

Faculty in the Library Schools of the Gulf Cooperation Council Member Nations: An Evaluation

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This study was conducted to analyze the bio-bibliographic profile of faculty members of six library schools in the six member nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Arabian Peninsula. Data were collected through a mailed instrument as well as from the resumes of these faculty members. Forty-nine out of sixty-five faculty members (75.4%) provided data. It was found that the mean age of these faculty members was 48.5. Most of them got their doctoral degrees from Western countries during the 1980s and the

1990s. The majority of them had considerable professional and managerial experience. Their instructional assignments have primarily been in the traditional areas of library operations and service. It was found that most of them have weak research and publication records. They are also quite inactive in professional service as few of them are engaged in continuing professional education activities and none of them is reported to be active in any national or regional professional forum.

Introduction

Library and information education is most influenced by the faculty members who run these academic programs. The faculty members have played a pivotal role in the development of the whole body of education. Any efforts to redesign and to reorient library and information education are essentially carried out by the faculty. One of the most critical factors in the evaluation of library and information education is the composition of the faculty and its contribution toward education, knowledge, research and scholarship, and professional service. This is dependent on the credentials of the faculty members.

The American Library Association (ALA) accreditation standards also focus on faculty-related factors of performance. Boyce and Hendren (1996) established that rankings of schools of library and information science were associated with various measures of high-author productivity of their

faculty members. Mulvaney (1992) also found that the perceived quality of a school's degree program was associated with certain variables and faculty productivity was one of the five critical factors. Blake (1990) examined the requirement of scholarly publishing for the purpose of tenure and promotion of faculty members. A number of related topics were examined, which included authorship characteristics, faculty productivity and quality of research. Budd and Seavey (1996) examined both an individual faculty member's productivity as well as a school's performance by using the Social Sciences Citations Index, which was an extension of the earlier research conducted by Hayes for the period of 1981-1992.

White (1993) used three criteria for tabulating perceptions about the quality of degree programs. The second item was related to the contribution of faculty toward advancement of the profession. Pettigrew and Nicholls (1994) analyzed publication patterns of the faculty and effect of

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doctoral programs on productivity. They noted that productivity was generally higher in those schools that had Ph.D. programs. Rehman (1994) used specific criteria for examining faculty situation of six library schools in Pakistan. These included faculty size, distribution of faculty in ranks, academic and professional credentials, instructional assignments, and research and publication record.

These studies have pointed to the apparent need for evaluation of faculty in library schools. Such evaluation becomes more relevant when it is conducted in a context that has an apparent common ground. The Gulf Cooperation Council is a politico-geographic entity in the Arabian Gulf of the Middle East with some inherent similarities among its six member nations. Linguistic, political, economic, socio-cultural, and historical similarities make it a coherent and natural block. Educational systems and models in the region are almost identical and library and information education is no exception in this regard. Rehman (2000) noted that the 4-year undergraduate degree in these schools, patterned on the North American model, is the entry license to the professional practice. Sharief (1981) and Ashoor and Chaudhry (1999) observed that quite a large number of those currently holding the top academic and administrative slots had taken their graduate education from North America and the United Kingdom. Egyptian nationals, with their intellectual resource and linguistic leeway, have also made a significant impact on traditional library education in this region.

The North American and Egyptian models of education have influenced the development of the field of library education in this region in diverse ways. During the last 25 years, the field has matured and it seems to be an appropriate time to take an objective assessment of the composition, credentials and contributions of the faculty members serving in the library schools of this region.

In 1993, Unesco and IFLA were instrumental in convening a meeting of 33 schools of library and information education in the Arab world. Johnson (1994) reported the recommendations of the meeting, pointing to the need of an improvement in the situation of faculty, conduct of quality research, establishment of a regional clearinghouse for literature, and the publication of an Arabic

bulletin for professionals. Al-Ansari (1992) made an overall manpower projection study for the field of library and information science for the state of Kuwait. Abdul-Motey (1995) examined the development and changes in library education in Kuwait. Studies conducted by al-Sereihy (1998) and Siddiqui (1996) described the overall situation of library and information education in Saudi Arabia. Mufaraji (1992) had also conducted a similar study about the situation in the Sultanate of Oman. Quite recently, Rehman, Ansari and Yusuf (2001) have presented a summative evaluation of the six schools in the GCC region covering aspects related to curriculum, student enrollment and graduation, academic and administrative support, physical and computing infrastructure, and instructional policies and practices. Against this hindsight, the need for an incisive analysis of the faculty situation in the six library schools of the region becomes apparent.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to have an intensive evaluation of the faculty of the six library and information schools in the region related to their bio-bibliographic profile. Such an analysis is expected to provide a clear picture of the faculty credentials and contributions in the region. For any future development of library and information education in the region, this assessment provides an essential framework for reflection and deliberation.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study:

1. What is the faculty strength in these schools and its distribution by age, nationality and academic ranks?
2. What are the academic and professional credentials of these faculty members?
3. What are the areas of specialization of the faculty members in their doctoral studies and instructional assignments?
4. What are the research and publication contributions of these members?
5. What are the contributions of these faculty members toward professional service?

