# ICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: EXPLAINING THE INTEGRATION IN RELATION TO THE CONTEXT

CHRISTINA HADJITHOMA
NIKLEIA ETEOKLEOUS

**Abstract** – *Even though large amounts of government budgets have been devoted to embedding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in schools, teachers do not appear to use these to transform teaching and learning, a goal declared by policy agendas. Previous studies focused on the capacity of policy itself, and especially on the implementers to explain the level and outcomes of implementation. This paper turns the attention to the context in which implementation takes place and views implementation from an institutionalist perspective. Schools are seen as organisations within the broader educational system and therefore, the paper focuses on a specific case to explore implementation. This paper integrates the results of two studies looking at ICT implementation in the Cypriot centralised and bureaucratic educational system, and attempts to interpret them differently from previous studies. It is suggested that unless the system is transformed and modernised, the institutionalisation of innovations, such as ICT, faces the threat of failure.*

## Introduction

*1* n recent years we have experienced computer technology expansion in our daily life activities. As a result of the invasion of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in society, new forms of work, communication and economic growth have emerged in what is today a global society. The education agendas of world organisations include the embedding of new technologies in schools and emphasise the role of Information Technology (IT) in transforming teaching and learning. A document of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) claims that 'perhaps the factor most identified as heralding fundamental change in the structure and organisation of schooling is the spreading impact of ICT on learning' (p. 66). Not only world organisations, but also global market companies, such as Microsoft, have joined the promotion of the embedding of ICT in education (Microsoft Corporation, 2005).

In this context, the way people learn and what they learn are different from what they used to be. The concept of literacy is changing to one that the New

London Group[1] calls Multiliteracy (see Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; also Jewitt, 2003; Kress, 2004). The assumptions ICT brings with it are related to transforming schooling through the flexibility and variety of learning choices it provides. Online learning resources created in a multidimensional space aim to involve audiovisual, textual and graphical stimuli that overrun the linearity of traditional textbooks. As a result of the push that modern society and world organisations give to national governments, many countries have attempted to introduce ICT in schools.

Many studies from different parts of the world (e.g., Cuban, 2000, 2001; Earle, 2002; Goddard, 2002; Zhu, 2003; Eteokleous, 2004; Angeli & Valanides, 2005) have examined and evaluated ICT integration in numerous varied educational settings. The question posed by previous studies is whether or not classroom teachers throughout the world possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as the resources and the help needed to successfully and effectively implement the technologically oriented policies in ways that are helpful and valuable to students. Teachers or the policy capacity appear until now the ones to blame for the failure of using ICT to transform education. In addition, the majority of the studies that explore ICT integration in schools focus on the short-term incremental changes implemented or on measurable benchmarks – such as, computer-student ratio and technical assistance – which involve factors that are difficult to deal with, as technology evolves fast. In terms of long-term transformative changes – such as, change of teaching and learning strategies, development of new pedagogies based on new literacies and new curricula, training in the educational applications of ICT, and restructuring of schooling organisations – no explicit impact on education has been tracked.

The introduction of ICT to educational institutions proves to be difficult due to its fast evolving nature. For educators, ICT tools are not something novel, as unavoidably they have come across them outside school. However, ICT does become a problematic innovation when it is embedded in education. The influences that ICT tools will have on teaching, learning and schooling in general, are yet unknown both to policy-makers and to educators who often have to deal with this innovation without any sufficient empirical or cognitive guidance. Researchers have been studying the impact of ICT on teaching and learning even more during the last couple of decades. But research findings have not yet reached the stage of becoming normative guidelines for policy-makers and practitioners. There are ongoing debates among those who are pro or anti technologists – respectively, the techno positivists and the techno sceptics. While the former advocate optimistic beliefs regarding the relation between ICT and society, the latter (e.g., Robertson 2003) regard ICT tools and the web as new forms of labour and power. Companies in the technology market, such as Microsoft and Apple,

have only recently taken on board the development of information and communication tools of educational value. Previously, such companies had focused on the development of technology as business and industrial tool. The unfounded embedding of ICT in schools as a learning tool consequently has implications on the way that educators perceive and adopt them in different contexts.

