

A Profile of Journalists in the Arabian Gulf Newspapers, Characteristics of International News Desks reporters: A Field Study

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Abstract

There is no room to doubt that characteristics of journalists on the foreign news desks, as media communicators, being a factor influencing news content as discussed fully in chapter three. The main objective was not to examine the potential e of the journalists on the selection of political news by testing the theories global journalism, according to Berglez, includes a discourse of micro- and macro- power relationships; for example, individuals versus global corporations

Questionnaire survey was used in this study to find out the personal characteristics of the newsroom journalists in each newspaper studied in order to help to establish an impression of who are the media workers in foreign news rooms and to provide a frame for further studies to see if there is a relation between their characteristics and the selection of international political news. Total number of journalists registered on the foreign news desks in all the six newspapers studied was 42, of whom 9 were on annual leave. The researcher could not trace those on leave as he had only 2-3 days in each country for the field visit. Therefore the total number of foreign news desks reporters included in this study was 32 journalists.

This study provided the first picture of journalists on the foreign news desk in six Arab Gulf newspapers. Because it has been a small sample, generalization to all other journalists in the Gulf press may be taken as cautious, but because the same basic characteristics of this sample were very similar to the other studies investigating journalists elsewhere we might say that the picture this study has drawn about journalists may also be applied to the other journalists working on the foreign news desk in all the Arab Gulf press. The most distinct characteristic of the surveyed journalists is that they were mainly men except for two women journalists. All the journalists working in Al-Ayam (Bahrain), Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) and Oman (Oman) were citizens, while those in Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait), Al-Sharq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE) were non-citizens from Arab countries. This may well be related to the presence of a high proportion of non-citizens in the latter countries. Yet it appears that journalism, as a profession has not been an attractive job for the Gulf's own people especially in those countries with a higher income. Furthermore, this research showed that journalists on the foreign news desk in the newspapers studied had a high level of education with different specialisms, the majority majoring in journalism. Although the foreign news desk journalists are highly educated, they lack regular training.

Keywords

Foreign news, Foreign news desk journalists, Gulf newspapers, Global journalism

Introduction

Needless to say that News is a report of a current event. It is information about something that has just happened or will happen soon. From all these, we can safely define news as a development that has happened in the past 24 hours which was not known outside and which is of wide interest to the people and that which generates curiosity among listeners. (Eadia , 2009) The first, frequently cited and, at the same time, one of the most popular news definitions from late XIX century is the saying that, “news is when a man bites a dog”. This saying is attributed to at least two journalists. In the US, the authors are considered to be Charles Dana (“New York Times” journalist in the 1860s) or Charles Stanton, assistant to Secretary of State during Abraham Lincoln’s presidency and co-owner and publisher of “New York Sun” News as a key component of informational journalism system in the world presents a structural worldview element of modern personality, unlike news stories which appear in the first pages of the newspapers depend on news values found within published pieces of journalism cannot provide a complete explanation of the journalistic process (Boyd , 2006).,

News values are worth studying because they inform the mediated world that is presented to news audiences, providing a shared shorthand operational understanding of what working journalists are required to produce to deadlines. It is the way news values work in practice that results in them being articulated and conveyed to new journalism trainees and journalism students, and they are also used by public relations professionals and others aiming to obtain maximum news coverage of events (or pseudo-events) and finally news values are considered as the journalists’ responsibilities. (Harcup & O’Neill 2017) No reporter or news editor, try as they might professionally to suppress their own prejudices, will ever be able to do so completely. This is most obvious when they judge the basic story subject. I think homelessness is interesting and important, you think it is inevitable and boring (David , 2011). News items present knowledge, which is perceived in the socio-cultural and communicative contexts and thus embody value orientations of communicators. The content of news reports is largely influenced by interpretation of the information processes by people involved in the collection, production and dissemination of news. Organizational, social and communicative factors influence the selection criteria of news reports, resulting in simulated events, actually constructed and interpreted reality; these factors manipulate the reality through the news content and form . (Serdali et al, 2016)

In the context of newspapers journalist use seems to be vital in transmitting the intended messages, because they are eye which reflect the reality, in the early 1900s journalism was often seen as a talent, an aptitude some people had. Journalists and the press could be opposed to a formal education. The traditional path to becoming a journalist was to start working as an apprentice, a volunteer, at a newspaper. In 1946, there were early attempts to include a course in journalism within an academic degree at the colleges in cooperation with local newspapers. Similar courses were arranged at the colleges of during the 1950s. (Gardeström , 2016) Journalism is and has been theorized, researched, studied and criticized worldwide by people coming from a wide variety of disciplines. Indeed, research about

journalism and among journalists has been established as a widely acknowledged field, particularly in the second half of the 20th century. Worldwide one can find universities, schools and colleges with dedicated departments, research and teaching programs in journalism. The field even has its own international and national journals (Deuze, 2005)

Foreign news has become a key social, political and cultural phenomenon and an indispensable source of knowledge, a common experience thanks to which we can interpret, define and recreate the world around us , Foreign news is defined in a different way by journalists, by sociologists, by political scientists and by recipients themselves , foreign news is relatively a recent formalized type of foreign experiences. Also , foreign news is formed to meet the demand of a rational/mental explanation on foreign events or countries. Although such inventions as telegraphs, television, and the Internet are making foreign news speedier and timely ever than before, reflecting the desires audiences seek in foreign news, perceptivity only allows us to see the history of foreign news in a deterministic manner (Gebser & Barstad , 1985)

Most newspapers actually ignore the coverage they get and pay for from the major wire services (AP, UPI, Reuters) because they don't believe that their readers want foreign news and they don't want to give up space for it, international news reporting around the world, then, seems to share the same problems and deal with the same issues . News organizations around the world need to change. They need to provide audiences with deeper, more analytical content, provide more context and consider the significance of international events they cover. They need to help people convert information into the knowledge they need to understand the world. (Profozich , 2009) foreign news is not just about what is happening in foreign countries; rather, it is about how we interpret ourselves through foreign countries. Cultural expression intends to be theoretical and explanatory unlike most instrumental and prescriptive communication theories. As opposed to a stimuli react, process-orientation view, it points out that communication is multidimensional rather than unidimensional, and meanings exchanged in communication are ever-presently creative rather than transmission. Cultural expression thus illuminates foreign news as a cultural manifestation as to how we make sense of a given discourse within our cultural milieu (Sakurai , 2017)

The point of departure is our world as a geographic structure divided roughly into 195 territories, most of which are called nations and are 'autonomous'. The international community of nations is structured by a number of variables and highly stratified into 'topdog' and 'underdog' nations so that the world is geography on which are superimposed two relatively similar levels of human organization: the inter-individual and the international. Thus, the world consists of individual and national actors, and since it is axiomatic that action is based on the actor's image of reality, international action will be based on the image of international reality. . But the regularity, ubiquity and perseverance of news media will in any case make them first-rate competitors for the number-one position as international image-former. Since the adequacy of an action is often (Galtung & Ruge ,1965) .