Definitions

GCC refers to the Gulf Cooperation Council, composed of six member nations, located in the Arabian Gulf region in the Middle East. The six member nations of the GCC are Bahrain, Kuwait, Muscat, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

The terms *school of library and information science* or *library school* in this study refer to those institutions that offer a degree, undergraduate or graduate, in the field of library and information science. The term *library and information science* is used in its generic sense, covering librarianship and information studies.

The term *faculty* in this study covers those instructors in the six library schools who are working as full-time employees, either as regular staff members or as contractees and have the requisite qualification of a Ph.D. to teach in the universities of this region. It excludes teaching assistants and lecturers who have a bachelor or Master degree and who serve in supportive instructional capacities.

Procedures

A mail survey was used to collect the bio-bibliographic data from the faculty of the following six schools in the member nations of Gulf Cooperation Council; three in Saudi Arabia, two in Kuwait, and one in Muscat:

- A. King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- B. Institute of Public Authority for Basic Education, Kuwait
- C. Imam Mohammad bin Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- D. King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- E. Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman
- F. Kuwait University, Kuwait

Since the contact information for the heads of the six schools was available, they were asked to provide names of the faculty members in the respective departments. With some persuasion, this information was gathered. It was found that altogether there were 65 faculty members in the six schools who served as the population for this study. Considering the small number, sampling was considered inappropriate.

Table 1: Participants
N=47

University	Total Number of Faculty Members	Responses		Responses with resumes
		Frequency	%	
Sultan Qaboos	5	4	8.2	3
Muhamed Bin Saud	14	8	16.3	1
King Saud	15	13	26.5	8
King Abdul Aziz	15	10	20.4	4
PIAAT	11	9	18.4	2
Kuwait	5	5	10.2	5
Total	65	49	75.4	23

A research instrument was designed which collected the following elements:

1. Academic qualifications: information about the year they earned Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. degrees, names of countries where the degree awarding institutions were located, and their areas of specialization
2. Teaching experience: length, courses taught during the last three years
3. Professional experience: length and areas in which worked
4. Research and publications: Arabic and English publications in five different types of products
5. Contributions to continuing education
6. Service contributions to professional associations
7. Personal data: age and nationality

The faculty members were asked to supply copies of their resumes. The instrument was translated into Arabic and pre-tested with two members of the faculty. Changes were made after the pre-test.

Data collection was quite tedious. The six heads were requested through personal contact to administer the instrument on the behalf of the researchers. They were sent questionnaires, but few responses were received. Then follow-ups were made, and after having tried all the possible measures, 49 of 65 responses were received, a response rate of 75.4% Twenty-three faculty members also provided copies of their resumes.

A breakdown of respondents from the six schools is given in Table 1. Forty-four faculty members were employed in the three schools of Saudi Arabia and the response rate for this segment was 57.4%. Fourteen out of the sixteen fac-

Table 2: Nationality
N=47

Area	Frequency	%
Gulf	28	59.6
Other Arab countries	16	34
Outside	3	6.4
Total	47	100

Table 3: Age
N=47

Category	Frequency	%
39 or below	6	12.8
40 – 45	12	25.5
46 – 50	12	25.5
51 – 55	7	14.9
56 – 60	7	14.9
61 and above	3	6.4
Total	47	100

ulty members from Kuwait (87.5%) responded. The response rate of 80% was noted for the Sultan Qaboos University, as 4 of the 5 faculty members provided information.

Results

Nationality

Many of the faculty members in these countries are not natives. Table 2 provides a breakdown by nationality. Evidently, most of the faculty members are Arabs, the majority working in their own countries.

Age

Table 3 has the breakdown of the respondents by their age. The mean score for age of all the faculty members was found to be 48.5. It was found that 24 of them (51%) fell in the age group of 40–50. Another 14 were in the category of 51–60 (29.85). Six of them were 39 or below, a percentage of 12.8%. Only three of them exceeded sixty years of age. Apparently, most of them have reached a point of maturity by age.