The present paper will argue that even if teachers' will and positive attitudes and policy capacity are present, this does not necessarily lead to the institutionalisation of ICT as a transformative tool. In fact, in the case presented here, ICT is added to the existing curricula as another learning tool, such as the board or the textbook, and under these circumstances its potential is yet uncovered. The paper suggests that the context in which ICT is integrated is important, as it is one of the factors that influence implementation. By looking at the characteristics of the Cypriot educational system in relation to those factors that have been found to influence implementation, this paper illustrates how the context affects the ICT implementation process and outcomes.

This paper is based on two studies (i.e., Eteokleous, 2004; Hadjithoma, 2007) that explored, even if at different times, the Cypriot ICT policy and implementation in primary schools. More specifically, the two studies explored the factors that determine the level of ICT use in schools and identified influential factors on the embedding of ICT in school practices. This paper identifies the similarities in the results of the two studies and attempts to explain them from an institutionalist perspective – a theoretical framework that is different from those adopted previously in Cyprus and elsewhere to explain ICT integration.

## The context of the study

This section presents the Cypriot educational system and ICT policy. This should enable the reader to gain a better understanding of the contextual characteristics of the study, and subsequently of the proposed interpretations drawn from the data.

### *The Cypriot educational system*

The Greek Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) follows a centralised approach to managing schools. Decentralisation is limited to giving authority to local School Boards to manage minor issues of infrastructure and

to school principals to manage issues that concern students' and teachers' behaviour in schools (Panayides, 2003). According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2005, p. 29), the Cypriot educational system is a good combination of centralisation (of management) and decentralisation (some autonomy to schools). The MOEC is thus responsible for formulating policy plans, which are then examined by the Planning Bureau before being finally approved by the Council of Ministers. The public education sector is supported financially primarily by the government, either directly or by allocating funds to the local School Boards. As a result of the centralised nature of the system, teachers' practices appear to be curriculum-driven and content-oriented, and teachers are loyal to the prescribed textbooks (Koutselini & Persianis, 2000). Centralisation is such that there is a constant and overwhelming flow of information and instructions from the government to the schools, which renders even more demanding the already multitasked role of the teacher. This is expected in turn to influence the implementation of a non-coercive policy, such as the ICT policy that is in focus of this paper.

*The Cypriot ICT policy*

The Cypriot MOEC launched an ICT policy in the early 1990s. At that time, some of the primary schools were equipped with computers as part of a piloting scheme. In addition, a departmental IT group was created within the Department for Programmes Development of the MOEC. At the end of the 1990s, the governmental Pedagogical Institute started offering optional IT training programmes for teachers.

*Evagoras* (see MOEC, 1999) – the first formal ICT policy document – describes the action plan for the embedding of new technologies in primary education from 2000 to 2005. It includes the economic, pedagogical and national reasons according to which the embedding of computers in education is necessary. *Evagoras* has five portals: (i) the update of the national curriculum that will include computer technology applications; (ii) teachers' professional development in three levels (i.e., computer literacy, use of computer applications as teaching and learning tools, and use of other technological methods and mediums; (iii) the use of computers for school management; (iv) the integration of Internet applications in primary education, and (v) the continuous provision of hardware and software, as well as the provision of support and maintenance within schools (MOEC, 1999). According to the *Evagoras* document, while teachers and students can use the computer as an educational tool in order to find information, to create materials for lessons and

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to work in virtual learning environments, computer skills are taught as a subject only in the afternoon school.

A preliminary study (Hadjithoma, 2003) has shown that the implementation of *Evagoras* was partial and that some of its goals were postponed. The suggested reasons for this were the small number of ICT regional coordinators who undertook the implementation of the policy goals in schools, the lack of continuous technical and cognitive support within the schools, and the emphasis on equipment rather than on human resource. The primary focus on equipment provision, which also occurred in other countries, led to 'having a deserted full of dust computer in the corner of the classroom; an initiative that started by charging the public with a respected amount of money, without having teachers who know how to operate these machines' (Kazamias et al., 2004, p. 154).