Print media play various roles they are often the only form of education, and as such, they are a very powerful influence on beliefs and opinions. This influence is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the relationship between the media and politics. Politics can justifiably be described as an important determining factor in daily life, and a major influence over

many facets of day to day existence, including finances, healthcare, and employment. The media are often the major source of information about political affairs, and as such the media shape what we actually know about the political system and what we may never find out. As a result, the media retain a certain “hold” over the political arena. (Mady, 2005) A key aspect of contextualization is authentication. Understanding the biases of a newspaper is a critical hermeneutic strategy for reading a story correctly. In the same way, understanding a journalist may require knowledge of how a editor relates to her peers politically and socially. This context is usually well understood by the audience of a paper, and the audience adjusts the factual assertions of a story around that context in a way that can be very difficult for a reader without context to do. Authentication is not always critical in finding a story valuable a wholly false story that is getting amplified by mainstream media can offer valuable insights on the opinions and biases of a community but it’s critical to understand whether the viewpoints expressed in a story are widely held or marginal. (Zuckerman, 2008)

Arabian Gulf newspapers

In about 2000 BC, the island of Failaka, lying just offshore the Gulf coastline, was inhabited by colonists from the Dilmun civilization centred on modern Bahrain, who developed it into a commercial and trading outpost for the entire region (Potts , 2009) and In the latter half of the 19th century, important new export markets in Europe and as far away as North America emerged for Gulf dates and pearls. Global demand for both commodities boomed in the later years of the century as international seafaring trade networks proliferated. The value of the date export trade in Muscat (today the capital of Oman) doubled between 1899 and 1906 and increased 2.5 times in Bahrain in the same period (Bishara , 2014) and nowadays , Arabian Peninsula countries Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, UAE and Saudi Arabia, members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) since 1998, currently belong to the group of emerging countries engaged in the transformation of national economies on the basis of the new industry segments and diversification. it should be noted that interest in the Gulf States is predefined not only because of their significant and diverse socio-economic, structural, financial, integration, investment and foreign trade successes, but also because of the Gulf States national economies structure similarity with international economy. As well as possible and even necessary intensification of international Arab economic, trade and investment cooperation, which, in our opinion, could be long-lasting and fruitful for both sides It is important not only to state, but also to form stable mutual interests but not all countries are interested in mutual development. (Shkvarya & Frolova, 2017)

Journalism in the Arab Gulf region was established at the hands of educated pioneers in Arabic literature such as Abdul Aziz Al-Rasheed in Kuwait (1928) and Abdulla Zayed in

Bahrain (1939), who had no background in journalism at all, and were only aiming at presenting a newspaper which was heavily cultural in content directed to elite people in society. Modern journalism started in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s and the other Gulf countries in the 1970s and therefore journalism as a profession is new and challenging. With the proliferation of print media and the emergence of other media sectors like radio and

television, there was a high demand for professional journalists at a time when the Gulf had a shortage of skills among its own people.

In Saudi Arabian, first newspapers, "Hijaz Vilayeti Salnamah" was published in Turkish by the government printing press, It was not printed regularly, as two years elapsed between the first two issues. Modern news paper establishment period' was between 1963-now because it witnessed the change from individual ownership, to press establishments in order to break the monopoly of the press. By virtue of a royal decree in nineteen sixty three, new press establishments were created, whereby the establishments that owned and published newspapers, Two significant events characterize this stage in the development of the Saudi press. These are the Gulf War and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in nineteen ninety and the September attacks in two thousand and one. The government can dismiss editors and censor material, and the religious establishment also has a powerful influence on the news agenda. Sources of news from other countries are censored (Alarfaj , Nd).

Modern Kuwait's print media had its beginning in the 1920s, expanding in the 1960s (Kamaliour & Mowlana) with the emergence of a number of publications. Most newspapers in Kuwait are individually owned, allowing for a wide range of expressions of opinion . However, government newspapers were discontinued because they could not compete with privately owned publications. Arabic daily newspapers from Kuwait include: Al-Rai Ala-Am (Public Opinion) which started publication in 1961 and hosted a 2001 ; Al-Seyassah (Policy), founded in 1965, ; and Al-Qabas (Starbrand), a somewhat liberal publication founded in 1972.s. Another Arabic newspaper, Al-Watan (The Home-land), started publication in 1974 and had a 2001 . Al-Anbas (The News) was founded in 1976 and had a Other newspapers include Al Dostoor , a general interest publication; and Al Iklisadia , a business publication. Newspapers published in English include the Kuwait Times , founded in 1961, with a 2001 Kuwait Today ; and the Arab Times , founded in 1977 reporting a The Washington Post is also received in Kuwait. Weekly publications include Al-Mousaher , an economic publication; Murat al-Umma (Mirror of the Nations); and Al Yaqza (The Awakening), a general and political publication founded in 1966, reporting in 2001 <http://www.pressreference.com/Gu-Ku/Kuwait.html>

In UAE the government-owned Emirates Media publishes Al Ittihad newspaper and owns Abu Dhabi's radio and television stations. Another newspaper, Al Bayan, is also government owned, as are most television and radio stations. The country's largest English- and Arabic language newspapers, Al Khaleej and Gulf News, are privately owned. By law, the Media Council, which is appointed by the president, licenses all publications and issues

press credentials to editors. Laws also govern press content and proscribed subjects. Media Council censors review all imported media for content. (Library of Congress 2007)

