the move to using EMI is also positively evaluated, since Emirati youth in government schools now access the same kind of educational advantage previously offered only to fee-paying private school attendees (Gallagher, 2011). For those in HE, EMI is perhaps best described as a “choiceless choice” (Troudi & Jendli, 2011, p. 41) as there are only a few options to study in Arabic beyond secondary school. The NSM signals the great expectations for bi-literate Emirati youths who already encounter a noticeably multilingual world just outside their classroom doors but also immediate pressures for educators in HE institutions who must now redefine academic bridging services deemed essential a few years earlier.

Within this interesting and complex setting, Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE), a stand-alone teacher-training college, prepares Emirati nationals to become English Medium teachers (EMTs). Although co-educational, the college caters mostly to females, who speak a local Arabic as their first language. While the mandate for the

undergraduate bachelor degree program is to support educational reforms, the focus is exclusively on training Emiratis as EMTs and not Arabic Medium teachers (AMTs) even though proficiency in both Arabic and English is in demand in Abu Dhabi schools.

Attested linguistic and academic qualifications underscore the hiring practices at the college where international instructors with proficiency in English and other languages, including Arabic, are offered fixed-term contracts to teach using EMI. The college is also staffed by expatriates from a wide array of countries, including Emiratis. The social diversity and multilingual competencies within this HE institution reflect the dynamics in many Abu Dhabi workplaces. As follows, there are diverse opportunities for Emirati pre-service teachers to communicate in English and Arabic. The Abu Dhabi-based college is thus a rich setting to explore patterns of English and Arabic use in order to locate the experiences of using EMI.

### **EMI use in HE in the Arabian Gulf**

Reports in Arabian Gulf literature have duly addressed the tensions that English in education generates in an Arabic-speaking milieu. Findlow (2006) most cogently addressed how Arabic and English evoke different conceptions in the minds of UAE HE students. Arabic is construed in terms of authenticity, religion, and emotions, whereas English is associated with modernity, internationalism, and business (p. 25). Her conclusions cite the relevance of HE in generating a linguistic dualism in which each language is called upon to serve differing agendas but also the limited relevance of pan-Islamic political rhetoric in determining conceptions of English and Arabic.

While convincingly argued, it should be noted that the regional literature has rather steadfastly focused upon the tensions generated by the encroachment of English into educational domains, formerly constituted in Arabic. Similar conceptions of EMI as a force leading to the “Englishization” of higher education (Coleman, 2006, p. 1) have appeared in Europe, but EMI issues are triangulated by greater student mobility and program choice in the region. The European debates likewise target fears concerning a critical loss of the national language and the resultant negative effects on the cultural identity of the national student population. However, the draws of attracting fee-paying, international students to Europe and the development of international networks have led to a quiet acceptance of English as a necessary linguistic resource for multilingual academic communities. This condition has led to an acknowledgement that while EMI may be controversial on a national level, it is not so at the individual level as students can choose to study in programs which match their professional aims (Wilkinson, 2013).

In the context of the Arabian Gulf, English is uniquely referred to as a threat to Arabic (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Al Lawati, 2011), and Islam (Charise, 2007; Karmani, 2005, 2010; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014), and regarded as “the language of a colonizing and bellicose West” (Gallagher, 2011, p. 63). Reports on the use of English in education, first equated with Westernization (Al Haq & Smadi, 1996), are more currently framed by the negative effects of globalization (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Al Lawati, 2011). Although positive reports of student perceptions of English appear in the UAE literature, the theories of linguistic

imperialism, featuring a troubling determinant view of power, are commonly evoked (Troudi & Jendli, 2011). That said, the value of English as a lingua franca for an influential group, police officers in Dubai has been assessed (Randall & Samimi, 2010), yet the ways in which English is used as a lingua franca, and with whom, are often glossed over without valid empirical support. However, research on the development of a local variety of English (Boyle, 2011; van den Hoven, 2014) indicates a growing interest in describing the sociolinguistic practices of the users of EMI in the UAE.

In light of the fresh interest in English use, an exploration of the ways in which the two languages are used on a daily basis is due. Such research can enhance the description of current forms and functions of English and Arabic, which support daily communication in various educational domains, including the use of EMI in HE. Accordingly, this study explores how EMI is experienced in a HE institution for Emirati pre-service teachers.

### **Methodological Framework**

Questions about social processes and experiences warrant an exploratory, qualitative approach (Barbour, 2008). Conducted for a larger doctoral study, this phase of inquiry uses focus group discussions to describe patterns of language use among Emirati members of a diglossic, Arabic-speaking speech community who use EMI in HE. The accounts of 12 participants and the meanings attached to English in light of their daily experiences are reported here. All participants were female nationals between 21-24 years old, resided in Abu Dhabi, and had just completed their third year of study. Through an ethnographic approach to data collection, a deductive and inductive process of coding, and theme generation of the 3.3 hours of transcribed focus group talk (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), EMI was identified as an independent zone of conversational activity at the college.

### **Findings**

A brief description of the participants' daily patterns of language use is reported here. This section includes descriptions of how English is used, with whom, and what conditions contribute to the gap in descriptive accounts of the "current sociolinguistic landscape" (Matsuda, 2012, p. 4). Grosjean's (2001) construct of language mode, being "the state of activation of the bilingual's languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time" (p. 3) proved helpful in interpreting the ways in which participants described using Arabic and English. By contextualizing the use of EMI as a language mode nested within a range of other language modes, clear patterns emerge detailing how English use in this context is distinguished from its broader use in Abu Dhabi. Accordingly, the present study offers current empirical data on the sociolinguistic dimensions of English use in Abu Dhabi among female Emirati pre-service teachers. To ensure anonymity, the participants are identified by their focus group number (e.g. FG1-4).

Four distinct languages are recognized as part of the linguistic environment: Arabic, English, 'Indian', and 'Persian'. The participants reported only being capable of using Arabic and English but had members within their speech community, namely fathers and brothers, who had linguistic resources in the two other languages. According to the

participants, Abu Dhabi's linguistic environment supports the use of Arabic with a broadly-construed in-group of Arabs and English for international and intra-national communication with out-group foreigners.

As concerns EMI, the data suggests that the participants experience EMI in HE as one language mode among eight other modes, where mode reflects a zone of conversational activity. EMI is referred to as "formal English" (FG3) and features academic vocabulary used at the teacher-training college but is called "Simplified English" (FG3) when teaching young children during internships, or practicum, at local schools. The two modes of EMI belong to a broader continuum of language use spanning from Arabic to English as follows: Standard Arabic, Local Arabic, Local Arabic and English, 'ECAE-flavour English,' 'Arabish,' functional English, Academic English, and Simplified English. Each mode is described below.

### **Standard Arabic**

According to the participants, Standard Arabic is the language used with "Arab people" (FG1) and serves as the lingua franca with speakers of other varieties of Arabic. While Standard Arabic is not used in everyday life, it is conceptualized as a public language featured in the media. The participants learned Standard Arabic in primary and secondary schools where it was the medium of instruction for all subjects, including English (FG3&4). Of note, the participants consider Standard Arabic to be somewhat indistinguishable from Classical Arabic, the language of the Quran. In other words, Classical Arabic is perceived as a more refined form of Standard Arabic.

### **Local Arabic**

Local Arabic, a largely spoken variety of Arabic, is used on a daily basis in public and private spheres. It is distinguished from Standard Arabic and is considered "informal" (FG3). Local Arabic is also affectionately called "our mother language" (FG2) as it signifies the first language acquired among family in the home. Local Arabic is also used with those employed to work in the home, namely maids and nannies, who have gradually acquired high-frequency expressions through daily interaction. The mother tongue is also used at the college with Emirati peers and employees working in administration or management and with college employees from other Arab countries familiarized with Local Arabic through residence in the UAE. Accordingly, Local Arabic is frequently used at this HE institution but mainly for social and administrative purposes.

### **Local Arabic-English**

English is also used in the home, however, the accounts of English use at home differ from Troudi and Jendli (2011)'s claim of increasing use in the home with parents, maids and drivers. When used at home, the participants cited it was used for studying, mainly with sisters who were also students in HE. In this sense, EMI use in HE fosters English use at home but is limited to discrete functions, such as consolidating learning. In this dynamic, code-switching occurs where stretches of Local Arabic talk are mixed with shorter stretches of English, described as adding English words to conversation in Arabic (FG4). In addition, systematic patterns of word borrowing are described, in which the lexical

categories of education, technology, and “simple” (FG4) emphatic expressions are regularly inserted into daily talk with siblings and, occasionally, with parents.

### **ECAE-Flavor English**

“ECAE-flavor English” (FG3) is a unique formula of Local Arabic talk with systematic patterns of English code-switching, word-borrowing, and word-blending. Identified as the preferred in-group talk with ECAE peers, this mode is viewed as “English and Arabic” (FG3) but “the major language is English” (FG2). While this practice is similar to the Local Arabic-English mode used at home, the hybrid talk at ECAE is distinguished by the incursion of word-blending. In the college-based mode, academic English words are added and sometimes inflected with an Arabic morpheme to allow flexible incorporation of English into Arabic talk. One participant called this “combining” (FG3) and exemplified this phenomena with the hybrid word ‘vocab-at’ where ‘vocabulary’ is shortened to ‘vocab’ and the Arabic morpheme ‘at’ is added as a suffix. Here, Arabic grammar is used to structure the sentences but professionally relevant English vocabulary generates the meaning and focus of the talk. This way of communicating is considered appropriate among fellow bilinguals in informal settings at the college.

### **“Arabish”**

Another hybrid language mode for use among bilingual peers is ‘Arabish’. ‘Arabish’ is an Arabic chat language using phonemes from Local Arabic talk with graphemes from the alphabet as well as numerals. As put by one participant, “letters are English letters but the pronunciation is Arabic” (FG1). While originally associated with digital communication among young Emirati women (Piecowye, 2003), it serves as written communication for the spoken language. Of particular note, this mode is no longer limited to the digital realm since the participants reported that they also use it for informal, handwritten notes. As qualified by a participant, this representation of ‘Arabish’ was a clear and rational choice since “if I wrote the letters in Arabic and the word, the meaning of the word is English, she might get confused” (FG1).

### **Functional English**

Among the three English modes referenced here, functional English is the most prevalent in Abu Dhabi. It is perhaps best understood as a register of English activated in public places when addressing needs and wants, such as hospitals, supermarkets, and shopping malls. Accordingly, intelligible communication was prioritized in order “to avoid misunderstanding” (FG3). Functional English, as a public mode of communication, is valued when clear and easy to understand, and, thus, enabling use with diverse speakers of English. In this mode, simple words are prioritized over academic words (FG1). Functional English is activated with native-speakers of English and non-native English speaker alike, regardless of professional status, who are identified as “non-Arabic” (FG4); or “foreign” (FG2). Since these users “don’t have the ability to talk in Arabic” (FG1), Functional English serves as a default lingua franca in Abu Dhabi, in contexts where exchanging information is prioritized over building friendships (van den Hoven, 2014). This mode operates at the college but outside of the classroom, namely the hallways, canteen, and, occasionally, in the student lounge.

### **Academic English**

Face-to-face communication in English with instructors at the college has shaped the designations of EMI as a “formal” (FG3) and “academic language” (FG4). The presence of an instructor in a classroom, regardless of mother-tongue status, signals the use of this English mode. In contrast to the purpose of functional English, this mode is for “classroom discussion and presentation [sic]” (FG1), where emphasis is on expressing concrete and abstract ideas orally. However, the active use of EMI across the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening with different instructors and in different subject areas is credited as the “easy” (FG3) process of acquiring high-level vocabulary, such as ‘globalization’ and ‘phenomenon’ (FG3). Of note, the student-centred pedagogy associated with the use of English across the curriculum was positively evaluated as “comfortable [and] beneficial” (FG3).

### **Simplified English**

EMI was also experienced as a language for teaching English, Math, and Science to Emirati children during teaching internships in Abu Dhabi government schools. The defining feature of this English mode is the use of simple words that can break down the concepts and language (FG4). Positive associations of learning English have been profoundly shaped by female Emirati teachers who, as early as grade 1, introduced that learning the new language of English was sanctioned by Islamic thinking for promoting intercultural learning (FG4). Also, courses which recognized the participants’ bilingualism and identified strategies to integrate content and language learning were also credited for their emerging professionalism as EMTs. However, their experiences of using EMI in internships generated critical reflections in favour of using Arabic for teaching Science but also disdain for the teacher-centered pedagogy they had experienced as students in Arabic classes, which one participant called “rote teaching” (FG3).

## **Discussion**

This exploration of the sociolinguistic dimensions of English and Arabic use in Abu Dhabi is a response to the curricular changes redefining primary education in Abu Dhabi and processes of internationalization supporting the use of English in HE. This study contributes to educational research in the Arabian Gulf by offering a preliminary schematization of where, when, with whom, and how communication in English and Arabic happens in a HE setting. The construct of language mode developed through research on bilingualism enables a description of eight zones, or domains, of conversational activity in English and Arabic. These, in turn, promote greater clarity on patterns of EMI use at a teacher-training college in terms of locating its use along a broader continuum of language use in Abu Dhabi.

Further research into the designations accorded to English and Arabic can follow from this study to update Findlow (2006)’s typology. Themes in the local and regional literature, which support the polarization of English and Arabic, in which the two languages are treated as homogenous entities, and, furthermore, as languages which oppose each other (van den Hoven, 2014), should be critically examined given that few studies articulate the routinized use of non-Standard varieties of Arabic and English. An exception is a study by

Kennetz, vandenHoven, and Parkman (2011), which examines the attitudes Emirati students hold toward six different varieties of English prevalent in the UAE, which recognizes UAE students as emergent bilinguals. When bilingualism is featured in the literature, the employment of a subtractive view of bilingualism is frequently indicated when interpreting the effects of developing proficiency in more than one language. However, it does not necessarily follow that learning more of one language means a loss in another. This study supports research employing an additive approach in which English and Arabic belong to differentiated zones of conversational activity.