## Factors that influence the integration of computer technology

The literature separates the factors that influence teachers in integrating computers into two major categories – those that are external and those that are internal to teachers (or first-order and second-order factors respectively) (Ertmer, 1999).

### *Factors external to teachers*

According to many studies, teachers report that continuous and adequate professional development and training is required. These studies suggest further that teachers' professional development training needs to go beyond simple computer skills and focus on computer curriculum-integration. Other teacher related factors include insufficient teacher understanding of methods for integrating technology into the curriculum, teacher coaching, and appropriate teacher evaluation (Carvin, 1999; Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999; Becker & Ravitz, 2001; Demetriadis et al., 2003; Smeets, 2005).

Other researchers (e.g., Meyer, 2001) emphasise the importance of leadership, arguing that it is the key point to successful technology integration, as it can influence other important factors in the process. Additionally, the literature indicates other important factors including a positive school environment, adequate school support and technology resources, access to hardware and software, basic technological equipment and facilities, technical support and assistants, time for planning, and sustained funding for technology (Sheingold & Hadley, 1990; Cuban & Pea, 1998; Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999; Ertmer, 1999; Becker & Ravitz, 2001; Earle, 2002; Demetriadis et al., 2003).

*Factors internal to teachers*

Researchers (Carvin, 1999; Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999; Becker & Reil, 2000; Becker & Ravitz, 2001) argue that teachers' instructional styles, attitudes toward learning, and teaching philosophies influence the way computers are integrated in the classroom. In fact, teachers who easily accept and incorporate new ideas, changes and reforms into their practices are more likely to integrate computer applications in their teaching (Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999). Moreover, teachers' interactions with peers may also shape behaviour. Teachers who maintain more frequent personal and professional contacts with their peers may be more likely to encourage students in similar ways through the use of computer applications (Berg et al., 1998; Carvin, 1999; Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999). Finally, teachers who feel that computers are good tools for promoting students' learning are also found to engage their students in using computers more than teachers who do not feel that way (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999; Carvin, 1999; Demetriadis et al., 2003; Smeets, 2005).

## The paper's main aim and research objectives

While the literature on ICT policy implementation considers personal (individuals' experience, attitudes and will) and professional factors (training/resources), this paper suggests that beyond these factors there are institutional factors, related to the broader system, which may present constraints to the use of ICT by teachers.

Toward this end, the present paper integrates the results of the two studies on which it is based, to then focus on explaining the factors that were found to influence the adoption of ICT by educators from an institutionalist perspective. Specifically, it attempts to provide explanations of how a centralised school system and its bureaucratic characteristics constrain teachers in their efforts to integrate computers in their classroom practices. The paper consequently seeks to address the following objectives:

- to integrate the factors that, according to the two studies, affect implementation, and categorise them into personal, professional and policy related factors;
- to interpret the above factors from an institutionalist theoretical framework; and
- to discuss the implications for policy-makers and educators.

## The first study: Eteokleous (2004)

*Research methodology*

A structured questionnaire was administered by post to a random sample of 500 Cypriot primary teachers during the scholastic year 2003-2004[2]. The response rate was 58.6%. The questionnaire consisted of the following 5 sections: (i) teachers and school demographics; (ii) teachers' computer use for different purposes (personal, organisational and instructional); (iii) students' computer use in their classroom (as assigned by their teachers); (iv) factors that influence teachers in integrating computers in their classrooms; and (v) an open-ended question for additional comments. Version 11 of the SPSS statistical package was used to analyse the quantitative data.

Independent and dependent variables were used in the analysis. There were two major categories of independent variables. The first was *teachers and school demographics*, which included the variables 'school region', 'teacher education', 'experience', 'age', 'gender', 'grade' and 'class size'. The second was *the factors that influence teachers' practices*, which included the variables 'school climate', 'teacher professional behaviour', 'teacher attitudes toward integrating computers in the classroom' and 'teacher approaches toward progressive instructional practices'. The three dependent variables were *teacher-reported computer use in general*, *teacher-reported student classroom computer use* and *teacher-reported student progressive classroom computer use*. Each of the above was calculated by summing teachers' responses to a number of statements, using a 5-point Likert scale[3].