The settlement of Omanis in Africa contributed to the establishment of newspapers in Zanzibar as early as 1911, when *Alnajah* (success) was established by Abu Muslim Al-Bahlani. *Alnajah* died in 1914, but a number of publications followed, including *Alfalaq* (dawn) in 1929, *Almurshid* (the guide) in 1942 and *Alnahdha* (renaissance) in 1951 (Op cit: 33). All of these newspapers died by the end of the Omani rule in east Africa in 1964. In 1971, a new era for journalism had just begun, but this time in mainland Oman. The government started its own newspaper, *Oman*, in 1972, and several other new newspaper titles started to emerge erratically over the years with a very a long interval between one another. However, this trend has changed since 2006, as four dailies and more than 10 free weekly tabloids have come into existence. According to the list of publications obtained by the researcher in October 2010 from the Ministry of Information, the licensing body in Oman, there are 84 publications in Oman ranging from the mere newsletters to refereed journals. Amongst those are 9 daily newspapers, 22 private commercial magazines, 17 governmental magazines, 10 free weekly tabloids, 3 quasi refereed journals and 8 refereed journals. The rest are either newsletters or erratic publications. (Al-Shaqsi , 2013)

In Bahrain the press began during the 1930s and maintained independent status. Then, the Bahraini government issued a press law in 1965 that allowed for newspaper production to begin again. In 1967, *Akhbar al Khaleej* , Bahrain's first Arabic daily opened under the possession of Abdulla Mardi. Today there are four dailies, There are 15 periodicals that circulate currently, many of which are business and tourism related. Some of these include *Bahrain of the Month* (monthly), *Discover Bahrain* , *Gulf Construction* (monthly) *Gulf Panorama* (monthly), *Al-Hayat at-Tijariya* or *Commerce Review* (monthly) *Al-Hidayah* or *Guidance* (monthly), *Al-Musafir al-Arabi* or *Arab Traveller* (bimonthly), *Shipping and Transport News International* (bimonthly), and *Travel and Tourism News Middle East* (monthly) (Press Reference 2018)

The initial role of mass media in Qatar was to facilitate the process of building a modern nation. The planned development of electronic media in particular has reflected this fact. The policies and plans of the Ministry of Information are geared toward using media to bridge the gap between the oil boom in the 1970s and early 1980s and lagging internal development. Print Media such as (*Al Sharq Newspaper*, *Al Watan Newspaper* and *Al Raya Newspaper*): Information providers mainly including Newspapers, magazines and gazettes. (Mady , 2005)

However, even if each pan-Arab press had a different attitude toward unity based on its Arab or Islamic values, we should keep it in mind that those papers tended to address the entire Arab community, not just with regard to a specific country's issues, but on Arab issues as a whole. These pan-Arab papers played an important role in keeping their readers in touch with pan-Arab issues, and in compensating for a lack of pan-Arab news on the air. This fact

should be emphasized when interregional collaboration for exchanging common news broke down and each Arab state tried to solidify its national borders shaped by its own obedient national mass media (Yushi, 2012)

Now the majority of universities in the Gulf countries have journalism and mass media departments from which hundreds of journalists of both sexes graduate. Nevertheless, the mass media in the Gulf countries continue to have non-Gulf Arab journalists who are also the most qualified journalists in the Arab countries and this has raised the standard of journalism in the Gulf.

Previous studies

A significant number of studies were found at the international level handled the relationship between the characteristics of journalists and foreign news, such as Scott, Martin and his colleagues (2017) try to put an answer to this question, How does donor funding affect the independence, role perceptions, and ideology of the journalism it supports? They begin to answer this increasingly important but under researched question with a year-long case study of the humanitarian news organization IRIN as it transitioned from being funded by the United Nations to a private foundation, run by a Malaysian billionaire. Using content analysis, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic research, we document the changes that occurred in IRIN's outputs, target audience, and public service values, and the complex interplay of influences that produced these changes. They find that, in this case, donor power operated entirely indirectly and always in concert with the dominant professional values within IRIN. In doing so, this case study highlights the importance of journalistic agency and contextual variables in the journalist-donor relationship, as well as the potential significance of contradictory dynamics. They also use this case to test whether Benson, Hessérus and Sedel's model of media owner power can help to explain the workings of donor power. (Scott & Mel & Wright, 2017) Ivan Sascha (2013) aims to examine that media framing has a powerful effect on citizen perception and policy debates. Research has provided less insight into the ability of marginalized actors to promote their preferred frames in the media in a dynamic political context. The efforts of an exiled Iranian opposition group to get its name removed from official terror lists in the United States, United Kingdom, and EU provides a valuable platform to examine this problem. Using content analysis, I explore how the group promoted its frames in the opinion sections of major world news publications over nine years (2003-2012). He then examines the extent to which journalists aligned to its frames, as opposed to rival official frames, over time in the larger arena of news. The results support research showing that by nurturing small opportunities, marginalized political actors can expand media capacity and influence, but these effects are mediated at least in part by critical or focusing events that make rival frames less salient. The study sheds light on the complex relationship between activists, the government, and the media. It has implications for the ability of marginalized political actors to get their frames into public discourse. It also has implications for terror tagging and media coverage of other controversial issues. (Sheehan, 2013) Pertti Alasuutari and his colleagues (2013) study the domestication of foreign news by identifying the different ways in which the Egyptian revolt was reported and discussed in

Britain, Finland and Pakistan. The data comprise the press coverage of the 2011 events in three newspapers: The Times in Britain, Helsingin Sanomat (HS) in Finland, and the Daily Times in Pakistan. They argue that, in addition to journalists, there are other agents who contribute to domesticating foreign news items. This makes understandable the unexpected differences