Academic credentials

Tables 4, 5 and 6 provide data about academic credentials of the faculty members. Table 4 indicates years when the respondents obtained their

Table 4: Years of Academic Qualifications
N=47

Degree	Year	Frequency	%
PhD	1994 or later	9	18.4
	1990–93	17	34.7
	1985–89	12	24.5
	1980–84	6	12.2
	1979 or earlier	5	10.2
	Total	49	100
Master	1994 or later	3	5.3
	1990–93	2	3.5
	1985–89	17	29.8
	1980–84	21	36.8
	Before 1980	14	24.6
	Total	57	100
Bachelor	1994 or later	–	–
	1990–93	2	7.4
	1985–89	4	14.8
	1980–84	5	18.5
	Before 1980	16	59.3
	Total	27	100

Ph.D., Master and Bachelor's degrees. Table 5 displays areas of specialization these faculty members had during their doctoral studies. Table 6 shows names of countries from where they had obtained their degrees.

Years of degrees

Data indicate that a majority of the respondents got their research degree during the last 15 years. They are expected to be quite fresh and rigorous in their academic and research pursuits.

With regard to the Master's degree in the field, it was found that a majority of them (59.2%) received it during the period 1985–1993. This further confirms that an average faculty member appears to be relatively mature, but having acquired knowledge and academic training in the recent past. Another related finding is that most of them were able to earn their doctoral degrees soon after getting their Master's degree. Many of the respondents had more than one Master's degree, as indicated in Table 4.

Twenty-seven of the participants provided information about the year when they received their bachelor degree. Quite expectedly, none of the faculty members had been awarded bachelor degrees after 1993. A majority of them (59.3%) received the degree before 1980.

Faculty in the Library Schools of the Gulf Cooperation Council Member Nations

Table 5: Ph.D. – Areas of Specialization
N=47

Area	Frequency	%
Library information science	35	71.4
Comparative librarianship	3	6.1
Information resources	3	6.1
Networking	3	6.1
Library management	2	4.1
Library automation	2	4.1
Management of information technology	1	2.0
Total	49	100

Table 6: Places Where Educational Degrees Were Earned
N=47

Degree	Country	Frequency	%
PhD	USA	25	51.0
	Europe	12	24.5
	Egypt	7	14.3
	Others	5	10.2
	Total	49	100
Master	USA	39	68.4
	Europe	5	8.8
	Egypt	5	8.8
	Others	8	14
	Total	57	100
Bachelor	USA	4	14.8
	Egypt	9	33.3
	Others	14	51.9
	Total	27	100

Areas of specialization

The faculty members were asked to mention their areas of specialization during their Ph.D. studies. Table 5 provides a breakdown by specialization. The majority of them (71.4%) just mentioned library and information science. Three respondents listed each of the three areas of comparative librarianship, information resources, and networking. Library management and library automation were each mentioned by two faculty members. Only one faculty member mentioned management of information technology. Since majority of the respondents did not specify their areas, it is not possible to comment on these specializations.

Places of educational degrees

Table 6 displays data about the places from where the faculty members earned their degrees. It is evident that a majority of the respondents had obtained bachelor degree from their own native

Table 7: Academic Title
N=46

Title	Frequency	%
Professor	8	17.4
Associated Professor	11	23.9
Assistant Professor	23	50
Teacher	1	2.2
Others	3	6.5
Total	46	100

Table 8: Length of Teaching Experience
N=45

Years	Frequency	%
4 years of less	6	13.3
5 – 10	13	29
11 – 15	8	17.7
15 – 20	9	20
21 – 25	3	6.7
26 or more	6	13.3
Total	45	100

country. An overwhelming majority of them got their Master's from the United States. Most of them stayed there for their Ph.D. while some of them moved to the United Kingdom for Ph.D. degree. Also, it was evident that a majority of them earned their Ph.D. degrees from the United States.

Teaching credentials

Tables 7, 8 and 9 display data about teaching credentials of the respondents. Table 7 provides breakdown of the faculty by their academic titles. It was found that 17.4% of the respondents were professor, 23.9% were associate professor, and 23 (50%) were assistant professors.

Table 8 displays results about length of teaching experience of 45 respondents. It was found that two-thirds of them had experience of more than ten years. The mean of the length of teaching experience of the faculty members was found to be 13.3 years. It means that an average faculty member in these schools has a substantial teaching experience.