*Findings*

The analysis of the descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of the teachers surveyed taught in urban schools (63%), taught in 5th grade (36%), were females (72%), used computer technology in their lives (94%), particularly at home (93%) and at school (82%), and had Internet connection at home (85%). With regard to their years of teaching experience, the teachers surveyed were evenly divided among the five provided categories (i.e., 1-4; 5-8; 9-12; 13-16; and 16+). As far as their teacher education went, all the participants held a bachelor's degree in Primary Education. In addition, 4% held a certificate, 22% held a master's degree and 0.7% held a doctorate.

The results indicated that while Cypriot teachers use computers rather extensively for their own purposes, they use them less frequently inside their classrooms. Moreover, when computers were used in class, this tended to be in a rather sporadic fashion, meant more as support or as fancy chalkboards.

The teachers also ranked the factors that were significant to them in terms of integrating computers in their classroom practices. Their resulting first three important factors were: (i) personal attitudes toward computer technology; (ii) college preparation in acquiring computer skills; and (iii) level of computer literacy. The two factors that appeared to have the least impact on teachers in applying computers in their classroom practices were: (i) the amount of support the principal provided to teachers in terms of integrating computers in class; and (ii) the amount of support and assistance they received from the district/local technology coordinator (see Table 1).

*TABLE 1: Frequency distribution of statements ranked by teachers in terms of their importance regarding computer technology integration in the classroom*

| **Factors** | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|
| College preparation in acquiring computer skills | 2.72 | 1.67 |
| Personal attitudes toward computer technology | 2.98 | 1.93 |
| Level of computer literacy | 3.05 | 1.76 |
| College preparation in integrating computers into the classroom or curriculum | 3.18 | 1.55 |
| Professional development activities in acquiring basic computer skills | 3.20 | 1.40 |
| Professional development activities in integrating computers into the curriculum | 3.47 | 1.14 |
| Having access to technology resources (software, hardware, etc.) | 3.64 | 1.67 |
| Evaluation for using computers in my classroom | 4.38 | 1.81 |
| The level of principal support in terms of integrating computers into the curriculum | 4.83 | 1.14 |
| The level of support and assistance from district/local technology coordinator | 4.86 | 1.25 |

The first set of the regressions examined how teacher demographic characteristics and school factors influenced *teacher general computer use*, *student classroom computer use* and *student progressive classroom computer use*. The following demographic variables were used in the regression analysis: grade, years of experience, age, class size, and education. The results can be summarised as follows. Teachers' education has a positive significant link to all three kinds of uses. Teachers' age appeared to be a significant predictor (negative relationship) for *teacher general computer use* ($p < .01$). Finally, grade appeared to be a significant predictor (positive relationship) for *student progressive classroom computer use* ($p < .10$).

Teacher and school demographics were positively, but not highly, correlated with *teacher computer use in general*. Once again, teacher and school demographics had a positive, but relatively low, correlation with *student classroom computer usage in general*. Finally, correlation between teacher and school demographics and *student progressive classroom computer use* was positive and relatively very low (see Table 2).

*TABLE 2: School and teacher demographics effects on teacher and student computer use*

| Variable | Teacher general computer use | | Student computer use in the classroom | | Student progressive computer use in the classroom | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ß | Beta | ß | Beta | ß | Beta |
| Teacher education | 3.94*** | 0.26*** | 3.83*** | 0.17*** | 0.89** | 0.14** |
| Teacher years of experience | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.16 | 0.02 | 0.26 | 0.13 |
| Grade | 0.55 | 0.02 | 18.55 | 0.51 | 7.75* | 0.73* |
| Class size | 0.40 | 0.06 | -0.64 | -0.06 | -0.12 | -0.04 |
| Teacher age | -2.12*** | -0.28*** | -0.38 | -0.03 | -0.37 | -0.12 |
| $r^2$ | 0.165 | | 0.06 | | 0.07 | |

\* $p < .10$, \*\* $p < .05$, \*\*\* $p < .01$

The second set of regressions examined the effects of four variables (i.e., 'school climate', 'teacher professional behaviour', 'teacher approaches toward progressive instructional practices' and 'teacher attitudes toward the use of computers in education') on *student classroom computer use in general* and *student progressive classroom computer use*. The effect of teacher and school demographics, using the same variables as in the first set of the regressions, served as control variables.