between the three newspapers. One might assume that coverage of the Arab Spring would have been more impartial and less emotional in Britain and Finland than in Pakistan, which is culturally closer to Egypt. The opposite was true, however. The coverage of the events in Daily Times primarily consisted of hard news. The Times and HS, on the other hand, sent their reporters onsite, and the news stories used several discursive means to bring the events experientially closer to their readers. Yet, the Egypt uprising was used as a lever in domestic politics more forcefully in Pakistan. That is because the uprising was domesticated to local politics by other actors than just journalists (Alasuutari & Qadir & Creutz, 2013). Matt J. Duffy (2013) examines the “cultures of journalism” at two newspapers in the United Arab Emirates, the Arabic-language Al Ittihad and English-language The National. Founded in 2008, the latter newspaper promised to bring Western-style journalism to the Middle East, so the analysis helps to examine whether it reached this goal. The author and an Arab-language researcher used a “frame analysis” to examine a sample month of coverage (April 2011) during the “Arab Spring.” The researchers looked for examples of four main concepts based on Kovach and Rosenthal’s Principles of Journalism: Verification and commitment to truth-telling, holding those in power accountable, providing a space for public criticism and compromise, and comprehensive and proportional reporting. The analysis found that the English-language paper covered the news according to those principles far more than the Arabic-language outlet. But The National deviated from these principles when covering “sensitive” subjects such as actions taken by the nation’s security forces. The author concludes with questions about how the different approaches of the English and Arab press may affect the audience’s culture (Matt, 2013). Hillel Nossék (2004) has theoretical assumption mention that when a foreign news item is defined as ‘ours’, then journalists’ professional practices become subordinate to national loyalty; when an item is ‘theirs’, journalistic professionalism comes into its own. Thus, the article argues that there is an inverse relation between professional news values and the national identity of the journalist and the journal’s editors. Expressed as a rule, we would say that the more ‘national’ the report is, the less ‘professional’ it will be, i.e. the closer the reporters/editors are to a given news event in terms of national interest, the further they are from applying professional news values. This claim is presented in the form of a flow diagram and is investigated using qualitative content analysis of the coverage of four events in three different countries (the USA, Britain and Israel). The four events, which were all presented as foreign news, were defined as political violence based on an observational definition. The theory which is empirically tested and presented in this article can help us to understand the coverage of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and further our understanding of how events were, and still are, covered as foreign news in general, and, in particular, how political violence is covered as foreign news (Hillel, 2004).

There are, however, a number of studies that inform the current paper and its narrow objective: to consider GCC newspaper coverage of climate change. Several studies provided the insights as to which content categories, and other variab. As far as survey research is concerned, to our knowledge there have been two studies that conducted questionnaire survey research among journalists working in Arab Gulf newspapers; one was conducted by Issa (1995) among journalists working in three Qatari dailies exploring their personal

characteristics and their attitudes towards regional and international issues(Essa, 1995) . The second was by Al-Saud (1998) who examined the personal characteristics of journalists working in six Arab Gulf dailies and their opinions and beliefs with respect to the social news coverage (Al-Saud,1998)

Theoretical framework

It seems as there has been a lack of theoretical insight when it comes to the debate of international reporting, in the way that theoretical debates mainly have focused on mid-range theories as e.g. agenda setting, rather than on macro theory. According to Berglez, there is a particular epistemology connected to global journalism, a view he shares with Ulrich Beck (2002), which Berglez defines as the global. The global outlook provides knowledge that is differentiated from the national outlook. The central perception of the national outlook is that everything regarding social reality revolves around the nation-state, where the understandings and explanations of the global outlook intersects both economic, political, social and ecological practices alongside how processes and problems in different parts of the world affect one another. (Lundgren , 2016)

Global journalism, according to Berglez, includes a discourse of micro- and macro-power relationships; for example, individuals versus global corporations. Berglez, Castells, Giddens and Beck all agree that the concept of globalisation is an ever more important condition. Berglez is hopeful that the routines required to change mainstream journalists' perspectives from domestic or national to global could become 'naturalized' as they are adopted more widely so that the global reality is integrated into everyday news The emergence of several international networks of investigative journalists, indicates this process is beginning. Gerard Ryle is optimistic that 'the same technology that is destroying our industry has the power to rebuild it' by courting and seeking to protect whistleblowers, by collecting data and by establishing teams of investigative reporters. These actions would enable journalists to see that far from journalism dying, the profession has the potential to enter a new 'golden age'(Gearing, 2016)

The global outlook focuses on a certain form of knowledge, grounded in aspects of how lives are intertwined. Hence is the global outlook produced in the minds of journalists; i.e. how they explain, select sources, choose background material and mix verbal comments. The global outlook is a certain way to communicate, which interlocks peoples and practices on a global scale. Berglez argues that in a world with increasingly more complex relations between peoples, places and practices due to globalization practices, "global journalism is the news style which integrates and covers these relations in everyday news production (Hafez , 2011)

While acknowledging the difficulties for journalists and news outlets to adjust to the changes of the digital age, Ansgard Heinrich urges journalists to experiment with the connections such as online crowd sourcing, newsgathering using social media, and collaborating beyond professional journalism networks. She warns that only those news organisations which understand the patterns of digital networks will survive (Heinrich 2012, 65). Although Heinrich concludes that journalists have been slow to ‘fully acknowledge the opportunities of the network journalism sphere’ (Heinrich 2012, 66), she is optimistic that

journalism may still have a bright future if news outlets network successfully so that they can ‘enhance their networks and form continuous links with nodes (Sarah, Ansgard &Annelore ,2015)

Problem statement

After more than one century of emerging of the newspapers in its modern form in the Arabian Gulf countries, this study will present an updated picture of journalists profile working in these six countries members in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). However, the study will observe the journalists on the international news desk in leading newspaper in each country to identify basic characteristics of them as media communicators. Until this moment, there has-been no specific study of journalist as a professional group in today’s media workforce. This study serves the development of the contemporary journalism in the Arabian Gulf, and to establish some professional framework and the eventual to provide the background for newsmen. The importance role for the journalists comes from their power in determined news selection criteria when they decide what is newsworthy. From this aspect, this study will try to discover the reality of newsmen international news desks in sex countries includes; Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The sex countries share in many characteristics. They are all Arabs and Muslims and based on tribal modern society. They have similar political and socioeconomic structures and have advances in its infrastructure including media outlets. This united scene will provide a good profile for this study to draw one distinct picture for the journalist in the area

Study Questions

The study will try to draw a common profile for the journalists in the Arabian Gulf countries by testing their personal characteristics such as age, gender, years of experience and education. So, the study will examine two main questions:

1. What are the characteristics of journalists in the leading newspapers in the sex Arabian Gulf countries?
2. What is the common profile can the study draw for the journalists in the international news desk in the Arabian Gulf daily newspapers?