The respondents were asked to list courses they had taught during their academic career. Forty-five of them listed courses that are displayed in Table 9. These courses were then grouped into ten areas. Most of them had taught technical and public service courses. The second largest group

Table 9: Courses Taught
N=45

Categories	Frequency	%
Technical and public services	32	71.1
Technology (computers, Internet...)	24	53.3
Foundation	20	44.4
Collection development	16	35.6
Other areas (copyright, Arabic resources, libraries for handicapped, etc.)	12	26.7
Library management	11	24.4
Children libraries	7	15.5
School libraries	6	13.3
Academic libraries	3	6.7
Special libraries	3	6.7
Total	134	100

Table 10: Type of Experience
N=43

Categories	Frequency	%
Technical Services	25	58.1
Administration	24	55.8
Public sector	17	39.6
System management	5	11.6

Table 11: Length of Professional Experience
N=43

Range of years	Frequency	%
4 years or less	13	30.2
5 – 10	11	25.6
11 – 15	7	16.3
15 – 20	8	18.6
21 years or more	4	9.3
Total	43	100

was engaged in the instruction of information technology courses. Evidently, a majority of them is engaged in the instruction of traditional library science courses.

Professional experience

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they had any professional experience. Forty-three of them provided details of such experience, shown in Tables 10 and 11. It was found that 58.1 percent of them had worked in technical services, 55.8% in administrative positions, 39.6% in public services, and 11.6% as systems managers.

About the length of experience, it was found that the majority of them (55.8%) had experience of ten years or less. Thirty percent worked for four years or fewer.

Table 12: Research & Publications
N=47

Category	Range	Arabic English Others		
		Arabic	English	Others
Articles in academic journals	None	16	27	-
	1-3	12	15	-
	4-10	9	3	-
	11 or more	8	1	1
Articles based on descriptive account, position papers, opinion papers, etc.	None	33	36	-
	1-5	7	6	-
	6 or more	2	-	-
Research reports	None	30	35	-
	1-5	4	2	1
	6 or more	6	2	-
Books translated/edited	None	26	38	-
	1-2	11	4	-
	3-5	1	-	-
	6 or more	1	-	-
Books authored	None	19	35	-
	1-2	12	4	1
	3-5	10	2	-
	6 or more	3	-	1
Chapter/s in Book/s	None	30	37	-
	1-2	7	2	1
	3-5	-	2	-
	6 or more	-	-	-

It means that almost all of them had professional experience of varying length. A majority of them had worked for about 5-10 years in administration and technical or public service areas.

Research and publication credentials

The respondents were asked to furnish research and publication data in different categories of scholarly contribution. They were also requested to supply copies of resumes; 23 of them complied with this request. Data thus collected were carefully analyzed. Table 12 displays research and publication contributions of these faculty members.

It was found that in the category of *articles in academic journals*, a majority of them had not produced anything in English while about one third of them reported nothing in Arabic or other languages. It is worth noting that with the mean of 13.3 years of teaching experience, there were only about one third of the respondents who had pro-

duced four articles or more in Arabic. For English language, less than ten percent reported as having produced anything. It indicates that a large number of these faculty members are making little scholarly contribution to the field.

It was further explored if these faculty members had made contribution to literature, based on descriptive accounts, position papers, opinion papers, etc. One-fifth of them reported that they made such contribution in Arabic whereas only six of them reported of having produced any such publication in English language. It means that more than three-fourths of the respondents had made no contribution in either of the two languages. Further it was explored if the respondents had contributed any research reports. It was found that more than two third of them had made no such contribution in any of the two languages. Again, the contribution of the faculty members in this area was marginal. A large majority of them did not have even a single contribution to his credit. Likewise, less than one third of them indicated if they had translated or edited any books in either of the two languages. However, more than half of them reported that they had authored books in Arabic. On the average, one in ten had authored a book in English. About one-fifth of them had contributed chapters to Arabic books, but it was only two of them who made such contributions to books in English.

This profile of research and publications has indicated that by and large these faculty members have not made any worthwhile scholarly contribution. A large majority of them have produced nothing. As faculty members are admittedly the primary producers of literature, this is a serious weakness of the faculty that may have far-reaching implications for the development of profession in this region

Continuing education contributions

The respondents were asked to indicate if they had organized any continuing education programs or they had participated in any such program as instructors. Table 13 has a breakdown of such contributions.