In the first regression, *student classroom computer use* was the dependent variable. 'Grade', 'teacher professional behaviour' and 'teacher attitudes toward computer use in education' appeared to be significant predictors for *student classroom computer use* ($p < .01$). On the other hand, 'teacher education' and 'school climate' were found to be significant predictors at the .05 level. Finally, in the last regression, *student progressive classroom computer use* was the dependent variable. 'School climate', 'teacher professional behaviour' and 'teacher attitudes toward computer use' appeared to be significant at the .01 level. From the control variables, 'teacher education' and 'grade' appeared to be significant predictors at the .10 level. In all regressions, the link among the variables was positive (see Table 3).

## The second study: Hadjithoma (2007)

*Research methodology*

The second study employed a survey questionnaire that was distributed by post to schools in all four educational districts regulated by the Republic of Cyprus (i.e., Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaka and Famagusta, Paphos). From the 348 public primary schools in Cyprus (2003-2004), 69 schools were randomly chosen to represent the educational districts and their rural/urban areas[4]. The questionnaire consisted of questions organised around the themes 'personal information', 'experience in using ICT', 'training in ICT', 'use of ICT at school' and 'ICT policy'. The response rates were 76.8% of the sample schools and 35.8% of individual teacher questionnaires. Four schools were then selected as case studies that included interviews with 16 teachers as well as school/classroom observations. EXCEL and SPSS (Version 11) software were used for data analysis. Correlation tests were run in order to identify the variables that have a significant relationship with the use of computer at school[5].

*TABLE 3: Effects of 'school climate', 'teacher professional behaviour', 'teacher approaches toward progressive instructional practices' and 'teacher attitudes toward classroom computer use' on student computer use in the classroom*

| Variable | Student classroom computer use in general | | Student progressive computer use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | I | | II | |
| | ß | Beta | ß | Beta |
| **Controls** | | | | |
| Teacher education | 2.13** | 0.09** | 0.45* | 0.07* |
| Teacher years of experience | 0.24 | 0.03 | 0.28 | 0.14 |
| Grade | 3.36*** | 0.09*** | 1.06* | 0.10* |
| Class size | -0.47 | -0.04 | -0.07 | -0.02 |
| Teacher age | -0.01 | 0.00 | -0.26 | 0.08 |
| **Factors** | | | | |
| School climate | -1.73** | -0.12** | -0.57*** | -0.15*** |
| Teacher professional behaviour | 0.98*** | 0.19*** | 0.25*** | 0.17*** |
| Teacher approaches toward progressive instructional practices | 0.55 | 0.04 | 0.17 | 0.05 |
| Teacher attitudes toward the use of computers in education | 1.35*** | 0.25*** | 0.37*** | 0.25*** |
| $r^2$ | 0.16 | | 0.20 | |

\* $p < .10$, \*\* $p < .05$, \*\*\* $p < .01$

*Findings*

In the Hadjithoma (2007) study, 17.6% of the participants were males, 75.3% were females and the remaining 7.1% did not state their gender[6]. Age wise, 50.3% of the participants belonged to the 20-30 age group, 38.1% to the 31-40 age group, 7.4% to the 41-50 age group, and 3.2% to the 51-60 age group. The remaining 1% did not state their age[7]. While the mean number of teaching years for the teacher sample was 10 years, their mean number of years using the computer at school was 2.65 years. Most of the participating teachers (77.9%) had their own class[8].

The correlation tests indicated that the following variables related to teachers' skills and attitudes were significant in relation to the use of computer in class:

- *Self-evaluation as a user of computer* (not confident / developing confidence / confident / very confident) ($p < .05$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 21.512$); and
- *Use of computer at home* (daily / weekly / monthly / every trimester / never) ($p < .05$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 7.070$).