Methodology

The Survey Questionnaire

Surveys as a method of data collection involve mainly two methods: interviews and self-administered questionnaires (Alshenqeet , 2014). In both, structured questionnaires are used in which people are asked to answer a list of questions but they differ in the way the questionnaires are administered which we will discuss in detail later. In brief, in survey interviews, also called personal interviews, people are asked questions face to face, while in self-administered questionnaires, the questionnaires are either given or sent to people who are asked to answer the questions and return the questionnaires to the researcher. In general, questionnaires have

the advantage of being an inexpensive method of collecting data about very personal matters and complex and detailed issues and eliminate the effect of interviewer's bias (Adams & Anna, 2008)

Questionnaire design

The approach used in questionnaire design and the layout affects the response rate. Accordingly the researcher spent great time and effort in preparing the questionnaire. In general, there are different types of questions used in questionnaire surveys including closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions ask respondents to select from lists of answers provided by the survey designer - lists such as multiple-choice questions. In contrast, open-ended questions ask for an answer that the respondents should construct by themselves .Therefore, as this study was investigating the basic characteristics of journalists on the foreign news desks, it has used mainly closed-ended questions. The questionnaire length is another important concern in designing a questionnaire because it affects the completion rate in which a long questionnaire causes a low completion rate while shorter questionnaires result in a higher completion rate . The length of this questionnaire was reasonably short taking about 15 minutes to complete. (Nolinske, 1998).

Pre-testing the Questionnaire

Pre-testing the questionnaire is the best way to find out if the questionnaire is clear and adequately designed to obtain the most valuable and relevant information.

In this study, the questionnaire was tested on three journalists on the foreign news desk in Kuwait (Al-Rai Al-Aam). This group of journalists was selected for the pre-test because Kuwait was the first station in the field trip according to the arranged schedule. The questionnaire was distributed by hand and the researcher explained the aim of the study and illustrated the questions. After completion, the respondents were asked whether they understood the questions and if they were easy to answer or required more clarification. Following the discussion, some of the questions were reformatted to be clearer and simpler to understand, particularly those concerned with the instructions for the questions which were restated to be clearer for the respondents.

Identifying the Sample

All the journalists working on the foreign news desk in the six newspapers included in this study were selected, as a form of purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling in the sense that only journalists on the foreign news desks were chosen; and convenience sampling because it included journalists working on the foreign news desk only from the six studied newspapers.

This sampling was done for a number of reasons: first, the researcher was aiming to have some background of Arab Gulf journalists to serve as a context for further studies. stated that when the researcher is investigating an important area but little is known about it, convenience sampling is valid.

Secondly, the focus was only on the journalists on the foreign news desk and not those in the domestic news room because news concerning the governments and the top officials in the Arab Gulf countries is sent directly to the domestic news desk through the national news agencies or the Ministry of Information to be published without alteration or filtering¹ However, they have the choice to cover other domestic news such as sport, health, housing services, social and other news. Thirdly, limitation of resources like money and time for random sampling of all the journalists in the Arab Gulf countries is also considered a justifiable reason for convenience and purposive sampling Although there is a problem of representation as discussed above, argues that since science is a cumulative process, consistent results from these types of sampling over a period of time can raise important research questions that even generalisation can be drawn from probability sampling. (Riffe, & Stephen & Frederick, 1998)

The total number of journalists registered on the foreign news desks in all the six newspapers studied was 42, of whom 9 were on annual leave. The researcher could not trace those on leave as he had only 2-3 days in each country for the field visit. Therefore the total number of foreign news desks reporters included in this study was 32 journalists.

Administering and Collecting the Questionnaires

There are many possible ways to administer the questionnaire. This could be through interviews such as face-to-face (personal interviews) and telephone surveys or through self-administered questionnaires such as mail surveys, or a combination of both as in group administration. Each of these methods has its own advantages and disadvantages. Telephone surveys involve asking questions orally and the responses are recorded by trained interviewers on a computer terminal. They have multiple advantages which include sensible cost, high response rate and the data is collected in a reasonably short period. On the other hand, telephone surveys require a large number of 'dialings' to obtain the appropriate sample for the study. Face-to-face or personal interviews involve a similar approach to telephone surveys. They involve either structured or unstructured questioning which will be explained later. In postal surveys, the self-administered questionnaires are sent to the selected sample

¹ Although there is no written policy, all the editors interviewed in this study have confirmed this information to the researcher.

with a stamped reply envelope enclosed to encourage good response. Generally a mail survey is low cost with no interviewers to be trained and the possibility of covering a wide geographic area. However, the biggest disadvantage is a low response rate, in addition to it being the slowest form of data collection (Wimmer, 2003)

In this study, the researcher attempted to overcome the disadvantages resulting from the above methods of questionnaire administration. During his field trip the researcher utilised the opportunity to distribute the questionnaires by hand to the journalists in the foreign news rooms. The researcher visited the foreign news rooms in the selected newspapers and explained the purpose of the study to the journalists. Thereafter, the questionnaires were distributed and the researcher waited in the room for any clarification required. After completion, the questionnaires were collected immediately. The time taken to complete the questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes.

Difficulties encountered in relation to the questionnaires' administration and collection:

The researcher faced a problem related to preparing adequate copies of the questionnaire because accurate numbers of journalists in each newspaper were not provided to the researcher. Although the researcher was able to make copies in the newspaper location after permission it took considerable time and effort.

Although the aim was to have a 100 per cent response rate for this small group of journalists, two journalists (6%) did not complete or return the questionnaires. The pressure of work as we explained could be a factor. In this situation the researcher attempted to contact the non-respondents a number of times asking them why they did not respond and asked them kindly to complete and return the questionnaires. The non-respondents had no reasons for not completing the questionnaires and promised to do so but the researcher did not get any from them. The two journalists who did not respond were from Al-Ayam (Bahrain).

Analyzing the Data

After collecting the questionnaires, the responses were coded and the data entered into the computer for analysis to be carried out by using SPSS. The same statistical tests were used as in content analysis such as descriptive statistical tests like frequencies and percentages, and cross-tabulations. The Chi-square test was used to measure the extent of significant difference among variables. There were no significant difficulties encountered during data analysis.