One limitation of this study is that no suggestions guiding EMI use in HE are offered. That said, this study offers some grounds to re-evaluate the literature on English and Arabic in education with fresh considerations for further research on EMI in HE in the Arabian Gulf. Firstly, although gendered patterns of communication in HE lay outside the scope of the study, subtle references to language used among and between males and females were detected and, when examined, could yield interesting findings. Gender-segregation, after all, is socially prescribed and its impact on code-choice is under-researched (Levine, 2011). Secondly, according to Kennetz et al. (2011), Emirati students are not sophisticated in differentiating varieties of English. However, this study reveals that Emirati students are rather facile at describing varieties of Arabic although appropriate meta-language was not applied. In other words, in this study, differentiation of Local Arabic from other regional varieties was supported by phonological, lexical, and grammatical distinctions, offering some scope to delve into the linguistic awareness of how varieties of Arabic (as well as English) differ. Lastly, the bold assertions that Local Arabic was used more than English in daily life, particularly in face-to-face spoken interactions including those at the college, display the genuine warmth for Arabic as the language of their lifeblood. The role of Arabic as the “socially dominant language” (Levine, 2011) in this region remains unquestioned yet the use of EMI in the domain of HE was valued positively. As such, further research into the ways in which differentiated use of Arabic in HE contexts using EMI not only gives rise to linguistic innovation, but also affects conceptions of EMI is heartily recommended.

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# **ADJUSTING THE “INTERNATIONAL” TO FIT THE CONSERVATIVE “NATIONAL”: THE CASE OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN SAUDI ARABIA**

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## **Introduction**

Although international schools originated in Europe, they are currently spread all around the world and have shown dramatic expansion over the last few decades (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). The growing interest in this type of schooling has been mainly triggered by the rise in the number of internationally mobile professionals seeking job opportunities overseas in the company of their families and children (Walker & Cheong, 2009). However, international schools have multi-cultural student populations which transcend the narrow scope of expatriate elite to include an increasing number of local students from the host country.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been no exception. Large numbers of professionals from different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds are moving to the country with their families. As a consequence, international schools have been crucial. The demand for these schools among Saudi households has been high, and the government has responded by allowing more locals to attend these schools (MOE, 2009). The expansion of this type of education can be problematic in a conservative country like Saudi Arabia which has distinct sets of beliefs, social values, and cultural traditions that can be in dissonance with the ethos, values, and modes of working adopted by international schools. This paper explores such dissonance and considers its implications for educational policy.

## **What are International Schools?**

There is no scholarly consensus on the nature of international schools as well as on the definition of the term "international school". Generally, international schools have been associated with the notion of educating children outside of their own national context (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). It has also been linked to the notion of international education (Hayden & Thompson, 1998). A few attempts have been made to provide a clear definition of the term. For instance, the Hong Kong government Education Department defines international schools as "schools which follow a non-local curriculum and whose students do not sit for the local examinations ... They are operated with curricula designed for the needs of a particular cultural, racial or linguistic group or for students wishing to pursue their studies overseas" (Education Department, 1995, cited in Bray & Yamato, 2003, p. 54).

Hill (1994) provides further clarification of the term by providing a useful list of the main features of international schools. According to him, international schools are schools that:

- have students and staff representing a number of cultural and ethnic origins;

- offer the IB and/or a number of different national courses and examinations;
- adopt internationalism rather than nationalism as their ethos;
- may serve local and varied expatriate community of business people, diplomats, armed forces personnel;
- may attract resident students from all over the world;
- are usually either proprietary schools, owned and controlled by one or two individuals, or are private schools governed by a board of directors consisting mainly of parents; and
- are usually fee-paying, scholarship-funded, or both (cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995, p.336).

Due to the diverse needs of different expatriate communities, there are variations of international schools. As mentioned, while many schools cater for the needs of a culturally diverse student population and provide international programs, such as the International GCSE (IGCSE) or the International Baccalaureate (IB), others are in fact schools which provide teaching in the national curriculum of a particular country but are located in a foreign country. Students who plan to join university education offered in that curriculum enroll in such schools (Hayden & Thompson, 1998, p.551). The existence of this variation has implications for the ethos said to be adopted by international schools. As Mackenzie and his colleagues (2003) suggest, "the term 'international school' is not, in itself, any guarantee of a particular ethos or philosophy of education" (p. 300). Hayden and Thompson (1995) also argue that "for the most part the body of international schools is a conglomeration of individual institutions which may or may not share an underlying educational philosophy" (p. 329).

### **Why International Schools are Expanding**

The prevalence of international schools has been fueled by a constellation of factors. Prominent among these is global mobility. There has been a dramatic growth in the number of internationally mobile professionals working for multinational companies and international organizations (Hayden & Thompson, 2000). Increasingly, these professionals are accompanied by their families and children when they move to a new job location (Mackenzie et al., 2003). When children accompany their parents on such overseas postings, they become "global nomads", referring to a "person of any age or nationality who has lived a significant part of his or her developmental years in one or more countries outside his or her passport country because of a parent's occupation" (Schaetti, 1998, cited in McLachlan, 2008, p. 94). As soon as they settle with their children overseas, parents are confronted with a dilemma: how to arrange appropriate education for their children away from their own national system? International schools arose primarily as a response to this dilemma as they cater to a perceived need on the part of those households and are educational institutions that provide forms of education that may not be available in local schools (Hayden & Thompson, 1998, p.551)

The growing interest in international schools has been generated by changing school demographics. International schools no longer serve solely the children of expatriate elite,

but rather have a more diverse student population including an increasing number of local students from the host country (Walker & Cheong, 2009). Reasons for this shift include what Hayden and Thompson (1998, p.552) term "pragmatic concerns," referring to local students' interest in taking examinations that are acceptable for university entrance in a number of countries. International certificates such as the IGCSE or the IB are seen by many parents as a ticket to international higher education because they allow students to study abroad (Mackenzie et al., 2003). Dissatisfaction with national education systems (Bray & Yamato, 2003), and interest in high quality English language instruction and enhanced intercultural awareness have also been cited as contributing factors (Walker & Cheong, 2009).

### **International Schools in KSA**

As a result of the economic boom which KSA experienced in the past few decades, there has been a dramatic surge in the numbers of professionals moving with their families to the kingdom. A recent study published by the Population Division of the United Nations ranked KSA as fourth in hosting the largest number of foreign manpower worldwide, with 9.1 million expatriate workers and professionals in the country (DESA, 2013). These workers have different ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds which make it quite difficult for them to enroll their children in Saudi public schools. This has created the need for alternative, international schools which cater to the educational needs of expatriate children.

In response, a decision was made by the government in 1974 to establish the first international school with the purpose of serving solely the children of non-Muslim expatriates in the country. The school was called "The International Arabic Saudi School" and had two branches in Jeddah and Dhahran. The following years witnessed a rapid growth in the number of international schools authorized by the government. These schools varied from those serving a particular expatriate community (e.g., the Pakistani school, the Indian school, the British school) and applying the curricula of their respective national systems, to those owned by Saudi investors and serving a more diverse student population (Al-Eriefy, 2011). According to data from the Ministry of Education (MOE) (2013), there are as many as 501 international schools in the Kingdom, serving 301,213 students, and the number is on the rise.

A new dimension to this phenomenon is a growing demand for international schools among Saudi households. Statistics from the MOE (2013) indicate that there are 11,616 Saudi students enrolled in these schools. This has been the result of a significant shift in admission policy: until 2009, enrollment in these schools was exclusive to expatriates. Admission of Saudis was limited to children of families returning from abroad and they were allowed only a maximum transitional period of three years in the international schools, after which they were required to transfer to public education (MOE, 1999). In 2009, as a response to public pressure, the MOE introduced changes to its educational policy allowing more Saudi children to attend international schools (MOE, 2009).

The expansion of international schools in a conservative country such as Saudi Arabia, coupled with the increasing demand for this type of schooling among Saudi households, can be problematic. International schools have their own educational philosophy, culture, and modes of operation that may be at odds with the culture prevalent in Saudi schools and the traditions of Saudi society at large. Hayden and Thompson (1998, p.562) posit that the dissonance found between the cultures prevalent in international schools and the conservative culture of the host nation can compromise the relationship between the school and the community in which it operates. The challenge can be even greater if the school is perceived by society as a threat to its culture and values.

### **International Schools: A Threat to Saudi National Identity?**

There have been concerns among conservative Saudis that international schools can pose a threat to national identity. These concerns have been particularly reflected in a number of religious opinions (*fatwas*) given by renowned Saudi scholars prohibiting the establishment of international schools in the kingdom, and calling upon Muslim parents to abstain from sending their children to these schools (see for example Fatwa no. 20096 issued on 22/12/1418 H. by the Permanent Committee for Fatwa in KSA). Bakr Abu Zeid, a famous Saudi scholar, wrote a book in which he discussed what he considered "dangers" of sending Muslim children to international schools. He saw the expansion of these schools as part of a "plot" developed by the enemies of Islam to undermine Muslims and to drive them away from their Islamic identity (Abu Zeid, 2000).

However, there has not been much empirical evidence to support the aforementioned claims. Only one study was conducted in the Saudi context to explore the impact of international schools on students' cultural identity. The study was comparative in nature and sought to examine the views of a sample of students from both secondary international and public schools in Riyadh regarding five dimensions of their cultural identity; namely the religious, social, cognitive, psychological, and political dimensions. The study found that international schools had a negative impact on students' cultural identity in the five dimensions and that students of public schools were more appreciative of their identity than their peers in international schools (Al-Eriefy, 2011).

More empirical research is needed in order to explore the impact of international schools on Saudi students' identity. However, the concerns underlined by Al-Eriefy's (2011) study and conservative religious leaders indicate that international schools in the country are facing challenges rooted in the apparent paradoxes between how international schools and Saudi public schools approach education. For the purpose of this paper, two paradoxes are addressed in the following section.

### **Secular vs. Religious Approaches to Education**

There is no solid evidence in the literature that suggests that international schools are secular or religious in nature. However, since they serve diverse student populations, which may include students from different religious backgrounds, international schools are expected to adopt non-religious approaches to education. Some researchers use the term "non-religious" as synonymous with "secular" (Ameli et al., 2006). A secular education

system can be defined as one that is not based on any divine faith (Khan, 2010, p.87), whereas a religious education system is one that is developed along the lines of a particular divine scripture, in which a particular religious ethos is nurtured, and subjects are taught from a religious perspective (Hewer, 2001). Based on these two definitions, international schools can be classified as secular. Adopting a secular approach to education would help these schools meet the needs of their multi-ethnic, multi-faith student population rather than aligning themselves with a particular religion. Advocates of secular education suggest that it promotes religious freedom by preventing the domination of minorities by the majority. They call for an alternative approach to religious education whereby students are educated 'about' rather than 'for' religion. This can be achieved by teaching religion from a comparative perspective (Marshall, 2011, p.127).

However, whether such an approach will appeal to religious parents is a different matter. Iddrisu (2002) indicates that while some secular schools tend to introduce some aspects of religious instruction in order to attract religious families, this may fail to encourage those families to send their children to secular schools as they see the proportion of religious instruction provided as insufficient.

Secular approaches to education are perceived to be in dissonance with the predominantly religious nature of Saudi public education. While public schools in KSA cannot be classified as "faith schools" per se, they adopt a religious approach to education and the ethos and environment of these schools is guided by religious teachings. This is not surprising because, as Hamdan (2005) points out, "[T]he history of education in Saudi Arabia indicates that the structure of the educational apparatus and the content of teaching have been formulated to preserve the country's religious foundations" (p.57).

This is clearly evidenced in the heavy emphasis placed on religious instruction throughout the whole public education system. For instance, in primary schools about 30 percent of weekly hours are allocated to religious subjects; this proportion is 24 percent in intermediate schools. And in secondary school, in the Shari'a and Arabic track, approximately 35 percent of weekly hours are allocated to religious subjects, and about 14 percent for those in the technical and natural science track. Emphasis on Islamic teachings is also evident in History and Arabic literature classes (Prokop, 2003, p.79). The situation is different in international schools which are required (by a regulation issued in 2009) to provide at least 50 percent of the amount of Islamic instruction provided in public schools (MOE, 2009). It is not clear to what extent the schools abide by this obligation. However, a study of Islamic education in Saudi international schools has found that it suffered from several problems. These problems included negligence of Islamic classes by both the school administration staff and the students, lack of extra-curricular activities related to Islamic subjects, and low quality of Islamic education teachers (Al-Maneea, 2006). This finding might well explain the perceptions of religious leaders regarding the potential negative impact of international schools on students' identity.

### **Multicultural vs. Mono-cultural Approaches to Education**

Multicultural education has been promoted as a means of resolving "mono-cultural nationalism" found in some societies where people are normally reluctant to mix with



others. Interest in multicultural education has been fueled by the rapid increase of migrant children and the consequent need to integrate them into their new societies (Kang, 2010). This has relevance for international schools where student populations are often highly diverse in multiple ways. These schools serve a student population representing different national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. This necessitates a multicultural approach to education that promotes values such as tolerance, empathy, and intercultural understanding (Mackenzie et al., 2003). Mono-cultural approaches may not be appropriate in this context as they run counter to the promotion of such values. As Taieb-Carlen (1992) suggests, mono-cultural practice in a multicultural context can lead to serious identity problems among students. A recommended alternative is multicultural education, providing all students the opportunity to learn about their own culture and those of others. This will have implications for such concepts as citizenship and identity which cannot be defined "through mono-cultural, nationalistic, and legalistic perspectives", but rather have "cosmopolitan" and "global" dimensions (Alviar-Martin, 2011, p. 46). International schools can be seen as providing appropriate contexts in which the concepts of "multiple citizenship" and multiple identities are most prevalent. They seek to "[inculcate] in students a civic consciousness that [encompasses] contexts from the local to the global" (Alviar-Martin, 2011, p. 44).

This global, multicultural approach stands in contrast to the ethnocentric school culture prevalent in Saudi public schools. Although hundreds of thousands of children from other Arab countries are enrolled in Saudi schools (see MOE, 2013), the system adopts a mono-cultural approach which mainly propagates Saudi culture and values. This can be clearly seen in the heavy emphasis placed on the creation and preservation of Saudi "national identity" throughout the different stages of the educational system. More particularly, the state's aim of unifying the nation and creating a shared Saudi identity has always been evident in history textbooks which glorify the role of king Abdul Aziz in unifying the tribes and restoring security and order, while ignoring important developments and critical events in the rest of the Arab world (Prokop, 2003, p.80). As Hamdan (2005) argues, the country's unity has been long held as synonymous with "strong leadership" and it is through the public education system that this unity is being preserved.