These results have indicated that an overwhelming majority of the respondents had never participated in continuing education activities. It was found that 59.2% of the respondents had

Table 13: Continuing Education Programs
N=49

Number of Programs Conducted	Frequency	%
None	29	59.2
1-3	19	38.8
20	1	2.0
Total	49	100

Table 14: Professional Affiliation
N=49

Professional Association	No	Role
ALA	16	Member
SLA	11	Member
Arabian Library Union	8	Member
LA	6	Member
IFLA	5	Member
Egyptian Library Association	5	Member
BETA PHI MU	2	Member
Jordanian Library Association	2	Member
British Library Association	2	Member
American Association for LIS	2	Member
Saudi Library Association	2	Member
AFB	1	Member
AIB	1	Member
ASIS	1	Member
PULSAA	1	Member
COMLIS	1	Member
LLA	1	Member
Sirian Library Association	1	Member
Iraqi Library Association	1	Member
Pakistan Library Association	1	Member
Malaysian Library Association	1	Member
Arab Federation of LIS	1	Member
Association of College and Research Libraries	1	Member
Middle East Collection Society	1	Member
Kuwait Library Association	1	Member

made no such contribution. Very few of them had any substantial contribution in this area.

Professional affiliation

The last question was about professional affiliation of the faculty members. It was surprising that none of them indicated holding office in any regional or national organization currently. Many of them were having single or multiple memberships in these associations. Table 14 shows names of all these associations and the number of members of the respective association from this group.

The largest group of 16 was found to be the members of ALA. It was followed by the Special Libraries Association (SLA), which also has a regional chapter. The membership indicated that

only 22.5% of them had become members of this chapter, which happens to be the only active regional forum for professional activity. A number of national or regional associations were listed which had 1–2 members from this community. Probably they are the nationals of these countries who are now working in these schools.

Conclusions

The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. The mean age of the faculty members in the region is 48.5 years.
2. The percentage of those who received Ph.D. in 1985 or later is 77.6%. Fifty-one percent of them received it from the United States and 24.5% from Europe. Even a larger percentage of 68.4% got their Master's degree from the United States.
3. The mean length of teaching experience was found to be 13.3 years. Two-thirds of them had been teaching for more than ten years. Twenty percent had been teaching for more than twenty years.
4. Seventy-one percent had been teaching technical and public service courses. A majority of them had also been teaching IT-based courses.
5. Most of them had experience of ten years or less in professional positions, primarily in technical services, administration, and public services.
6. One-third of the faculty members had produced research articles in Arabic, the majority having produced 1–3 such articles. In the English language, 42.5% had produced research articles mostly in the category of 1–3 articles. It is worth noting that with the mean of 13.3 years of teaching experience, there were only about one third of the respondents who had produced four articles or more in Arabic. For English language, the proportion was only 8.8%. It was reported that 56.8% of them had produced books in Arabic.
7. A majority of the respondents, 59.2%, had made no contribution to any continuing education activity.
8. None of them was reported to have an office in any professional association, though many of them had multiple memberships in these associations.

Discussion

These results have indicted that a typical faculty member in these schools is 40-plus years old, had earned a Ph.D. in 1990, and received graduate education in the field of library and information science from overseas. These faculty members, by and large, have an adequate amount of academic and professional experience. They have been

teaching in the mainstream areas of traditional library operations and services. Rehman, Ansari and Yusuf (2001) have also reported elsewhere that these schools have an adequate teacher-student ratio. Distribution in academic ranks and age groups also appears to be consistent with the international norms. While these schools may have a genuine point of satisfaction that the size and composition of faculty are quite in line with the typical requirements of effective instruction.

The areas in which the faculty members are deficient are related to research and publication and professional service. One point of primary concern is that these faculty members have left no real mark in their academic and scholarly contributions. Little research has been conducted and very few of them have appeared in any quality outlets of scholarly communication. Even the contribution of a large majority of them to the Arabic literature in has been weak. On this count, these faculty members appear to have serious deficiency. It is not easy to suggest any shortcuts to remove this deficiency. Creating a culture of academic scholarship takes a great deal of effort with some long-term orientation. One reason might be that most of these programs are essentially undergraduate where the tradition of scholarship is not expected to strong.

Another area of concern is that these faculty members seem to be quite inactive in the conduct of professional continuing education activities. They also seem to be playing no effective role in professional associations. These are again in clear defiance to the academic norms of professional education in the field. There is little organized activity in the professional field in this region, yet indifference of almost all the faculty members to these activities poses some serious questions about their sense of professional activism. These results have raised some serious questions and it is up to the academic and professional leadership in the region to address itself to some strategic resolutions.

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