Result

This section presents the results and the findings of the questionnaire survey conducted among the journalists working on the foreign news desk ² in the six Arab Gulf newspapers studied. Journalists on the foreign news desk in the Arab Gulf newspapers routinely receive hundreds of copies of news stories and photos from news agencies and the newspaper's correspondents. The selection of the international political news stories starts at this stage and the role of the journalists on the foreign news desk is to rewrite and reformulate the final report that will be published next day. How and to what criteria political news stories are selected has been already discussed above along with the factors influencing their selection. This section will consider media communicators, in this case the journalists on the foreign news desk, as a factor influencing news selection.

The basic assumption is that the journalists' background may be related to and influence the news content as we saw in chapter three. There has been a long debate about the influence of individual characteristics of journalists on the selection of news. The effects of journalists' characteristics on the media content can be seen through the effects of the personal background of journalists (age, gender, marital status, social class), their education, experience, personal attitudes, values and beliefs, and professional roles and ethics (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Study, showed that because the journalists are operating within the framework of their organization and are in the centre of the model (chapter three); other factors also interplay such as media routine, media owners, advertisers, government and pressure groups. For example the effect of the organizational routines may limit the potential effect of the personal Characteristics of journalists on media content. This is the situation in the west; the influence of journalists on the Gulf press has not been studied, where the surrounding conditions are completely different. Journalists in the Arab countries in general and in the Arab Gulf States in particular face even more prominent pressure due to lack of freedom of expression.

This study is only preliminary rather than conclusive because it is one of the first Arab Gulf studies of journalists involving six countries at a time. Our study, involves a purposive and convenient sample of all the journalists working on the foreign news desks in the six Arab Gulf dailies presenting their basic profile and comparing it to other journalists elsewhere to see if they share the basic characteristics or not. Our study however will not investigate the potential influences of the journalists in the newspapers studied on news content and will not test the theories discussed above. It aims only to discover the basic profile of journalists in the Arab Gulf newspapers and paint the first picture of journalists in the Gulf. This will draw attention to the basic characteristics of journalists working under a distinct media system, the features of which appeared partly from the analysis of political news content in chapter six. Nevertheless the data subsequently will provide groundwork for future studies looking at the influence of journalists on the selection of news in the Gulf press.

² In the Arab Gulf newspapers, different names are given to the foreign news room such as international news desk, world news desk, political news desk, and foreign news desk. Here we will be referring to it as the foreign news desk

There were 42 journalists working on the foreign news desk, unevenly distributed over the six newspapers (Table 1), the largest groups (=10) being in Al-Sharq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE) while the smallest (=4) were in Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait) and Oman (Oman). The discrepancy in the number of journalists in the newspapers studied is due to differences in job description, in which journalists in Al-Sharq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE), which had the largest groups, in addition to their job as foreign news desk reporters were commentators and analysts on political issues in their newspapers. In contrast, those working in the other newspapers were only foreign news desk reporters. Al-Ayam (Bahrain) exceptionally had three of its reporters as part-timers, leaving five journalists with full-time jobs. In this questionnaire survey, only 30 journalists of the 42 responded, giving a response rate of 71 per cent, which is an acceptable rate. Of the 12 non-respondents, the majority (=9) were on their annual leave and only 3 did not actually return the questionnaire. Consequently, the actual number of non-respondents is 3 journalists, who were working for Al-Ayam (Bahrain) newspaper. This assumes that the actual response is 30 out of 33 journalists i.e. a 91 per cent response rate. Among the 30 journalists included in this questionnaire survey were also the heads or the supervisors of the desk. Of the 30 journalists surveyed, about a quarter was in Al-Bayan (UAE), whereas only 2 journalists were in the Oman newspaper.

Table 1: The distribution of the total number of journalists in the six newspapers and their response rate

Newspaper	Journalists Total No.	Respondents No.	Response Rate (%)
Al-Ayam (Bahrain)	8	5	62.5
Al- Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait)	4	3	75
Al- Sharq (Qatar)	10	6	60
Al- Riyadh (Saudi A.)	6	6	100
Al- Bayan (UAE)	10	8	80
Oman (Oman)	4	2	50
Total	42	30	71.4

Age

Of the 30 journalists who participated in this survey, a significant proportion (12, 40%) were aged between 31 and 40 years, while 9 (30%) were aged 41-50 years, and the remaining 30% were below 30 or above 50 years of age (Table 8.4). There was no significant difference between the groups (Chi-square 0.163).

When the age groups of journalists were distributed according to the newspaper, it was found that the journalists in Al-Ayam (Bahrain), Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait) and Oman (Oman) newspapers were significantly younger (below 41 years of age) than those working in Al-Sharaq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE) newspapers (Chi-square 0.030).

The age of the journalists involved in this survey did not differ much from other journalists elsewhere and it seems that journalists are generally in their thirties. In this sample, it seems that the majority of journalists working in Qatar and the UAE newspapers had more years of experience than the rest of the journalists although the difference was not significant. The youngest journalists were in Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain; mean age was 30 years.

Table 2: The Distribution of Journalists According to Age Group in the Six Newspapers

Age groups	Newspaper												Total	
	Al-Ayam (Bahrain)		Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait)		Al-Sharq (Qatar)		Al-Riyadh (Saudi A)		Al-Bayan (UAE)		Oman (Oman)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
20 – 30	1	20					3	50			1	50	5	17
31- 40	4	80	3	100	2	33	1	17	1	12.5	1	50	12	40
41- 50					2	33	2	33	5	62.5			9	30
51- 60					2	33			2	25			4	13
Total	5		3		6		6		8		2		30	100

Gender

The journalism profession appears to be dominated by men in many countries. Journalism used to be, almost exclusively, a male profession; however, the situation has changed dramatically since more and more women journalists have been gainfully employed. Women now make up more than a third of the world's journalists. They work in newspapers and magazines, in broadcasting and online media; and they cover every issue, from education to war, accessed from <http://adtimes.nstp.com.my/jobstory/2001/aug13c.htm>

In general governments in the Arab Gulf countries have the trend to offer equal opportunities for both men and women to enter the workforce. In Bahrain for example the percentage of working Bahraini women increased from 4.3 in 1971 to 27 per cent in year 2017 www.bahrain.gov.bh/census/basicres_e.html. Subsequently, the proportion of women joining journalism has increased considerably in all the countries. Women have entered journalism as a profession very early in the age of the Gulf press; for example, in Bahrain, there are well known women journalists and columnists such as Tefla Al-Khaleefa working in the Akhbar Al-Khaleej daily newspaper and Sawsan Al-Shaer in Al-Ayam. In Kuwait the

editor-in-chief of the Al-Anbaa daily newspaper is Bibi Al-Marzuk, a female journalist. In Saudi Arabia although women were allowed to enter journalism studies, they have limited opportunities for work because of the traditional structure of Saudi society. There is a physical separation between men and women in public sectors including workplaces, schools and universities. Additionally, women's mobility across the country is highly restricted due to prohibition of car driving. These factors in addition to others related to tradition had affected women's presence in mass media sectors

as news reporters. Despite these limitations, the Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) newspaper was the first to allocate a senior position to a female journalist who is now managing a separate female department where all the women journalists do their office jobs.