### **Policy Adjustments**

Bearing in mind the existing concerns over the expansion of international schools, policymakers in KSA have adopted certain measures mainly to contextualize these schools within the conservative culture of Saudi society and to reduce the potential negative consequences as perceived by the concerned authorities. Three main policies are:

#### *1. Restricting admission of Saudi students*

As mentioned earlier, admission of Saudi students into international schools was previously exclusive to children of Saudi families returning from abroad, and limited to a maximum period of 3 years. In 2009, a new regulation issued by the General Administration of Foreign Education relaxed restrictions on admission into international schools owned by Saudi investors, yet conditional upon the school fulfilling the following requirements:



- Be accredited by a recognized organization;
- Provide Islamic instruction, Arabic language, and Saudi history and geography to its students, with a minimum acceptable amount of 50 percent of what public schools offer; and
- Receive necessary approval from the General Administration of Foreign Education prior to enrolling Saudi children. (MOE, 2009)

## *2. Imposing conditions for granting licenses to international schools*

The MOE has imposed certain conditions that must be fulfilled before granting a license for an international school. According to a regulation issued in 2001, applicants seeking a license for an international school must sign a pledge that the school will:

- Be headed by a Saudi principal approved by the MOE;
- Comply with Islamic rules and respect the moral and political principles of the Kingdom;
- Be committed to teach only the program it was authorized to teach;
- Be subject to inspection by MOE officials and provide the inspectors with all the documents and information they need;
- Provide entirely segregated education for boys and girls; and,
- Ensure that its curriculum contains Arabic language, Islamic instruction, and Saudi history and geography (MOE, 2001).

## *3. Providing international programs within already existing private schools*

In 2006, the MOE authorized high performing private (Arabic) schools to provide international programs. The programs included the International Baccalaureate (IB), the American Diploma, and the British IGCSE. The main purpose of such a step was to reduce the number of Saudi students enrolling in international schools by providing them with a convenient alternative. Permission to offer international programs is still subject to meeting criteria similar to those required of international schools (Al-Seheem, 2010).

## **Conclusion**

This paper explored the current status of international schools within the Saudi education context. It particularly highlighted the dissonance between the more open, liberal approaches to education prevalent in international schools and the conservative nature of those adopted by the public education system. Saudi households' interest in international schools has been on the rise and concerns have been raised by conservative religious leaders about the potential negative impact of this type of schooling on Saudi students' cultural identity.

Certain measures have therefore been taken by policymakers in order to counterbalance this impact. These include restricting admission of Saudi children, imposing criteria for granting license to new international schools, and allowing existing private schools to provide international programs. The impact of these measures is not yet known. It is not clear to what extent these regulations are being observed by the schools as this is a neglected area of investigation. What is clear, however, is that such measures will likely

make the environment in which the international schools are operating more challenging. The schools are required to provide high quality educational service that meets the needs of their diverse student population, whilst at the same time aligning themselves with the conservative culture of Saudi society and complying with the regulations put forward by the MOE. An area ripe for future research is to examine how these challenges manifest themselves on the ground.

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# METHODS OF DEVELOPING ADMINISTRATIVE INNOVATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN THE NORTHERN AL-SHARQYAH REGION OF OMAN

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أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية  
علي بن سعيد بن سليم المطري  
وزارة التربية والتعليم  
سلطنة عمان

## المقدمة:

لعل استمرار التقدم العلمي والتطور التقني الذي حققته البشرية في مختلف المجالات يتطلب النظرة المتجددة للأشياء وتوليد الأفكار الجديدة وتشجيع الإبداع، وخاصة في الدول النامية التي تسعى جاهدة إلى اللحاق بركب التقدم العلمي والتطور التقني، لذا أصبح الاهتمام بالإبداع والمبدعين في الدول المتقدمة والنامية على السواء ضرورة قصوى في العصر الحديث ، ويرجع ذلك إلى أهمية الإبداع في تطور المجتمعات وتقدمها، وكذلك كونه الأداة الرئيسة للإنسان في مواجهة المشكلات الحياتية المختلفة وتحديات المستقبل.

وقد نال موضوع الإبداع الإداري اهتماماً كبيراً من كتاب الإدارة والباحثين الذين أوصوا في دراساتهم بمواصلة البحوث والدراسات الميدانية في موضوع الإبداع الإداري في مختلف المنظمات الإدارية، وذلك في ظل التطورات السريعة التي أفرزتها مستجدات العولمة والتحرر الاقتصادي والثقافي والتطور التقني، وتأثيراتها على أداء المنظمة ورفقيها. والمؤسسات التعليمية هي إحدى المؤسسات المهمة في الدولة والذي يجب أن توفر المناخ الإداري التنظيمي الإبداعي الملائم والمشجع لموظفيها على العمل الإبداعي، وإظهار إبداعهم في التعامل مع المشكلات التي تواجههم نظراً لأهمية الدور الذي تقوم به هذه المؤسسات في عملية التنمية بشكل عام. وعينت سلطنة عمان بالإبداع عناية خاصة، فقد جاء في خطاب جلالة السلطان قابوس بن سعيد المعظم عام 1995م:

" إن التنمية ليست بغاية في حد ذاتها، وإنما هي من أجل بناء الإنسان الذي هو أدواتها وصانعها، ومن ثم ينبغي ألا نتوقف عند مفهوم تحقيق ثروة مادية وبناء اقتصاد متنوع، بل عليها أن تتعدى ذلك إلى تكوين المواطن القادر على الإسهام بجدارة ووعي في مسيرة النماء والبناء الشامل، وذلك من خلال تطوير قدراته الفنية والمهنية، وحفز طاقاته الإبداعية والعلمية، وصقل مهاراته المتنوعة، وتوجيه كل ذلك نحو خدمة الوطن وسعادة المواطنين". (وزارة الإعلام، 1995، 428).

ويتأثر التعليم إلى حد كبير بما يحدثه مدير المدرسة من تطور في أداء العاملين معه، إذ أن نجاح مدير المدرسة في أداء رسالته يتوقف على ما يمتلكه من جوانب إبداعية وإدارية تساعد على إحداث هذا التطوير.

## مشكلة الدراسة :

لقد لاحظ الباحث من خلال عمله في وزارة التربية والتعليم وجود حالة من ضعف الاهتمام بالجانب الإبداعي لدى مديري مدارس التعليم العام والأساسي، مما قد يخلق مردوداً سلبياً على العملية التعليمية، وللتأكد من هذه الملاحظات وصدقها فقد أجرى الباحث دراسة استطلاعية هدفت إلى التعرف على رأي بعض مديري المدارس المتعلق بواقع الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره من حيث التطبيق والممارسة في العملية الإدارية في المؤسسات التعليمية لديهم، والذين ينتمون لمجتمع الدراسة، شملت عينة الدراسة 11 مديراً و 4 مديرات، ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة قام الباحث بإعداد استبانة لاستطلاع رأي بعض مديري المدارس حول واقع الإبداع الإداري ومعوقاته وأساليب تطويره، وللتأكد من صدق الاستبانة تم عرضها على مجموعة من المحكمين ، وتم التأكد من ثباتها بتطبيقها على عينة استطلاعية وحساب معامل ألفا كرونباخ وكانت قيمته = 0,9، وقد استخدمت استبانة متدرجة وفقاً لمقياس ليكرت. وقد أشارت نتائج الدراسة الاستطلاعية إلى تدني مستوى الإبداع الإداري لدى أفراد العينة الاستطلاعية.

الأمر الذي يبرر الحاجة إلى دراسة أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري لدى مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية. حيث أن موضوع الإبداع الإداري يعتبر المفتاح والمدخل لعمل التغيير المطلوب في واقع العملية الإدارية في المؤسسات التعليمية.

**أسئلة الدراسة:** تحاول الدراسة الإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية:

- 1- ما الأسس النظرية للإبداع الإداري في الفكر الإداري المعاصر؟
- 2- ما واقع الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية؟
- 3- ما مدى الفروق ذات الدلالة الإحصائية لدى مديري المدارس حول واقع الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره في محافظة شمال الشرقية، تعزى لمتغيرات الجنس، والخبرة الإدارية والمرحلة الدراسية؟
- 4- ما التصور المقترح لتنمية الإبداع الإداري لمديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية؟

**أهداف الدراسة:** تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على:

- الأسس النظرية للإبداع الإداري في الفكر الإداري المعاصر.
- واقع الإبداع الإداري من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية.
- أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية.
- أثر بعض المتغيرات المؤثرة على واقع الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية في كل من (الجنس ، والخبرة الإدارية، والمرحلة الدراسية).
- التصور المقترح لتنمية الإبداع الإداري في محافظة شمال الشرقية.

## حدود الدراسة:

اقتصرت هذه الدراسة على ثلاثة محاور تم من خلالها التعرف على أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية بسلطنة عمان وهي (واقع الإبداع الإداري، معوقات الإبداع الإداري، أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري) في العام الدراسي 2007/2008م.

**منهج الدراسة:** اتبع الباحث في هذه الدراسة الحالية المنهج الوصفي التحليلي من خلال التعرف وتحليل واقع الإبداع الإداري ومعوقاته وأساليب تطويره من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في المنطقة الشرقية في سلطنة عمان.

## مصطلحات الدراسة:

### الإبداع

إجرائيا في هذه الدراسة يقصد به: توظيف أمثل للقدرات العقلية والفكرية التي تتميز بأكبر قدر من الطلاقة والمرونة والأصالة والحساسية للمشكلات والقدرة على تحليلها، بما يؤدي إلى تكوين ترابطات واكتشاف علاقات أو أفكار أو أساليب عمل جديدة داخل المنظمات الإدارية

### الإبداع الإداري

إجرائيا في هذه الدراسة يقصد به : جميع الأفعال الفردية الموجهة نحو استنباط وتبني وتطبيق الأفكار المميزة والمفيدة على مستوى التنظيم، ويمكن أن تحدث هذه الأفكار المميزة تغييرات جديدة في الأساليب الإدارية تساعد على توليد قدرات عقلية متميزة وطلاقة ينتج عنها أفكار مبتكرة وطرق حل غير مألوفة تضم عناصر المرونة والأصالة والطلاقة وحل المشكلات والمخاطرة وتسهم بفاعلية في حل المشكلات الفردية والجماعية والمؤسسية.

### المعوقات:

إجرائيا في هذه الدراسة يقصد بها العقبات والصعوبات البيئية والتنظيمية والشخصية التي تحد من الإبداع الإداري في المؤسسات التعليمية.

### أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري:

إجرائيا في هذه الدراسة يقصد بها: مجموعة الطرق والوسائل والإجراءات التي تعمل على رفع مستوى الإبداع الإداري لدى العاملين في المؤسسات التعليمية.

**-مدير المدرسة:** إجرائيا في هذه الدراسة يعرف بأنه شخص تقع على عاتقه مهام القيادة التربوية بمدرسته والعمل على تنفيذ سياسة الوزارة، من حيث إعداد الخطة والموازنة السنوية للمدرسة، والإشراف على إعداد الجدول المدرسي، ومتابعة احتياجات المدرسة من الكوادر الفنية والإدارية، والعمل على توفيرها، وعقد لقاءات دورية مع الهيئة التدريسية والإدارية والفنية لتطوير الأداء .

### مجتمع الدراسة وعينتها:

تكون مجتمع الدراسة من مديري مدارس التعليم الأساسي والتعليم العام بمحافظة شمال الشرقية، البالغ عددهم ( 82 ) مديراً ومديرة، أما بالنسبة لعينة الدراسة فقد شملت (30) مديراً ومديرة، وتمثل عينة الدراسة ما نسبته 36,6% من مجتمع الدراسة الكلي وقد تم توزيع الاستبانة على جميع أفراد العينة فكانت درجة الاستجابة 100%، تم توزيع أفراد عينة الدراسة حسب الجنس، والخبرة الإدارية، والمرحلة الدراسية، ويبين الجدول رقم (1) ذلك.

توزيع أفراد عينة الدراسة وفقاً للخبرة الإدارية		
النسبة المئوية	التكرار	الخبرة
20%	6	سنوات (1-5)
33,3%	10	سنوات (6-10)
46,7%	14	سنة فأكثر 11
100%	30	المجموع
توزيع أفراد عينة الدراسة وفقاً للمرحلة الدراسية		
النسبة المئوية	التكرار	المرحلة الدراسية
13,3%	4	ابتدائي
20%	6	إعدادي
66,7%	02	ثانوي
100%	30	المجموع

### أداة الدراسة:

تم تطوير أداة (استبانة) لهذه الدراسة بعد الاطلاع على الأدب النظري المتصل بالدراسات السابقة المتعلقة بموضوع الدراسة، وقد استخدم الباحث لتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة استبانة مكونة من قسمين:

1-القسم الأول: ويشتمل على المعلومات أو البيانات العامة عن المستجيب في مجتمع الدراسة وهي: الجنس، و الخبرة الإدارية والمرحلة الدراسية.

2-القسم الثاني: (استبانة) الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية، وقد تألفت هذه الاستبانة من(31) فقرة، وقد وزعت الاستبانة على أبعاد الدراسة التالية:



1. واقع الإبداع الإداري ، ولقد تألف هذا البعد من (11) فقرة.

2. معوقات الإبداع الإداري، وقد تألف هذا البعد من (10) فقرات.

3. أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري، وقد تألف هذا البعد من (10) فقرات.

وللإجابة عن كل فقرة من قبل المدير أو المديرة وفق مدرج خماسي حسب مقياس ليكرت وذلك على النحو الآتي:

1. "بدرجة كبير جداً" وتأخذ درجة (5).

2. "بدرجة كبيرة" وتأخذ درجة (4).

3. "بدرجة متوسط" وتأخذ درجة (3).

4. "بدرجة قليل" وتأخذ درجة (2).

5. "بدرجة قليل جداً" وتأخذ درجة (1).

**صدق الأداة:** تم عرضها في صورتها الأولية على مجموعة من ذوي الاختصاص في الإرشاد النفسي والتوجيه والإدارة التربوية، ونظم المعلومات، وقسم اللغة الإنجليزية، وعلوم المكتبات في جامعة نزوى، وبعض المختصين في علم الاجتماع ومناهج طرق التدريس، قد بلغ عدد المحكمين ثمانية

**ثبات الأداة:** تم حساب معامل الاتساق الداخلي لكل مجال من مجالات الإدارة، باستخراج معامل ألفا كرونباخ ( Cronbach Alpha)، وذلك بعد تطبيق الأداة على عينة الدراسة المؤلفة من (30) مديراً ومديرة مدرسة. وقد أشارت النتائج إلى أن معاملات الاتساق الداخلي لأبعاد الدراسة المكونة للاستبانة تراوحت ما بين (0,82 و 0,96) بوسيط مقداره (0,90)، هذا ويبين الجدول رقم (2) معاملات الاتساق الداخلي لأبعاد الدراسة والبعد الكلي المكون لاستبانة الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية.