The proportion of women journalists in the newspapers studied was very variable, for example in Al-Bayan (UAE) and Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait) they constituted about 31 and 25 percent respectively while in Al-Ayam (Bahrain), Al-Sharq (Qatar), and Oman (Oman) the figures were 16, 17 and 11 percent respectively³. In spite of a considerable proportion of women journalists as a whole working in the newspapers studied, only 2 females were working on the foreign news desks. One of the females was in the age group of 31-40 while the other was in the 41-50 age group. Furthermore, one of the females was a non-citizen on full-time work with a Bachelor's degree in business while the other was a citizen in a part-time job with a Master's degree in linguistics. The most likely reason behind this is the timing of work. The evening shifts for the foreign news desk have probably put off female journalists and directed them to work in the other departments in the newspapers with no night shifts. In the Gulf region social life is very important and women are not encouraged to engage in evening jobs in general.

Is there an effect of gender on news selection? There is an argument that an increasing ratio of women in key news positions may lead to a new emphasis on values such as harmony, brotherhood, affiliation and community and audience needs while de-emphasising politics, crime, finance and war/conflict. On the other hand, other researchers found no effect of gender on news selection criteria in actual practice

Ethnic background and Citizenship

The main ethnic group in the Arab Gulf countries are Arabs. Other ethnic groups include Iranians, South Asians and Baluchi. The proportions of these ethnic groups vary considerably among the Arab Gulf countries. In Saudi Arabia, Arabs constitute about 90 percent of the population whereas in the UAE and Qatar less than 40 percent www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ This classification however is not very relevant to the social, economic and political aspects of life in the Gulf countries. The most important discrepancy between the populations inhabiting the Gulf countries is based on citizenship. Arab Gulf citizens are distinct from non-citizens with regards to social, health, and education services and enrolment in military or civil employment. Citizenship in the Arab Gulf countries is only offered with very strict rules and regulations and in many occasions no rules

³ From phone interviews with the editors-in-chief of the above newspapers on 21-06-2017

exist for its regulation. This is mainly due to the tribal nature of Gulf society that would prefer to maintain its identity and does not admit new members very easily

Furthermore

www.workmall.com/wfb2017/united_arab_emirates/united_arab_emirates_history_tribal_nature_of_gulf_society.html the Gulf countries would be rather reluctant to share their wealth with expatriates. Therefore the process of gaining citizenship in any of the Gulf countries is very complicated and the lucky people who would get it have to eliminate their previous citizenships from their countries of origin, rendering the issue of admitting ethnicity very sensitive among citizens of the Arab Gulf countries. Consequently, the researcher's choice was not to ask about ethnicity, rather about nationality to which it is far easier to get an answer. The question about nationality may also help to verify if the journalist's nationality could influence the geographical coverage of political news stories. We saw in chapter seven that it may explain why certain countries received more coverage than others.

A considerable proportion =17 (57%) of the journalists working in the six Arab Gulf dailies were non-citizens of different Arab nationalities: Egyptians (=6), Sudanese (=4), Syrian (=3), Lebanese (=3), Palestinian (=2), and one Iraqi. There were no journalists holding nationality from any of the Arab Gulf countries working on the other Gulf countries' newspapers. Interestingly, all the journalists working on Al-Ayam (Bahrain), Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) and Oman (Oman) were citizens, while those on Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait), Al-Sharq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE) were non-citizens.

According to the GCC report in 2104, the non-citizens in the Gulf contribute about 48 per cent of the population but about 72 per cent of the work force www.library.gcc-sg.org/gccstatvol13/genstat/g4.htm The percentage of non-citizens in the work force (aged 15-40 years) differs considerably among the Gulf countries, however, as follows: Saudi Arabia 51%; Bahrain 59%; Oman 79%; Kuwait 80%; and Qatar 86%. Only the UAE had no recorded figures but in comparison to the other Gulf countries it has the largest non-citizen population comprising more than 80% of its population

Therefore www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ae.htm , the nationality distribution among the journalists studied somehow reflects the same proportion in the workforce in general. The unusually huge proportion of non-citizens in the Arab Gulf states is because all the Gulf countries have witnessed dramatic economic and educational developments while however lacking human resources from their own people. This has pushed the governments and the private sectors to depend greatly on expatriates from different parts of the world, mainly from other Arab countries, South Asia, Iran and others.. One interesting finding related to the three countries with no citizens on the foreign news desk is that they have the highest income; Qatar with \$28,750, UAE with \$18,906, and Kuwait with \$14,947 per person per year; while the other three countries have a lower income: Bahrain with \$ 12,522, Saudi Arabia \$8,553, and Oman \$8,003 www.gcc-sg.org . Therefore two reasons are assumed to be behind the non-citizenry among the journalists in Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait), Al-Bayan (UAE) and Al-Sharq (Qatar): first, it generally reflects the proportion of the general population especially in the work place and secondly it is due to journalism being a job with low wages in that citizens in these countries would prefer to choose careers with a higher income. As

Educational background and professional experience

The surveyed journalists were highly educated; the majority (28) of the sample had a university degree in different fields. Of the 30 journalists, 25 held a bachelor (BA) degree. The qualifications of the journalists did not differ among the journalists working in different newspapers (Table 3). Issa (1995) also pointed out that the journalists working in the Qatari press were highly educated the majority holding high degree qualifications. Similar findings were also observed by Al-Saud (1998).

About half of the journalists (16) in this study were graduates in journalism. The others held other specialisms such as Politics, Linguistics, Arabic and English Literature. The specialisms of the journalists working in the different newspapers did not diverge significantly from each other (Table 3). Al-Saud (1998) however, found that only 22 per cent of his sample majored in journalism while the others majored in different fields of social sciences. Furthermore, in this study, all the journalists had mastered another one or two languages, mainly English and/or French The surveyed sample was very similar to journalists in other countries in terms of education

Does the educational background of journalists affect the selection of news? There is no simple answer to this question. The studies that investigated the influence of journalists' educational background have looked at its effects on the journalists' perceptions, ethics and role. There was no difference between graduate school-trained journalists and those with only college education with regards to their ideas about ethics and their concept of newsworthiness . Educational background however influenced job hiring and journalists' perceptions about their role in analysing complex problems.

The majority (73%) of the journalists in this sample had more than 10 years of experience. They showed no significant difference between the groups of journalists working in the six newspapers in regards to years of experience, namely professional age, which is the number of years on the job. Each newspaper seemed to have a balanced proportion of more and less experienced journalists .When comparing the Arab Gulf journalists in this survey they appeared to have experiences similar to those in the US who showed an average number of years of journalism experience of 15 years for men and 12 years for women . In the Netherlands, around 41 per cent of journalists had 5-15 years of experience; 27 per cent had 16-25 years; whereas 52% of women had less than 5 years experience and 39 per cent had 5-15 years of experience . Similarly Brazilian journalists had at least 15 years of professional experience .

Table 3: The Distribution of the Journalists According to Specialization, Qualification, Years of Experience and Foreign Language in the Six Newspapers

Educational Status and Experience of Journalists		Newspaper					
		Al Ayam Bahrain	Al Rai Al Aam Kuwait	Al Sharq Qatar	Al Riyadh Saudi A.	Al Bayan UAE	Oman Oman
Specialism	No Degree	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Journalism Degree	0	3	4	4	3	2
	Politics degree	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Others	4	0	1	2	4	0
Qualifications	High School Certificate	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Diploma	0	1	0	0	0	0
	BA	3	2	5	6	7	2
	Master Degree	1	0	0	0	1	0
	PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0
Years of Experience	1-5	2	0	0	2	0	0
	6-10	0	1	0	1	1	1
	11-15	2	2	2	0	0	0
	16- 20	1	0	1	0	5	1
	21- 25	0	0	2	2	2	0
	26+	0	0	1	1	0	0
Foreign Language	English	3	0	6	6	7	2
	French	0	1	0	0	0	0
	English & French	2	2	0	0	1	0

Total=30

Summary

This study also provided the first picture of journalists on the foreign news desk in six Arab Gulf newspapers. Because it has been a small sample, generalization to all other journalists in the Gulf press may be taken as cautious, but because the same basic characteristics of this sample were very similar to the other studies investigating journalists elsewhere we might say that the picture this study has drawn about journalists may also be applied to the other journalists working on the foreign news desk in all the Arab Gulf press.

The most distinct characteristic of the surveyed journalists is that they were mainly men except for two women journalists. The presence of women journalists on the foreign news desk in the newspapers studied does not reflect the actual picture of women's representation in Arab Gulf journalism. The actual proportion of women is far more as explained above. Furthermore, with the recent development of journalism in the Gulf region the number of women journalists is expected to rise and become comparable to their proportion in the developed countries.

The journalists working on the foreign news desk were mainly in the age group of 31-40 years like journalists in the other countries.

The other interesting feature is that all the journalists working on Al-Ayam (Bahrain), Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) and Oman (Oman) were citizens, while those on Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait), Al-Sharq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE) were non-citizens. This finding shows that journalism as a profession has not yet been an attractive job for the Gulf's own people especially in the Arab Gulf countries with higher incomes. Nevertheless, the direction now is to recruit more citizens in journalism by the attitudes of the governments in establishing journalism studies departments. The discrepancy between the Arab Gulf newspapers also reflects the proportion of the non-citizens in the country.

It also appeared that journalism in the Arab Gulf newspapers is an open profession with no formal entry qualification; however the journalists in this survey had a high level of education with different specialisms, with nearly half majoring in journalism.

Conclusions

This research also provided the basic characteristics of journalists on the foreign news desks, as media communicators, being a factor influencing news content as discussed fully in chapter three. The main objective was not to examine the potential influence of the journalists on the selection of political news by testing the theories of the influence of individuals' characteristics on media content. The research however showed some observations as noted above about the relation between the coverage of a number of Arab countries in the Gulf press and the nationality of the journalists.

The most striking feature of the surveyed journalists was the dominance of male journalists with only two female journalists. This discrepancy however does not reflect the actual proportion of men to women in the general workforce or in journalism. Furthermore, with the recent development of journalism in the Gulf region the number of women journalists is expected to rise and to be comparable to their proportion in the developed countries. As with journalists in other countries this sample was mainly in the age group of 31-40 years.

The other interesting characteristic was related to the nationality of the journalists. All the journalists working in Al-Ayam (Bahrain), Al-Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) and Oman (Oman) were citizens, while those in Al-Rai Al-Aam (Kuwait), Al-Sharq (Qatar) and Al-Bayan (UAE) were non-citizens from Arab countries. This may well be related to the presence of a high proportion of non citizens in the latter countries. Yet it appears that journalism as a profession has not been an attractive job for the Gulf's own people especially in those countries with a higher income.

Furthermore, this research showed that journalists on the foreign news desk in the newspapers studied had a high level of education with different specialisms, the majority majoring in journalism.

Limitations of the study

This research aimed to provide the first picture of journalists on the foreign news desk in the six Arab Gulf newspapers. Because of a small sample size, generalization to all other journalists in the Gulf press should be made with caution. Nevertheless, the same basic characteristics of this sample were very similar to those of other journalists elsewhere. Subsequently, general conclusions can be drawn and the general profile of the journalists on the foreign news desk in this sample can be appropriately extended to other journalists working on the foreign news desk in all the Arab Gulf press.

The available data from journalists' profiles can provide a foundation for further studies to examine the effects of personal characteristics such as age, gender, years of experience and education on the selection of news. Although the foreign news desk journalists are highly educated, they lack regular training. It is recommended to the newspapers' administrations to train journalists in developing their skills and eventually reducing the reliance of the press on the international news agencies' ready copy.

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