الأبعاد	معامل الاتساق الداخلي
البعد الأول: واقع الإبداع الإداري	0,82
البعد الثاني: معوقات الإبداع الإداري	0,90
البعد الثالث: أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري	0,96
البعد الكلي	0,89

وقد بلغ معامل الاتساق الداخلي بطريقة كرونباخ ألفا (Cronbach Alpha) للمقياس ككل بدون تعديل (0,89).

### متغيرات الدراسة:

تم قياس أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري لمديري المدارس بمحافظة شمال الشرقية في ضوء ثلاثة متغيرات وهي (الجنس، والخبرة، والمرحلة الدراسية).

#### 1. المتغيرات المستقلة وتشمل:

1. الجنس: وله مستويان (ذكور، وإناث).

2. الخبرة: ولها ثلاثة مستويات، (1-5) سنوات، (6-10) سنوات، (11 سنة فأكثر).

3. المرحلة الدراسية: ولها ثلاثة مستويات، ابتدائي، إعدادي، ثانوي.

#### المعالجة الاحصائية:-

وللإجابة عن أسئلة الدراسة، تم استخراج المتوسطات الحسابية، والانحراف المعياري والأهمية النسبية لأداء أفراد العينة على كل بعد من الأبعاد الفرعية والبعد الكلي لمقياس الإبداع الإداري، ثم حساب المتوسطات والانحرافات المعيارية، واختبار (ت) لعينتين مستقلتين. واختبار تحليل التباين الأحادي (One Way Anova)، واختبار شيفيه (Scheffe Test) للمقارنات المتعددة البعدية بين المتوسطات. والنسب المئوية لوصف خصائص عينة الدراسة، ولتحديد درجة الاستجابة تجاه محاور وأبعاد الدراسة التي تضمنتها الأداة. وبعد الانتهاء من جمع البيانات تم تحليلها باستخدام الرزم الإحصائية في العلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS). ولتقدير الإبداع الإداري، فقد تم اعتماد العلامات الفعلية لغاية تحديد درجات التقدير، حيث تم تصنيفها إلى ثلاثة مستويات (كبيرة، متوسطة، قليلة) وظهرت هذه المستويات على النحو الآتي:

المدى		درجة التقدير
إلى	من	
2,49	1	قليلة
3,49	2,50	متوسطة
فما فوق	3,50	كبيرة

#### أولاً: مناقشة النتائج المتعلقة بالسؤال الأول: "ما الأسس النظرية للإبداع الإداري في الفكر الإداري المعاصر؟"

للإجابة عن هذا السؤال تطرق الباحث في الإطار النظري إلى الإبداع الإداري من حيث أصوله الفلسفية ومفهومه ومكوناته وعناصره وخصائصه ومراحله وأنواعه ومعوقاته، وعلاقة الإبداع بالإدارة وأساليب تطويره حيث توصل الباحث إلى نماذج متعددة لتطوير الإبداع الإداري وتنوعت من حيث الأهداف والمحتوى والفئة المستهدفة، حيث قام الباحث بوضع تصور مقترح لتطوير الإبداع الإداري من خلال الإطلاع على هذه النماذج والدراسات السابقة.

ثانياً: مناقشة النتائج المتعلقة بالسؤال الثاني: "ما واقع الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره من وجهة نظر مديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية وذلك على كل بعد من الأبعاد الفرعية الذي يقيسها مقياس الإبداع الإداري وعلى البعد الكلي؟"

وللإجابة عن هذا السؤال فقد تم حساب الأوساط الحسابية، والانحرافات المعيارية لاستجابات أفراد العينة على أبعاد الدراسة، والأداة الكلية.

يتبين أن الدراسة قد حصلت على درجة تطبيق "عالية" حيث بلغ المتوسط الحسابي لاستجابة أفراد العينة (3,58)، وهذه النتيجة تتفق مع ما توصلت إليه دراسة الحرمي (2003) التي أشارت إلى أن تقديرات أفراد عينة الدراسة لمدى ممارسة أسس الإبداع الإداري الفعال بمدارس التعليم الثانوي في سلطنة عمان بدرجة "عالية".

وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن البعد الثالث "أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري" قد احتل المرتبة الأولى بين جميع الأبعاد وذلك بدرجة تطبيق "كبيرة" حيث بلغ المتوسط الحسابي لاستجابة المديرين (4,02)، ويعزو الباحث إعطاء الأولوية لهذا البعد، لأنها تمثل قاعدة ارتكاز عريضة في تحديد أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري، وتتفق نتيجة هذه الدراسة مع دراسة سليمان (2004) التي أشارت إلى أن الحاجة إلى تنمية الإبداع لدى الإنسان في ظل التحديات الموجودة هو مطلب أساسي لكي تلحق بركب التقدم العلمي والحضاري.

وجاء البعد الأول "واقع الإبداع الإداري" في المرتبة الثانية بمتوسط حسابي (3,86) وانحراف معياري (0,58)، ويمثل هذا البعد درجة عالية لاستجابة أفراد العينة، ويعزي الباحث حصول هذا البعد على المرتبة الثانية بسبب يعود إلى أن مديري المدارس لديهم الحرص الشديد على الاعتماد التام على الأنظمة والقوانين واللوائح التنظيمية في اتخاذ القرار بشكل مباشر وذلك لتطبيق نهج وزارة التربية والتعليم في تنفيذ اللائحة التنظيمية للمدارس بالسلطنة على اختلاف مراحلها، وتتفق نتيجة هذه الدراسة مع دراسة سليمان (2004) التي أشارت إلى أن الحاجة إلى تنمية الإبداع لدى الإنسان في ظل التحديات الموجودة هو مطلب أساسي لكي تلحق بركب التقدم العلمي والحضاري.

ولا تتفق نتيجة هذه الدراسة مع دراسة الكلباني (2007) التي أشارت إلى أن مديرات مدارس التعليم العام في سلطنة عمان يمارسن عناصر الإبداع الإداري بصورة متوسطة.

أما البعد الثاني "معوقات الإبداع الإداري" فقد احتل المرتبة الثالثة لاستجابات أفراد العينة بمتوسط حسابي (2,86) وانحراف معياري (0,84). وهذا يشير إلى أن الاستجابة تمت بدرجة (متوسطة). ويعزو الباحث ذلك إلى شعور العاملين بالتهديد في حال تقديمهم لآراء تتعارض مع آراء الرؤساء، وضعف الرغبة لدى الإدارة في تحمل تكاليف العمل الإبداعي

ولا تتفق نتيجة هذه الدراسة مع ما توصلت إليه دراسة الحرمي (2003) التي أشارت أنه توجد معوقات للإبداع الإداري في مدارس التعليم الثانوي بسلطنة عمان ذات تقديرات كبيرة في جميع أبعاد الدراسة.

### ثالثاً: مناقشة النتائج المتعلقة بالسؤال الثالث:

نص السؤال الثالث على ما يلي: "ما مدى الفروق ذات الدلالة الإحصائية لدى مديري المدارس حول واقع الإبداع الإداري وأساليب تطويره في محافظة شمال الشرقية، تعزى لمتغيرات الجنس، والخبرة الإدارية، والمرحلة الدراسية؟"

أثر متغيرات الدراسة (الجنس، والخبرة الإدارية، والمرحلة الدراسية) على الأبعاد الفرعية للأداة.

لقد أظهرت نتائج اختبار (ت) للفرق بين متوسطات الأداء على الأبعاد الفرعية المكونة لمقياس الإبداع الإداري حسب متغير الجنس أن:

بالنسبة للبعد الأول والمتعلق بـ "واقع الإبداع الإداري" فقد أشارت نتائج اختبار (ت) إلى عدم وجود فرق ذي دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $0,05\alpha$ ) بين الذكور والإناث على هذا البعد. وبالنسبة للبعد الثاني: "معوقات الإبداع الإداري" فقد أشارت نتائج اختبار (ت) إلى عدم وجود فرق ذي دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $0,05\alpha$ ) بين الذكور والإناث على هذا البعد. وبالنسبة للبعد الثالث: "أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري" فقد أشارت نتائج اختبار (ت) إلى عدم وجود فرق ذي دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $0,05\alpha$ ) بين الذكور والإناث على هذا البعد. ويعزو الباحث هذه النتيجة إلى مدى إلمام مديري ومديرات المدارس بأهمية الإبداع الإداري، ومعرفة معوقاته وأساليب تطويره في العملية الإدارية.

كما أشارت نتائج الدراسة للمتوسطات والانحرافات المعيارية لأداء أفراد العينة على الأبعاد الفرعية والبعد الكلي لمقياس الإبداع الإداري حسب متغير الخبرة الإدارية إلى: أن متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين طويلي الخبرة الإدارية (11 سنة فأكثر) على جميع الأبعاد الفرعية المكونة لمقياس الإبداع الإداري والبعد الكلي أعلى من متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين متوسطي الخبرة الإدارية (6-10 سنوات)، وقليلي الخبرة الإدارية (1-5 سنوات)، وأن متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين متوسطي الخبرة الإدارية (6-10 سنوات) أعلى من متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين قليلي الخبرة الإدارية (1-5 سنوات). وهذا مؤشر على أن أصحاب الخبرات الإدارية الأطول أكثر إدراكاً ووعياً بأهمية الإبداع الإداري، ومعوقاته وأساليب تطويره في المؤسسة التعليمية المتمثلة بالمدرسة.

كما أشارت نتائج تحليل التباين الأحادي (One-Way ANOVA) لمتوسطات أداء أفراد العينة على الأبعاد الفرعية المكونة لمقياس الإبداع الإداري حسب متغير الخبرة الإدارية للمدير إلى ما يلي:

أ. عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $0,05\alpha$ ) في بعد واقع الإبداع الإداري، وبعد معوقات الإبداع الإداري لدى مديري المدارس يعزى للخبرة الإدارية.

ب. وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $0,05\alpha$ ) في بعد أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري لدى مديري المدارس يعزى للخبرة الإدارية.

وفي الوقت نفسه أشارت نتائج اختبار شيفيه (Scheffe Test) للمقارنات المتعددة البعدية بين متوسطات الأداء على بعد أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري وفقاً لمتغير الخبرة الإدارية إلى ما يلي:

أ.وجد أن هناك فرقاً ذا دلالة إحصائية بين متوسطات استجابات المديرين ذوي الخبرة الإدارية القصيرة (1-5) سنوات ، واستجابات المديرين ذوي الخبرة الإدارية المتوسطة من (6-10) سنوات، في بعد أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري ، ولصالح المديرين ذوي الخبرة المتوسطة من ( 6-10) سنوات، حيث بلغ المتوسط الحسابي لاستجابات المديرين ذوي الخبرة المتوسطة (4,12).

ب.وجد فرقاً ذا دلالة إحصائية بين متوسطات استجابات المديرين ذوي الخبرة الإدارية القصيرة (1-5) سنوات، واستجابات المديرين ذوي الخبرة الطويلة من (11 سنة فأكثر)، في بعد أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري، ولصالح المديرين ذوي الخبرة الطويلة ( 11 سنة فأكثر) ، حيث بلغ المتوسط الحسابي لاستجابات المديرين ذوي الخبرة الطويلة (4,38).

ج. عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسطات الأداء على أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري بين المديرين ذوي الخبرة المتوسطة (6-10) سنوات، والمديرين ذوي الخبرة الإدارية الطويلة ( 11 سنة فأكثر).

وتتفق نتيجة هذه الدراسة مع دراسة الكلبي (2007)، ودراسة الصوافي (2008) التي أشارت إلى عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في مستوى الإبداع الإداري والخصائص الشخصية (كالجنس والخبرة) لدى مديرات مدارس التعليم العام بسلطنة عمان. بينما لا تتفق مع دراسة سليمان (2004) التي أشارت إلى عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في مستوى الإبداع الإداري في متغير الجنس.

كما أشارت نتائج الدراسة للمتوسطات والانحرافات المعيارية لأداء أفراد العينة على الأبعاد الفرعية والبعد الكلي لمقياس الإبداع الإداري حسب متغير المرحلة الدراسية إلى: أن متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين لمدارس المرحلة الإعدادية على جميع الأبعاد الفرعية المكونة لمقياس الإبداع الإداري والبعد الكلي أعلى من متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين للمرحلة الابتدائية، والمرحلة الثانوية، وأن متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين لمدارس المرحلة الثانوية أعلى من متوسط الإبداع الإداري عند المديرين لمدارس المرحلة الابتدائية.

كما أشارت نتائج تحليل التباين الأحادي (One- Way ANOVA) لمتوسطات أداء أفراد العينة على الأبعاد الفرعية المكونة لمقياس الإبداع الإداري حسب متغير المرحلة الدراسية إلى ما يلي:

أ. عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $\alpha: 0,05$ ) في بعد واقع الإبداع الإداري وبعد معوقات الإبداع الإداري لدى مديري المدارس يعزى للمرحلة الدراسية .

ب. وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى ( $\alpha: 0,05$ ) في بعد أساليب تطوير الإبداع الإداري لدى مديري المدارس يعزى للمرحلة الدراسية .

#### رابعاً: مناقشة النتائج المتعلقة بالسؤال الرابع:

نص السؤال الرابع على ما يلي: "ما التصور المقترح لتنمية الإبداع الإداري لمديري المدارس في محافظة شمال الشرقية؟"

في ضوء نتائج الدراسة، قام الباحث: بإعداد خطة تدريبية مقترحة لتنمية الإبداع الإداري، ووضع برنامج تدريبي مقترح لتنمية الإبداع الإداري لمديري المدارس بمحافظة شمال الشرقية وذلك على اتخاذ القرار وحل المشكلات، والاتصال والعلاقات الإنسانية، ومهارات التفكير وتحفيز الإبداع.

#### خامساً: التوصيات

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# **PERSPECTIVES OF MALE MUSLIM REFUGEES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS OFFERED TO ASSIST WITH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA**

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## **Introduction**

Refugees granted entry to Australia often lack English language skills and have a lower labor force participation rate than skilled migrants and other Australians. The Australian government has thus established two main English language training programs (ELTP) to assist humanitarian refugees to settle into Australia and improve their chance of finding employment. These are the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) (called the Skills for Education and Employment [SEE] program as of July 1, 2013). However, it has been proposed that these ELTPs do not always meet the needs of Australian refugee immigrants with low levels of English proficiency for reasons discussed in this paper.

## **Australian English Language Training Programs**

The AMEP has been funded by the Australian federal government since 1948. The AMEP delivers basic English language tuition to adult migrants who are assessed as not having 'functional' English skills – defined as 'basic social proficiency' in English represented by an exit level of 2 in the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) across all four macro skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) (DIAC, 2009). All eligible clients are legally entitled to up to 510 hours of English language teaching in order to assist them to reach this ISLPR level. Employment has always been the preferred outcome of the AMEP. However, where English is deemed to be a barrier to employment, additional English language training following the AMEP may be available through the LLN/SEE program (Liebig, 2007).

The LLNP is the other English language training program available to refugees. It has operated since January 2002 and on July 1, 2013, its name was changed to the SEE program. This change of name was undertaken following market research which found that there was a negative social stigma among the unemployed about attending the 'Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program' – some perceived that this program started from a presumed deficit model of their LLN skills. Given this, the name was changed to the SEE program to better respect the desires of the unemployed (Department of Industry, 2013b).

Eligible refugee immigrants are sent to the program by referral agencies (either the Australian welfare agency, Centrelink, or contracted job service agencies). A formal pre-training assessment is then undertaken by a contracted LLN/SEE provider to assess the suitability of applicants for this training. Assessment is against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), an assessment tool that allows description of an individual's performance within the five core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication,



and numeracy. There are two performance 'indicators' within each core skill except for numeracy, which has three indicators. In the case of refugees transitioning from the AMEP, they must be deemed by the LLN/SEE provider as having 'capacity to benefit' from training. Such capacity assumes at least a basic proficiency in the English language, otherwise they may be refused entry to the LLN/SEE program (DEEWR, 2010).

### **AMEP Curriculum and Outcomes**

The AMEP provides a limited number of hours (typically 150) of English study. The formal goals of the AMEP as desired by the Australian government are described as follows:

The AMEP aims to help recently arrived migrants and humanitarian entrants to develop the English language skills they need to access services in the general community, provide a pathway to employment, training or further study and participate in other government programs offered (DIAC, 2008, p. 8).

Towards achieving this aim, the AMEP uses a single curriculum across Australia, namely the Certificate in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). This is a nationally recognised competency-based curriculum and assessment document. There are four certificate levels (CSWE I-IV) targeted at beginner, post-beginner, intermediate, and advanced language learners respectively (level IV is generally not included in the AMEP, typically being taken at a later stage by interested students). There is also an accredited course for preliterate learners, namely the Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English (CPSWE) (DIAC, 2008).

Following a preliminary assessment, learners are placed into the appropriate CSWE certificate level. At each CSWE level, there are various mandated modules with learning outcomes within speaking, listening, reading, writing, and numeracy. Within the CSWE curriculum framework, actual syllabus and lesson design depend on the local AMEP service providers and teachers, and varies depending on their particular AMEP client group. The federal government claims that this flexible CSWE framework allows providers to design certificate programs that meet the individual needs of the diverse client base served by the AMEP – that client base including learners with limited prior education; of varying age from youth to the elderly; and those with different goals ranging from achieving simple functional English to more ambitious goals such as linking with vocational training certificate pathways. The national curriculum in the form of the CSWE is also meant to promote consistency in assessment and reporting within the AMEP (DIAC, 2009).

Within the CSWE certificate framework, assessment tasks are administered by class teachers at predetermined points. Students gain a full CSWE certificate if they meet all the required competencies, otherwise they only receive a statement of attainment for the competencies they reach. The CSWE certificates aim towards students being able to perform specific tasks in English as demanded by a particular lesson(s) (Ehrich, Kim & Ficorilli, 2010). English language proficiency is not directly assessed, but rather assumed by achievement of a specific CSWE certificate level. The assumed English proficiencies are

aligned with the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) as given in Table 1.

**Table 1: CSWE Aligned with ISLPR (Source: Brindley & Slatyer, 2002)**

Certificate level	Student level	English proficiency level
CSWE I	Beginner	ISLPR 0 to 0+
CSWE II	Post-beginner	ISLPR 1- to 1
CSWE III	Intermediate	ISLPR 1+ to 2
CSWE IV	Advanced	ISLPR 2 and above

The CSWE III certificate is considered equivalent to a 'functional' English proficiency level of ISLPR 2 – this being the desired exit point of the AMEP, namely achievement of ISLPR 2 in all four macro-skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) (DIAC, 2009). The outcomes of the AMEP, as judged by its award of the various CSWE certificate levels, are given in the annual reports of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). The method of actual reporting – percentages or absolute figures – appears to depend on who is collating results. Thus, in the 2010-2011 annual report, there is a simple paragraph stating percentages, with no clear statement describing actual client numbers who completed the AMEP that year:

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In 2010-11, 22 per cent of clients who exited the program attained certification at CSWE Level 3, while 21 per cent reached CSWE Level 2. A further 43 per cent attained CSWE Level 1 and the remaining 14 per cent were awarded statements of attainment (DIAC, 2011, section 6, paragraph 4).

The annual report for 2011-2012 provided more specific and detailed information about the AMEP outcomes. In 2011-12, 3,001 clients completed between 500 and 510 hours, 69 clients reached five years in the program, and 1,906 clients achieved functional English. The outcomes for these groups are summarized in Table 2 (DIAC, 2012).

**Table 2: Levels of Achievement AMEP 2011-2012**

	Pre-CSWE	CSWE Level I	CSWE Level II	CSWE Level III
Completed 5 years	33	16	10	10
Completed 510 hours	329	1,525	886	261
Achieved functional English	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,906
Total	362	1,541	896	2,177

(Source: DIAC, 2012)

The most recent DIAC annual report provides figures for the 2012-2013 financial year in absolute numbers, with outcomes as summarized in Table 3 (DIAC, 2013, p. 238).

**Table 3: Levels of Achievement AMEP 2012-2013**

<b>CSWE Level</b>	<b>Number achieved</b>
Pre-CSWE Course	1,674
CSWE Level I	4,068
CSWE Level II	3,387
CSWE Level III	2,296

(Source: DIAC, 2013)

Achievement levels reported over the three years from 2010-2013 in the DIAC annual reports were all qualified with a statement to the effect that clients come from a range of different backgrounds, and many factors will influence their final levels of English/CSWE achievement on exit from the AMEP. These factors include their English skills on commencement of the AMEP; their previous education in their own language (if any); and other issues such as client age, community and social linkages and support, and the intensity of English learning undertaken on the AMEP (DIAC, 2011; 2012; 2013).

It is interesting to compare the numbers of students exiting the AMEP in 2011-12 and 2012-13. While the number of participants who reached a functional level in English was fairly steady across the two years (CSWE III – 20,177 and 2,296), the number of people who only reached a lower level increased significantly in 2012-13 (pre-CSWE – 362 → 1,674; CSWE I – 1,541 → 4,068; CSWE II – 896 → 3,387). The immediate reason for this is unclear, but may be related to the fact that a new AMEP business model was established following a review of the AMEP carried out in 2008 (DIAC, 2011).

### **LLN/SEE Program Curriculum and Outcomes**

The LLNP commenced in January 2002. The only formal report outlining the outcomes of the program was performed in 2005 for the period from January 1, 2002 to June 30, 2004 in response to a request from the federal Expenditure Review Committee. During that period, there were 48,554 clients who commenced the LLNP, of which 59 percent were from a non-English speaking background (the majority of which at 50 percent had low English proficiency levels). The results of the LLNP were reported from January 1, 2002 to December 30, 2003 for 41,892 clients (reflecting the fact that the remaining clients referred in 2004 were still in training). Two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reflected expected performance outcomes as shown in Table 4 (DEST, 2005).

**Table 4: LLNP Outcomes Against KPIs**

	KPI Target	Achieved overall	Basic English	Literacy & Numeracy	Advanced English
KPI 1: Percent of training commencements resulting in successful outcomes	40%	45.9%	49.6%	36.3%	69.3%
KPI 2: Percent of training commencements resulting in NRS skill increases	32%	41.5%	46.6%	30.3%	64.6%

(Source: DEST, 2005)

In respect to this table, the NRS refers to the National Reporting System, the predecessor of the ACSF; and ‘successful outcome’ (KPI 1) was defined in terms of either an improvement in a macro-skill competence indicator, progression to an accredited training course, or employment. (DEST, 2005, p. 13). However, there is no mention of any curricula used in the LLNP during the period covered in this report. There is also a notable absence of any further information, online or otherwise, available about the LLNP and its outcomes until the commencement of the 2010-13 contract. The remaining paragraphs of this section thus mainly refer to this period.

The curriculum for the LLN/SEE program is not mandated as it is in the AMEP; rather the choice is left to individual program providers. The regulatory statement about curricula in the program guidelines is as follows.

Training provided to clients must deliver LLN skills from accredited curricula and/or LLN skills associated with vocational competencies from training packages ... Clients engage in learning based on curricula Learning Outcomes (or training package competency standards) which address their specific learning needs (DEEWR, 2010, p. 144).

While LLN/SEE clients are not required to complete a vocational certificate, they must have a ‘capacity to benefit’, with success defined as follows.

Finding employment after undertaking the program’s training is the ultimate measure of success, however, attainment is also important. Attainment is measured by comparing the client’s LLN improvements in ACSF indicators from their PTA [pre-training assessment] to the later assessments during and at the end of their training (DIICCSRTE, 2013a, p. 5).

In fact, if a student fails to achieve improvements in two ACSF indicators in any 100-200 hours of training, then they are only allowed to continue at the discretion of the LLN/SEE provider who must make a judgment as to their capacity to benefit from further training. If

providers fail to exit students who do not achieve this benchmark, then they may fail to reach the KPI in respect to attainment. Under the LLN Program guidelines, this KPI required that “80% of all streams and all blocks of 200-hours achieve satisfactory progress or above” (DEEWR, 2010, p. 105); this has changed under the new 2013 SEE program guidelines to “80% of clients attain one ACSF indicator per full 100 hours of training” (DIICCS RTE, 2013b, p. 5).

The actual numbers of clients assisted through the LLNP was reported as 20,461 in 2010-11; 21,121 in 2011-12; and 23,449 in 2012-13 (Department of Industry, 2013a). However, there is, as yet, no publically available report on the overall outcomes of the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program for the contract over 2010-2013 (personal communication, Department of Industry, Canberra, 24 January 2014). The only officially-released results to date are piecemeal data provided in the federal government discussion paper titled ‘Creating a more flexible LLNP in 2013-16’ (DIISRTE, 2012). This document reports that:

In 2010-11, LLNP providers nationally achieved 94 per cent against this [attainment] KPI. The year to date figure for 2011-12 (as at April 2012) for the Attainment KPI was 96 per cent...Another measure of the results achieved is demonstrated in the 2009 Post Program Monitoring Survey which found that 45 per cent of clients surveyed indicated that after completing LLNP they were either in employment or undertaking further education. Indicative figures for 2011 are that over 60 per cent of participants are now going on to employment or further education (DIISRTE, 2012, p. 24).

This indicates the great need for English language training beyond the AMEP for non-English speaking background (NESB) people, the same point that was made by the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) in its response to the LLNP discussion paper. The ACTA response notes that “the LLNP is a key English language learning pathway from the AMEP” (ACTA, 2012, p. 19). For this reason, the LLN/SEE program may attract clients highly motivated to learn English, but for whom a job outcome (the ultimate aim of the LLN/SEE program) may be problematic – client groups such as mothers with young children; older migrants; and people with chronic health problems, disabilities, and/or mental health problems. Such clients may make progress within the LLN/SEE program against the mandate to achieve at least one ACSF indicator per 100 hours; but their desire and/or ability to enter further training or gain employment may not be achievable (ACTA, 2012).

Another issue is in respect to refugees with minimal/no previous schooling. The current operation of the LLN/SEE program is regarded by ACTA as “especially unfair to learners starting from a very low level or pre-literate background, or people whose traumatic experiences are impeding their learning” (ACTA, 2012, p. 22). This is because the ACSF does not adequately assess those with minimal/no literacy, nor does it always allow for their potential progress. Such clients may not meet the LLN/SEE demands for progress in at least one ACSF indicator per 100 training hours even though they are making identifiable progress as judged by their teachers. Furthermore, if LLN/SEE training providers keep such clients in training, they risk breaching their contracts as they risk failure in the attainment

KPI – thus such clients may be refused entry to the LLN/SEE program or exited at any early stage. In fact, ACTA question the credibility of the 94-96 percent gains reported for the attainment KPI in the LLNP discussion paper (as above), suggesting that this high rate of achievement may be more related to providers' unwillingness to report adverse outcomes for their students, with the result that teachers 'stretch the truth' in respect to their reporting of LLN/SEE program outcomes (ACTA, 2012). Such behaviour was also reported by Webb (2006) in the United States of America (USA) who neatly summarized the phenomenon as "teaching to the test ... [and] producing acceptable scores at the expense of student learning" (p. 209), this being done in order to satisfy the demands of accountability.

ACTA considers that the training hours provided by the AMEP and LLN/SEE program are inadequate, not enough for many NESB clients to reach a level of English proficiency suitable to gain a vocational qualification, especially where such clients are preliterate. This conflicts with the desired outcomes of the LLN/SEE program towards achieving a vocational certificate and, where possible, a job outcome (ACTA, 2012). It can be seen, then, that while the federal government may be satisfied with the overall outcomes of the LLN/SEE program, this view is not necessarily shared by other interested stakeholders, particularly in reference to preliterate NESB clients.

### **Summary**

The federal Australian government provides two main English language training programs for refugee immigrants into Australia. The AMEP provides training towards basic (functional) English language proficiency for refugees; this contrasts with the LLN/SEE program which aims for more specific vocational training outcomes to be gained while working towards improvements in language, literacy, and numeracy skills. The curricula used for these programs are competency-based and accredited courses within the Australian vocational training system. However, the generic competencies of these curricula are not always desired by students who generally have a preference for more specific vocational outcomes geared towards gaining a particular job (e.g. retail, aged care). Additionally, the outcomes for immigrants with low levels of English proficiency can be problematic, as the hours of available training are inadequate to gain a level of English proficiency suitable for employment; and/or such clients may not be considered as having capacity to benefit from further training, and thus may enter a cycle of permanent dependence on social welfare payments.

### **Implications for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries**

If a GCC country should ever need to set up a language training program in Arabic for a refugee community or otherwise, then the lessons learned from the Australian ELTPs could be useful in such a context. Firstly, students prefer training which offers the possibility of specific vocational outcomes and secondly, students with low level language and literacy proficiency require several hundred hours of training if they are to reach language proficiency necessary for employment. Finally, if language training programs are to result in employment for refugees or other groups, then they require adequate funding and opportunity for students to reach this goal.

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# **TOWARDS ENHANCING THE STATUS QUO OF ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (AFL)**

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## **Abstract**

Arabic as Foreign Language (AFL) teachers and the parents of AFL students often complain that AFL students are not able to speak Arabic at an acceptable level, even after years of studying the language in formal settings. To search for possible reasons, an empirical study was conducted at an international school in Dubai to reveal the status quo of the AFL curriculum and to offer recommendations on how to improve the AFL proficiency level.

## **Introduction**

AFL teachers in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) often complain in about the challenges in teaching AFL ("Improve schools – scrap," 2013). Parents and students have also raised concerns about how AFL students continue to face difficulties in engaging in simple conversations, even after years of studying Arabic (Khan, 2013; "No problem with", 2013). Some commonly accepted causes include lack of practice, teaching methods, textbooks, and resources (Alhawary, 2013; Chaker & Wahbe, 2013). This paper addresses the problems associated with AFL learning and teaching, and tries to answer the question, "What are the main challenges to teaching AFL at an international school in Dubai?" It also answers the subsidiary question, "What are the various stakeholders' reflections on the difficulties in learning Arabic particularly in speaking?"

The case study was conducted from October-November 2013 at an international school where the majority of the students did not speak native Arabic but are required by the government to Arabic as a foreign language (Kantaria, 2012). The sample consisted of 24 students from grade six, their two AFL teachers, and two parents. The mixed-method research approach includes three data collection instruments: a survey, interviews, and class observations. The quantitative data was collected from student surveys, while the qualitative data was collected from class observations and interviews with teachers and parents.

## **Background and Context**

Schools in Dubai can largely be divided into two types, public and private. Public schools are funded by the UAE government, and the medium of instruction (MI) is Arabic. Private schools, however, are privately owned by individuals or corporations, and the medium of instruction is predominantly English (EMI). International schools require fees. AFL is predominately taught in private schools as expatriates are typically not allowed to attend public schools, where the medium of instruction is Arabic.

The school where this study took place was an international school following a non-Arabic curriculum, different than that of UAE's Ministry of Education. According to this school's inspection report by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), the school has over 1,400 students and represents over 80 nationalities. The school follows the UK's national school curriculum and it offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) at the end of Year 13. In addition to studying English and Arabic/AFL, the students are required by the school to study either French or Spanish. AFL teachers do not necessarily hold education diplomas or licenses. One of the AFL teachers interviewed held a Bachelor of Arts degree in Arabic language and literature and the other had a Master of Arts in Arabic literature.

### **Similar Studies**

Some studies of underperformance in English as a foreign language (EFL) were considered while investigating similar concerns pertaining to AFL. Hussain, Nasseef, and Shah (2013) attributed many of the challenges facing teachers to "limited instruction time, large class sizes, mixed ability classes, high expectations from students and parents, lack of resources, inappropriate textbook material, and lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments" (pp. 112-120). Another similar UAE-based study on EFL teachers by Fareh (2010) found teaching methodology in the UAE to be teacher-centered and teachers to be improperly or inadequately trained.

Alhawary (2013) investigated the field of Arabic language teaching and suggested that it is in dire need of qualified teachers who have formal training in AFL methodology and awareness of research findings. He also stressed that AFL teachers need to have Arabic language competence, talent, and an interest in teaching (p. 32). Finally, Alhawary said that comparing to other foreign languages, AFL lacks textbooks, in print and online teachers' resources, learner's dictionaries, pedagogical grammar books, and Arabic instructional materials (2013).

Another study also criticized the scarcity of AFL textbooks and reviewed three AFL textbooks popular in the USA (Chaker & Wahbe, 2013). The study critiqued the design and illustrations, and the content such as Arabic letters, sounds, vocabulary, grammar, and diglossia (dialects). They found that all three textbooks tend to not provide a status equal to that of reading, writing, and comprehension for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (Chaker & Wahbe, 2013). They thus encouraged reform and called for more empirical studies on second language acquisition in Arabic, and for more quantitative studies in language skills (Chaker & Wahbe, 2013).

Parents and teachers often claim that AFL textbooks often do not take into account the learners' cultures. Duff and Talmy (2011) explained that any second language acquisition incorporates studying of culture through this language. Syllabus designers for second languages should take into consideration different cultures and cultural conflicts that may deter students from learning the language.

## **Methodology**

### **Design and Rationale**

This was an exploratory study of a mixed methods design that used three data collection instruments – namely, surveys, interviews, and class observations. A mixed methods design was used to support and strengthen the researcher's stance, particularly, by the means of *triangulation*. Triangulation examines evidences from a variety of data sources and uses them to build a coherent justification for themes (Creswell, 2009, p.191). This mixed methods approach combines both qualitative and quantitative data.

This study was of three sequential triangulation phases. In the first phase, students were surveyed in order to understand the difficulties they face learning AFL. Teachers were interviewed in the second phase to understand the challenges faced in teaching AFL. Parents were interviewed to learn about any obstacles hindering their children's learning of AFL and were asked if they had any suggestions to enhance the learning process. The third phase was class observations to collect more qualitative data and to find if similar factors hindering teaching and learning AFL could be found to support the findings of the other two phases.

The questionnaire contained closed and open-ended questions for the collection of both quantitative and quantitative data. The interviews were semi-structured (Kvale, 2007) to allow further inquiries from the interviewees.

### **The Sample**

Twenty four students responded to the questionnaire, and two parents and two AFL teachers were interviewed. One AFL class was observed over a week, covering four periods of 50 minutes each. The language levels investigated were intermediate and advanced. Beginner students were not investigated as the data collected from them could not answer the research question pertaining to the difficulties hindering speaking Arabic because many had just arrived to the UAE during the same academic year.

### **Ethical Issues**

Ethical approval was obtained from both the University of Exeter then from the principal of the school. The ethical clearance from the university included a proposal of the research with an explanation on how to protect the data collected and the anonymity of the participants. Parents and teachers signed the related consent forms prior to the interviews. Parents of students who participated in the survey signed a consent form as well.

## **Data Analysis**

General guidelines for the analysis were based on Richards (2003, p.47-230) and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011, p. 456-475).

### ***Phase One: The Survey***

SPSS V20 was used to analyze the quantitative data collected by the questionnaire. The mode time the students had studied AFL for was 5 years.

**Figure 1: AFL marks (out of 100) in the previous year for grade six**

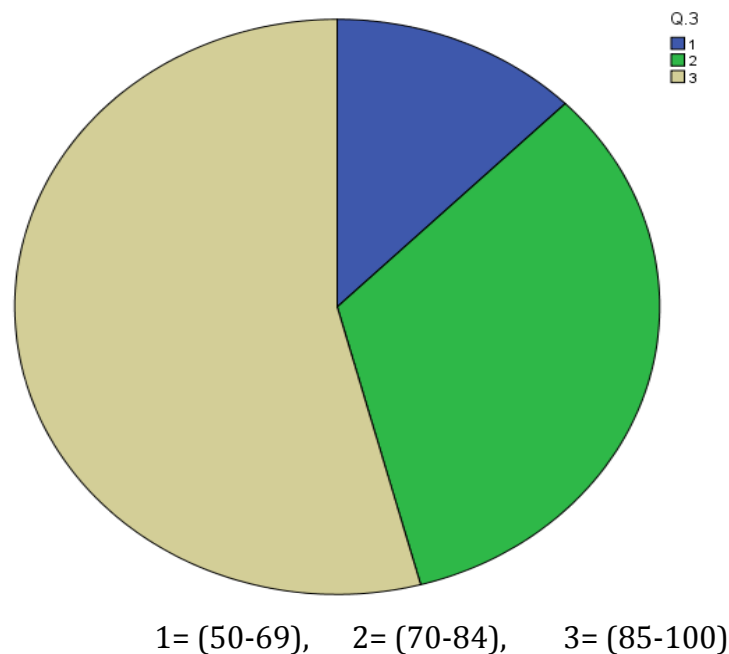


Figure (1) shows that more than half the students (54%) scored (85-100) in the previous year, a third of them scored (70-84), and almost 13% scored (50-69). Seventy five percent of AFL students do their homework independently. Only one student needed regular assistance. When asked if learning Arabic was difficult, seventeen students of those polled (almost 70%) did not find that learning Arabic was difficult.

Question seven asked if the students had any suggestions for improving AFL learning. Seven students of the 24 polled suggested improving the AFL curriculum for speaking. Eleven students suggested doing various activities in AFL classes (such as field trips, watching videos, and online AFL activities), and three believed AFL to be too easy and suggested making the curriculum more challenging.

### ***Phase Two: The Interviews***

The interviews with the parents revealed that they wanted their children to improve their speaking, writing, and reading skills. They complained that their children practice Arabic very little within and outside of AFL classes. They also suggested that there is confusion between MSA (formal Arabic) which is taught at schools and many dialects typically spoken in the UAE.

Teachers were interviewed and asked about the factors hindering learning AFL and about challenges faced teaching AFL. Both teachers mentioned that students speak Arabic below the standard level set by the school. They attributed this to the inapplicability of Arabic outside of class and the underemphasized importance of Arabic in modern society. Both

stressed that there is a need for extracurricular activities to complement their students' learning. The challenges to teaching they described are summarized in Table (1).

**Table 1: Teachers' suggestions for improving AFL learning**

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>No. of Teachers</b>
Emphasis on AFL from the authority	2
Decreasing the number of students in L2 classes.	1
There should be failure in AFL	1
Studying Arabic should not be made mandatory	1
Unified, good quality syllabus	2
Specialized institutions to train AFL teachers, as the current ones are not available in every Arab country and are not up to date with foreign language industry.	1
Teachers should maximize the use of Arabic by using it to explain the lessons to students instead of relying on English.	1

### ***Phase Three: Class Observations***

#### **The teachers and students**

During the classroom observations, teachers began their lessons by explaining the theme of the lesson of the day, and then related various activities to the theme. The teacher explained the details of the activities and then gave some time for students to do the activities. The teachers' voices were loud and often interrupted the children. Teacher Talking Time (TTT) was much longer than Student Talking Time (STT), as the teachers spoke most of the time instead of allowing the children to practice their Arabic. For error correction, the teachers pointed their fingers at students then called the students to the board for error identification. The teachers repeatedly silenced the students when they were loud. The class format was mainly teacher-centred with no activities designed to enable students to hold simple conversation in Arabic.

#### **Syllabus and materials used**

The majority of international schools in Dubai follow *Ohibbo AlArabiyya* [I like Arabic], a series of textbooks created for non-Arabic speakers by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Grade six follows the second stage (AbdulAziz, Husein, & Salih, 2012) which is designed for intermediate learners of Arabic. This stage consists of a student's book, workbook, and the teacher's guide.

The textbook contains many pictures of students in a classroom or children. A student was showing a picture with objection to her friend (p. 12) where there was a child around the age of five drinking tea in a big mug with a caption that translates in English as "*Huda* drinks hot tea." Exercise 12 (p. 7) requires the students to answer questions such as, "Do you have a big house? Is your bedroom beautiful? Do you have a library in your house? Is

there a playground in your house? Is there a swimming pool in your house? When do you swim in the swimming pool? Do you have a swing?" (AbdulAziz, Husein, & Salih, 2012, p.7). These are, perhaps, unaffordable luxurious references to locals' lifestyle that might deter some expatriates students from engaging with the textbook.

### **Discussion**

The study investigated the challenges faced by grade 6 AFL teachers as well as the difficulties faced by AFL students particularly with speaking. Students' data were positive and revealed that 88% of them scored above 70% in the previous year, 92% believed that learning AFL was easy and not difficult, and 75% said that they did their AFL homework independently.

However, 10 out of 24 students suggested they would like to improve their writing and speaking skills, while two desired to improve their reading skills. Similar responses were observed in a study that was conducted in Canada on immersion students studying French, where the emphasis was only on input and therefore the output production of speaking and writing were lagging behind (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 161). This can be attributed to the facts that AFL classes are more teacher than students- centred and therefore more time should be allocated to students to practice Arabic particularly in speaking.

Seven students complained about their weakness in language skills including reading, writing, and grammar. The two parents interviewed also complained that their children were not speaking at an adequate level, even though they had studied Arabic for four and five years respectively. The teachers and parents attribute the problem of inadequate spoken sufficiency to the formal-colloquial dichotomy. Another reason could be the class format where TTT was much longer than STT. Finally, the students found it hard to practice Arabic outside of the classroom as the majority of the population in the UAE do not speak Arabic, as observed by Ahmed (2010), and this contributes to the problem.

Further challenges facing teaching AFL were noted when 11 out of 24 students wanted more activities in learning AFL. Harmer (2007) suggests that "one of the chief reasons why classes become undisciplined is because teachers do not have enough for the students to do or seem not to be quite sure what to do next" (p. 101-102).

As described, class observations revealed several inappropriate teachers practices. Some of the practices included improper error correction and centrality on teachers rather than students. The teachers seemed to have problems controlling the class as well. Richards (quoted in Tony Wright, 2006) explains that good managerial skills contribute to teaching and learning experiences which are characterized by good discipline and the active engagement of learners in tasks and activities. Hence, teachers ought to engage students via various activities as a method of controlling the class as well as provide the students with opportunities to practice their Arabic.

## **Conclusion**

The results answered the main question, which asked, “What are the main challenges to teaching Arabic as a foreign Language at an International School in Dubai”. It is inferred from the findings that the challenges facing AFL teachers are many. The first is that students can only practice Arabic within classes due to the fact that majority of UAE's population consists of non-Arab expatriates, meaning there are few opportunities to practice Arabic with native Arabic speakers. Secondly, there is a lack of teacher training in AFL and in second language pedagogy. Thirdly, the dichotomy between the Arabic encountered daily by the students and the formal Arabic posed as a challenge for the students in practicing Arabic outside of formal classroom settings. The fourth reason is the textbooks are not modified effective pedagogical tools to better fit the appropriate sensibilities. Finally, teachers lack resources to make the lessons interesting and appealing to young children and consequently encouraging them to speak it.

The study also answered the second subsidiary question which investigated various stakeholders' views on whether AFL students have difficulties in speaking Arabic. It was suggested that one of the reasons for this difficulty included was that AFL is too simplified. Secondly, there was little chance for the students to practice Arabic outside the classroom due to the fact that they learn MSA while local dialects are used outside of the classroom. Thirdly, even within classroom, the students do not get enough opportunities to practice speaking due to the fact that AFL teachers are insufficiently trained, which might explain a higher TTT than STT. The final reason is the lack of students' resources to help them practice speaking.

## **Recommendations**

In order to better examine factors suggested by the teachers, students, and parents, another, larger follow-up correlation study is recommended. Furthermore, a greater number of professional development courses should be made mandatory for AFL teachers before they start teaching and continue throughout their career. Establishing an organization for developing AFL curriculum - similar to TESOL ARABIA – could be part of a constructive solution. Peer-reviewed publications and conferences in the field of AFL should be encouraged on a national or Gulf level following the footsteps of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic in the US (AATA). The MOE could also consider taking a more active role in improving and developing AFL teaching. Some suggestions include providing teachers' with additional resources, online activities for students, competitions, workshops, and awards for developing activities in AFL.

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# **LANGUAGE LEARNER LITERATURE AND IDENTITY**

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## **Abstract**

In this research study, second language English students from an Arabic speaking background in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) read graded language literature from their own culture. The study results reveal that students are interested in reading indigenous literature. Indigenous literature is literature from one's own culture and reading it promotes a sense of identity and belonging. Reading indigenous literature in the native language aids in the consolidation of an integrated identity between two languages and cultures. Data was collected through discussion board postings and discourse analysis was used to analyze the data.

## **Introduction**

In the United States (US), many students fail to achieve the grade-level standards required in reading (Krashen, 2004). This is particularly true for students who come from low socio-economic groups, ethnic minorities, and for students where English is not spoken at home (Krashen, 2004). If the goal of English language learning is higher educational achievement through better mastery of English, First Language (L1) English speakers and Second Language (L2) English speakers may follow a similar path to learning how to read well in English. Current ESL methodology for teaching reading leaves a large gap in this regard. Currently and historically, ESL methodology for teaching reading in English has been derived from the model of reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, posited by Goodman (1967) which was based on reading research into eye movements that indicated which words the eye lingered on when reading a page of text. In this model of reading, also known as the "whole" reading model for L1 English speakers, teachers activate the students' schema, or background knowledge, for the topic in a pre-reading task and encourage students to garner the gist of the reading text. Goodman's (1967) model of reading, which has heavily influenced L2 English reading methodology, proposed that good readers comprehend a text through a psycholinguistic guessing game in which efficient readers hypothesize, predict, and verify as they read based on their background knowledge of the topic. This chapter will describe a research study designed to explore and fill the gap between L1 English teaching reading methodology and L2 English teaching reading methodology.

## **Reading in English Language Learning**

In societies where there is a strong reading culture, such as in the US, United Kingdom (UK), and Australia, there are often many books, magazines, and newspapers in the homes of successful readers (Krashen, 2004). Children are often exposed to picture books with

simple words from a young age of about six months and are regularly read to by a caregiving adult. Thus, exposure to reading starts from an early age.

Reading continues through the elementary years of schooling. During this time, most of what is read is fiction. Throughout elementary school, teachers read stories aloud in class, and students make weekly trips to the library. At this stage, no one asks complicated questions about what motivates the main characters. This has proven to be a successful route to reading achievement in English (Krashen, 2004.)

This route to creating a successful L1 English reader is lacking in ESL methodology. At its peak in the 1980s, ESL methodology was heavily influenced by Goodman's (1967) model of reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game: the Psycholinguistic Model of Reading. In this model, as in whole reading instruction, teachers activate the background knowledge of students to decode a text by predicting what information will be forthcoming in the text and confirming whether they were correct or not as their eye passes over the text. This may be a good model of reading for the fluent accomplished reader, but it may not be applicable to second language learners.

Alderson (1984) proposed the Threshold Hypothesis, which suggests that English Language Learners (ELLs) (English Language Learners), children who study in English but speak another language at home, must achieve a threshold amount of competency in English before they can transfer the reading skills they have in their own language to English. However, this notion applies only to ELLs who have achieved successful reading in their own language, and not to learners who come from non-reading cultures or learners who are not successful readers in their own language, or learners who may come from a different alphabetic background, or learners who may not have a written language.

Similarly, the Threshold Hypothesis does not extend to L1 English speakers who come from low-literacy environments, typically immigrants and those from low socio-economic status groups. Therefore, of the over 2 billion ELLs worldwide (Gradoll, 2008), the Threshold Hypothesis may only apply to a small proportion of students who are successful readers in their first language. For many of today's ELLs, achieving reading success in English is both a language problem and a reading problem because many of them are not successful readers in their own language.

A factor that affects the way L2 English speakers learn reading has to do with the content of the fictional, historical, and biographical books available for reading. Many of these books include literature on the historical development of a country or nation, and national heroes, which serves the dual purpose of indoctrinating the reader into the cultural norms of the society and teaching them how to read. Readers from mainstream ethnic and socio-economic groups read about people who are similar to themselves. They are able to identify with the characters and stories featured in the literature they read, whereas this is not usually the case for minority groups. In the US, there has been a backlash at the underrepresentation of minorities in school texts and reading books (Al-Hazza & Bucher, 2008; Cherubini, 2008; Gray, 2009; Metzger & Kelleher, 2008). Thus, the challenge of ELLs to read more in English is not simply limited to the procedural challenge of learning to read in

another language, but it is also a problem of finding interesting, relevant, and accessible texts that the learners can understand and read.

All mainstream Graded Reader publishers, such as Scholastic, Penguin, MacMillan, Cambridge University Press, and Oxford University Press, are in agreement that the quality of a book's story is a major factor in their decision whether to or not to publish a book (Claridge, 2012). However, a survey of the hundreds of graded readers currently available from all major publishers (Hill, 2008) found only a handful of book titles which are not of American or British origin. These include five titles originating from English speaking African countries, Australia, and two collections of short stories from Africa and South Asia.

### **The Case of the UAE**

In the UAE there is a unique situation where Emiratis are a minority in their own country and run the risk of being marginalized in the society's amalgamation of different cultures. This situation affects the Emiratis' sense of self- and national identity, especially in the current climate of intense educational reform in the country that places a tremendous emphasis on bilingual education (Gallagher, 2011) and the use of authentic English language materials in the curriculum (Abu Dhabi Educational Council, Personal Communication, January 20, 2011).

The UAE is a small country in the Middle East. There are approximately 700,000 nationals living in a population of 5.3 million, primarily composed of foreign laborers (World Factbook, 2012). The native tongue of the indigenous population is a vernacular form of Arabic (which differs from emirate to emirate) which is different from the formal Modern Standard Arabic (Gallagher, 2011; Saiegh-Haddad, 2004). The concept of promoting national identity through schooling via the curriculum was conceived of at the same time as the country was founded because of the disparity between the seven different emirates (Suliman, 2000). The UAE's success as an oil exporter has placed it at the forefront of globalization (Karmani, 2005). As a result, Emiratis must learn how to speak English in order to join the workforce (Al Sayegh, 2004). The intense educational reform has improved the English language levels of the nationals in the country, but is perhaps doing so at the expense of their national identity in a country where they are the minority.

The UAE's rapid transition from a poor country to a rich country (Al Fahim, 1995), which has had a significant impact on tertiary education, has led to a dichotomy between the need to pursue modernity and preserve tradition (Findlow, 2006; Haque, 2007). More than 50% of the 727 Emirati respondents in Haque's (2007) study agreed that they have a conflict with modern Western culture. The idea of simplifying and reading Emirati literature to determine what effect, if any, it had on students' identities as Emiratis was born from the idea that students may find reading Emirati literature written by Emirati authors enjoyable and motivating, and that it may enhance their sense of national identity and "Englishness" as inclusive rather than separate.

## The Study

This study occurred at a tertiary institution in UAE. The participants were male and female Emirati students enrolled in a Foundation English language course designed to prepare students for bachelor degree studies in English. The entry-level requirement for the degree program was an IELTS overall-band score of 5.0 on the academic module, with no band score less than 4.5. Typically, system-wide test results indicate that male students do well in the speaking and listening modules of the IELTS exam, but their writing and reading band scores lag behind (Marsden, 2004). A partial explanation for why this might occur for the students is Krashen's (2004) assertion that L1 English speakers learn to write from reading, meaning the more one reads, the better they write. Students generally do not have a habit of reading in Arabic or English (Shannon, 2003) and this likely impacts their ability to write and read.

A team of seven teachers volunteered to participate in the study after a call for participation was sent to 40 teachers in the English Language Teaching Department. These teachers volunteered to rewrite four books of Emirati literature written in English for L1 English speakers, in order to simplify, or "grade," the English in the books so that students at lower levels of English proficiency could easily read the books. All of the teachers were L1 English speaking teachers and interested in Emirati culture. The books selected for the study were *Arabian Sands* by Wilfred Thesiger (1959), *From Rags to Riches: A Story of Abu Dhabi* by Mohammed Al-Fahim (1995), and *Dubai Tales* (1995) and *The Wink of the Mona Lisa* by Mohammad Al Murr (1995). Upon creating the prototypes, the books were distributed to participating teachers. The goal of the study was to determine if reading Emirati literature that had been modified to target lower level proficiency students would interest and motivate the students to read in English and enhance their sense of national identity at the same time. The study explores whether book publishers should publish more literature coming from the context of the learner to facilitate the acquisition of English and reduce the phenomena of linguistic dualism replacing it with bilingualism.

Data for the study was collected through discussion board postings. According to Barker and Galasinski (2001), discourse analysis reveals systems of knowledge and belief, interpersonal and intrapersonal identities, and meanings relative to specific times and contexts. In this discourse analysis, the discussion board postings were categorized for qualitative data analysis. Broad categories or themes were identified, further refined, and interpreted during the analysis of the data. Over 428 discussion board postings were analyzed on various topics related to the four Emirati books used in the study.

Thirty-seven postings indicated that the students enjoyed or liked reading the stories, and a further 20 commented that they found the stories interesting. A further two students described the stories as exciting. Only four students reported a lack of interest or enjoyment in reading the stories:

*I prefer to lesson [listen] from my family about the stories from the past.*

In addition, two students perceived the English author, Wilfred Thesiger, as portraying local people in a negative light:

*But chapter 2 I don't like when he writes "they had were all that interested them from the outside world."*

This student did not like the idea that the people, who lived in this culture at the time of writing, were not interested in airplanes and motor cars. The dislike or disinterest may have been because they saw their culture represented in English, but separated from their idea of "Englishness" as representative of modernity. The story represented the indigenous people at a time when they were poor and did not have many material possessions. The students perceived the depiction of their cultural heritage as a materially poor society to be negative rather than, as intended by the writer, a society to be admired due to self-reliance, ability to suffer hardship, sharing, and surviving in the harsh climate.

Simplicity was a theme in the broad category of the Desert which was also repeatedly mentioned as a positive attribute in the past life of the people who lived in the Arabian Peninsula, contrasting with the current modern lifestyle provided by the UAE government to its citizens. Simplicity was repeatedly mentioned as a positive attribute in the past life of the people who lived in the Arabian Peninsula, the Bedu:

*The local people in the story are very simple, honest, and loyal even to their camels.*

This passage from the discussion board postings reveals a desire for the simplicity of the past era. Modern life, while bringing many material, health, and welfare benefits, also brings much stress and often removes a society's contact with nature and the environment, which many argue is imperative for a sustainable society. Other aspects of the desert theme that appeared in the texts were identification with and admiration for Bedu culture, hardship in the scarcity of water and food, and desert animals, especially the camel, and slowness and transience.

Religion was a major theme in the discussion board postings. The acknowledgement of the importance of religion as a key social identity factor occurred in several of the discussion board postings of the students. For example:

*My favourite thing about the book is that when it shows the attitude of every Arabic people, the way they love and respect to their religion.*

However, in the drive to become modern, English is not identified with religion. Religion is identified with the local language (Haque, 2006). The discussion board postings seemed to indicate a degree of cognitive dissonance in this regard. Most successful readers start off reading about people from their culture and only later read with interest about people and places from other cultures and traditions. Religion is a large part of UAE students' culture and disregarding this may even harm some of the students who are trying to learn English

so that they can obtain bachelor degrees through the medium of English. Cognitive dissonance hinders learning.

Students also made over 40 postings about Sheikh Zayed who is a significant character in both *Arabian Sands* and *From Rags to Riches*. Sheikh Zayed was the first president of the UAE and the founder of the modern state in 1971. Students were proud to recognize him as the father of their country in the literature and to learn about his life during the time before he became the president and founder of the United Arab Emirates. The parts of the books that contained information about Sheikh Zayed were read with great interest and enthusiasm:

*I liked the story. Because it tells about the life of a great leader. Very beautiful mainland trips takes you back to the past. Our ancestors and those inherited from the ancient hobby [hunting]. Sheikh Zayed was a much loved hobby that was more his trip to the deserts and prairies. All Arabs like hunting deer and rabbits in the wild and deserts.*

The students' identities as Arabs and Emiratis developed throughout the discussion board postings, first as Arabs and later uniquely as Emirati:

*Arabs always put other people first or in front of them because they know that one day they will need to be first or in front of others for example , when you stand in a long line waiting for your turn and you are in hurry you will see that all of them will pass you if you asked them and they will help you with passing your work and finish it, you also will see how Arabs put others before themselves by asking them to give you the best thing they have just to make sure that they will and the will because it's in their blood from their parents and their parent parents.*

At the end of the data collection of the discussion board postings, the students' sense of self- and national identities, evolved to the idea of "us," "our," "my," and "we" as distinctly Emirati and they displayed a feeling of pride at reading Emirati literature written by and about Emiratis:

*I liked the paragraph when he start his plans. It's really hard for Englishman to cross from Salala to Abu Dhabi. After that he start find Bedu to cross the Empty Quarter with him. So, he must to [get] hold of Rashed to cross the sands to Bait Kathir with him. Of course I liked this paragraph because they talking about my family name ...*

The students felt both proud to read Emirati literature and realized that it helped them learn English as shown in the following comment:

*I like to read story in English about Emirati writer by an Emirati writer because when I see the writer is Emirati I feel proud. And also I have to read in English if I want to learn English language.*

There were also comments about how readers from other nationalities could benefit from reading and learning about the Emirati culture through the texts.

### **Conclusion**

The major themes that arose during the study were simplicity versus modernity, a desire to move toward towards a simpler life, a love of the desert and their ancestors' positive characteristics which emerged due to the harshness of the life and climate, the importance of religion in their lives, the admiration of their country's founder and first leader, and national pride at being Emirati. The study reveals that there is a need for indigenous language learner literature in the Emirates. It also has larger implications for English language learners globally who are torn between modernizing (learning English) and maintaining their local culture and traditions.

L2 reading methodology relies heavily on the supposition that learners are successful readers in their own language and that they will simply transfer these skills to learning how to read in English using a whole or top down reading strategy, rather than have any of the instruction or stages that occur in successful L1 English reading. This study shows that that reading literature from a national culture promotes a sense of national identity and hopefully lessens the impact of linguistic dualism. Further research in this area is recommended to confirm the findings of the study and to encourage publishers to meet the demand for authentic literature and course books that are contextualized in the local environment presenting English as a world and local language.



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## LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN EDUCATION

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### Introduction

The curtains have gradually fallen on the days when English as a Foreign Language (EFL) was thought of as one subject out of many in school curriculums. Back in the 1990s, some did even not consider EFL to be “a language of communication (e.g., in government, business, or industry) within the country” (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 124). Today, it would be naive to assume that in EFL contexts the use of English is limited to formal classroom settings. With globalization at its peak, former assumptions no longer reflect the current demographic, technological, sociopolitical, and linguistic realities (Jenkins, 2009). As Graddol (2006) describes, the English language has become one of the few enduring facts of global modern life.

In educational contexts, the links between the English language, “economic and technological globalization,” and “cultural and educational manifestations” (Stromquist, 2002, p.viii) have become much clearer since the early 2000s. As Stromquist (2002) explains, in many contexts education has become a venue that facilitates the transfer and exchange of ideologies which support globalization. The role of education the English language is gaining more ground, and as seen in Jenkins (2009), it is covering more domains, even in Asia (Nunan, 2003; Glass, 2009) and Europe (Berns, 2007) where languages and traditional cultures are seemingly more guarded. One of the biggest perceived threats associated with the spread of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), is that it is also “redefining national and individual identities” (Graddol, 2006, p. 12) and reducing cultures to what Kramsch’s (2003) describes as “surface cultures” portrayed merely by foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts.

Less powerful languages and cultures are being marginalized and pushed to the periphery on their own soil. Globalization is seen by many as a new form of western cultural colonialism which is basically carrying out the same agenda as that of past colonialism. It is, as Rasool (2007) maintains, shaping the linguistic habitus of societies, cultures and individuals. Rasool (2007) explains that the ways in which language-in-education policy interacted with history, politics, culture, and economics impacted societal development possibilities. Education and development in developing countries was, and to some extent continues to be, provided by people from the “outside” and only economic goals were incorporated into educational policy, planning, and practice with little or no attention given to issues such as culture and empowerment (Leech & Little, 1999). With globalization and “the shift in composition of the control of many domestic economies, away from national and towards global and regional,” questions are being raised about “whose economic and cultural goals and interests are being served by education” (Leech & Little, 1999, p. 4). According to Stromquist (2002), there is “sometimes plain erasure, of certain knowledge” (p. xiv). Many in the Arab world, especially in the Gulf countries where globalized

education has led to incorporating institutional policies that require courses to be taught in English to the exclusion of Arabic in the school curriculum will “serve foreign interests more than they serve the societies of the Gulf” (Al Kitbi, 2006, para. 3).

### **The GCC States**

In the Arab World, in particular in the Gulf States, there is concern regarding the rampant spread of English and the emphasis on it, which in many ways is undermining and marginalizing Arabic, the native language of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. These countries exist in unique contexts, because although they are not economically poor or dependent on financial aid from countries and organizations that support globalization, they are import-dependent consumer countries and have joined world organizations that compel them to take part in globalization (Abu Baker, 2000). Despite the trillions of dollars these countries spend to import technology and education, they still need to enhance their human capital by developing their populations' skills and technical knowledge (Gonzalez, Karoly, Constant, Salem, & Goldman, 2008; Krieger, 2008). In this effort and against the backdrop of globalization, they continue to face many challenges (Abu Baker, 2000) especially on the educational front.

There has been a tremendous increase on the reliance of English as it is currently the language of information technology and perceived as the medium for entering the globalized world. The growing reliance on English, along with the socio-economic changes, is rapidly changing the goals, policies, curricula, contents, and methods of education (Arani, 2004). English is replacing Arabic as the medium of instruction for the social sciences and humanities at the primary and secondary levels of education, and the medium of instruction for all subjects taught at the tertiary levels. This has been raising not only language but also cultural concerns. Language, which is the main element of culture and cultural identity (Maalouf, 2000; Kramesch, 2003) is becoming of major concern to these countries, especially given that in many of these countries expatriates outnumber natives. Not only is language a powerful means of political and social control (Tellefson, 2002), but it is also an obvious and important representation of any cultural system, which is itself an outcome of the political and economic systems (King, 1997). For this reason, among many others, many see that there is a need to differentiate and re-think education both within and outside the school system (Arani, 2004).

In countries like the UAE, this issue is being addressed on the academic and the political level (Helleyer, 2007; AlBaik, 2008; Shaheen, 2009). Many fear the loss of the Arabic language and by extension the Arabic culture. They suggest that speaking English should be prohibited, even in areas such as real estate business, and that Arabic should not be ignored (Al Baik, 2008). In many institutions, as Mills (2008) describes, Arabic has been eliminated as the language of instruction in favor of English, even in courses that teach Shariah Islamic law and Jurisprudence. Al Kitbi (2006) explains that such decisions have profound political, social, and educational implications. Many people question the direction taken by these countries in regard to education and predict “massive” repercussions, not all of which are positive (Kreiger, 2008). One inevitable repercussion, according to many, is the marginalization and loss of culture, given the current circumstances. Those affiliated

with the Arabic language and culture feel their culture and language are being erased (Mills, 2008). As Maalouf (2000) asserts, if these governments relaxed their vigilance and let market forces and the power of numbers rule, then the national language will soon be restricted to domestic use, its territory will shrink, and it will end up as a mere local dialect.

### **Existing Initiatives**

Plurality of cultures and languages may be accepted and fostered, but when factors such as “unity and coherence of identities” are perceived to be under threat, efforts are made to preserve them. In the GCC states, these efforts are visible on social and political levels. For example in the UAE, the Federal National Council (FNC), the authority of the UAE formed to represent Emiratis, is taking steps towards unifying educational policies that stress national, religious, and cultural values in the hopes of developing new generations that are proud of their national identity (Shaheen, 2009). Some government officials go as far as to suggest that the teaching of courses in English is technically a violation of the General Education law (that applies to the entire Arab world) which mandates the use of the Arabic as language for school instruction (Shaheen, 2009).

There are also other efforts being taken to address this issue, including international and regional conferences and symposiums. The Second International Conference on Arabic Language organized by the International Council for Arabic Language, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Association of Arab Universities, and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, discussed the language issue in mid-2013 in Dubai, UAE (Al Jabry, 2013). Moreover, many panels made up of international researchers have been commissioned to examine the status of the Arabic language. The latest panel was commissioned by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, in 2013 to investigate the declining status of the Arabic language (Al Khan, 2013) and to address the pervasive use and nature of the English language. The commission suggested that there is a need to improve the curriculum in schools, retrain teachers to teach Arabic and other subjects in the language, foster a culture of reading in Arabic, have the media play a bigger role in supporting the teaching of the language, and teach Arabic to non-native speakers. It also recommended the strengthening of Arabic as a universal language and as a language of science and culture.

### **Methodology and Findings**

Despite the rhetoric and various initiatives to address the issue, this research shows that the curriculum being taught in the schools, in one of the GCC states that voice such concerns, is not reflective of the recommendations. In brief, the study examined the written curriculum in the EFL/ ESL English textbooks used in grades 6, 9, and 11. The contents of the textbooks were examined to assess the extent to which reading passages and in-text supporting pictures dealt with or contained —terminology that denotes the Arabic culture; names, beliefs, values, ideals, etc. The study focused on textbooks because curriculums in the Arab world tend to be the dominant instructional media in the classroom (Patrick, 1988; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1990) and are good indicators of the learning and teaching process (Lie, 2002). The study examined the written curriculum (Glatthorn, 1987) in the EFL English textbooks in terms of text content. The texts and the text-supporting pictures

were used as data in examining the frequency of cultural representations. Only two sets of categories were constructed in collecting the data (in-text supporting pictures and in-text supporting terms), those that reflected Arab culture and those that did not. As an exploratory study, the course and workbooks from only one grade from each school level were chosen (the 6<sup>th</sup> grade from the elementary, 9<sup>th</sup> from the preparatory and 11<sup>th</sup> from the secondary level). Further studies that examine all the books from all the grades and levels would, of course, yield more detail, and are bound to be more representative. The findings of the study are briefly presented below.

The results show that only 7.5%, 44%, and 8.4% of in-text supporting pictures of the grade 6, 9 and 11 textbooks respectively, represented the Arabic culture (such as maps of the Gulf countries and a few male students wearing the traditional white robe). With respect to terminology, only 11.3%, 63.9%, and 33.3% of the in-text terms used in grade 6, grade 9, and grade 11 English textbooks respectively, are found to be representative of the Arabic culture (for example in the use of proper nouns or students or countries).

Such findings indicate that the Arab culture is not represented very often in educational materials in the country. And when represented, it is done so in a superficial manner, only in terms of pictures, such as pictures of Arab students in their native dress in a classroom environment, and pictures of maps that contained Arab countries or landmarks. The culture presented in these books reflected what Kramsch (1993) describes as 'surface culture.' Therefore, the findings of this study call for some reflection on how the Arabic culture is represented in teaching materials and further examination of textbooks across the GCC nations.

Theories and research have shown that cultures are maintained by curriculums and that the learner's experiences and backgrounds are important considerations in the curriculum content (Ferdman, 1990; Au, 1993; Takaki, 1993; Banks, 1995; Diamond and Moore, 1995; Diaz, 2002). Research has also revealed that the inclusion, exclusion, and representation of culture, history, and values in education curriculum, are of major importance and carry consequences that affect students (Ferdman, 1990; Au, 1993; Takaki, 1993; Banks, 1995; Diamond and Moore, 1995; Diaz, 2002). While there may be state policies that are advocating for maintaining national languages and identities for the development and pride of future generations, these policies have yet to be fully reflected in the curriculums. In societies where there is great concern about native languages and cultures being marginalized and engulfed by other more dominant cultures, it would be expected that the native culture is highly presented in the education curriculum. However, in reality, the curriculum in the GCC state which was examined does not reflect such concerns.

## **Conclusion**

There are fears and anxieties over the loss of native languages and cultures, not only in the Arab world, but in many other parts of the world. Although these fears and anxieties may continue to be addressed in conferences and research panels and symposiums, if they are not acknowledged and addressed on the political levels and implemented in curriculums, they may result only in heightening awareness of such issues and not much else. In the case

of the Arabic culture, which is being threatened by an increasing reliance on the English language in many of the GCC state, there is a great deal of rhetoric, on the social and political levels on the importance of maintaining their culture and identity. There are many initiatives being taken adopted to resuscitate this culture and language, but the outcomes of such efforts have yet to be seen. In the study presented in this paper, where the EFL/ESL textbooks being taught in schools were examined to assess the extent to which this culture was presented in the reading passages and in-text supporting pictures, the results showed that this culture is hardly present in the curriculum. So while there are several initiatives and surrounding hype purported to bring about change, there does not seem to be tangible evidence reflected in classroom textbooks. In other words, there might not be any progress being made. It is important to pay attention to what is included in the curriculum, whether it deals with the linguistic and or cultural aspects, are not pedagogical decisions, but very much political ones (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007; Tollefson, 2002). Ultimately, the decision to bring about change should come from the heads of governments who can insure that these initiatives are implemented and reflected in the curriculum.

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### ***About the Gulf Comparative Education Society***

Founded in 2008, the Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES) was formed to enable academic, professional, and educational discourse, from a comparative stance, with a focus on the Arabian Gulf region.

The GCES aims to:

- contribute to the development and improvement of teaching standards at all levels in the region;
- increase the dissemination of knowledge about international research and best practices practice from a comparative stance; and,
- promote action research and cross collaborations across the Gulf.

*The GCES is a non-profit society and a member of the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies. Visit <http://gulfcomped.ning.com> to learn more about the GCES.*

***About the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research***

The Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research was established in 2009 to aid in the social, cultural, and economic development of Ras Al Khaimah, a northern emirate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Established through Emiri decree, the Foundation is considered a non-profit, quasi-governmental organization and is the visionary initiative of Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah. His Highness places great value on education and research, and the Al Qasimi Foundation was created to generate a world-class body of research on Ras Al Khaimah and the broader UAE, develop local capacity in the public sector, and engage the community in its work.

Log on to [www.alqasimifoundation.com](http://www.alqasimifoundation.com) to learn more about their research, grants, and programmatic activities.



### ***About Dubai Women's College***

Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), Dubai Women's College (DWC) was founded in 1989. DWC began its legacy with only 145 students taking classes in a converted Dubai car showroom. The first batch of brave young ladies led the way for women in the United Arab Emirates not only by getting educations, but by making pioneering steps to join the predominantly male workforce after graduating. Today, 25 years later, DWC has a state-of-the-art campus spread over 350,000 square meters of cultivated land, with 2,200 students enrolled and offering bachelor's degrees in five academic programs.

*Log on to [dwc.hct.ac.ae](http://dwc.hct.ac.ae) to learn more about their programs and admissions.*



### ***About Middlesex University Dubai***

Middlesex University Dubai is the first overseas campus of the internationally renowned Middlesex University in London. The campus, which opened in January 2005, has more than 2,800 students from over 90 nationalities and offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in a wide variety of subject areas. The origins of Middlesex University date back to 1878, and it is one of only handful of United Kingdom universities to have been awarded three Queen's anniversary prizes.

Log on to <http://www.mdx.ac/> to learn more about their programs and admissions.

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