Although the correlation is not indicative of the strength or the kind of relationship that exists, it can be assumed that the more confident the teacher feels, the more possibilities there are that he or she would start using the computer in the classroom. Similarly, the use of computer at home may be assumed to have a positive relation with using the computer (and other ICT) at school. This is because the time to explore the hardware and software may be important for teachers in order to gain confidence to use ICT at school. At the same time, it was assumed that self-confidence might also be related to the use of computer at home. In fact, another chi-square test signalled this significant relationship ($p < .01$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 18.693$). In order to check for the interrelation of all three variables a test was performed between 'use of computer at school' and 'self-evaluation as computer user' (confidence), with the variable 'use of computer at home' layered out. The test indicated that there still is a significant relationship between the first two variables. The same test was performed between 'use of computer at school' and 'use of computer at home', layering out 'self-evaluation'. It confirmed the above results.

One question that included statements regarding both attitudes and beliefs was included in the analysis. Each of these statements was analysed separately (in the correlation tests). The following were found to have a significant relation with the variable 'use of ICT at school':

- *ICT help me in teaching* ($p < .01$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 11.320$); and
- *I don't know if they (ICT) are useful in teaching and learning* ($p < .01$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 12.168$).

The support that ICT can offer teachers in the classroom and, on the other hand, the uncertainty about the usefulness of ICT in teaching and learning, are factors that influence teachers in their use of ICT at school. While the above factors can be considered as personal, there were a number of factors that were related to the teachers' professional environment. The following professional factors were found to be significant:

- *Having own class or teaching various classes* ($p < .05$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 7.080$);
- *Use of computer lab* (yes / no / there is no computer lab) ($p < .05$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 23.880$);
- *Use of software* (yes / no) ($p < .01$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 13.987$); and
- *Evaluation of help by IT coordinator* (yes, it is important help / no, it is not important help) ($p < .05$, $df = 1$, $\chi^2 = 4.200$).

Finally, factors related to policy-making and policy distribution (i.e., ways of transferring policy decision to educators through the MOEC website or through ICT advisors visiting the schools), as well as offering guidance and directions on the use of computer in teaching and learning (IT committee website) were found to influence teachers' uptake of ICT in the classroom:

- *Use of MOEC website* (never / once or twice / often / very often) ($p < .01$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 25.034$);
- *Using IT committee website* (never / once or twice / often / very often): ($p < .05$, $df = 3$, $\chi^2 = 15.216$); and
- *ICT advisor for the school* (yes, there is / no, there isn't / I don't know) ($p < .01$, $df = 2$, $\chi^2 = 13.022$).

Table 4 summarises the above results.

## Integrating and categorising the significant factors

Using the existing literature to help integrate the results led to three categories of factors: professional factors (internal and external), attitudinal/personal factors (internal) and policy related factors (external). These factors are discussed below and the results are summarised in Table 5.

*Professional factors*

Professional factors are the ones related to educators' professional environment and their work. Along the same lines of the existing literature

*TABLE 4: Correlation test results for the variable 'use of computer at school' with various significant factors*

| **Factors** | $\chi^2$ | *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-evaluation as a computer user | 21.512 | 3 | .000 |
| Use of computer at home | 7.070 | 1 | .008 |
| Use of MOEC website | 25.034 | 3 | .000 |
| I don't know if they (ICT) are useful or not | 12.168 | 1 | .000 |
| Teaching own class or not | 7.080 | 1 | .008 |
| Use of computer lab | 23.880 | 2 | .000 |
| Use of software | 13.987 | 1 | .000 |
| They (ICT) help me in teaching | 11.320 | 1 | .001 |
| Evaluation of help by IT coordinator (important/not important) | 4.207 | 1 | .040 |
| Use of IT committee website | 15.216 | 3 | .002 |
| ICT advisor at the school | 13.022 | 2 | .001 |

(see Carvin, 1999; Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999; Becker & Ravitz, 2001; Earle, 2002), teachers' experience (e.g., self-confidence in using ICT) was found to be important for employing ICT at school.

No correlation between training and use of computers in the classrooms was found. This may be explained in relation to the content of the training provided. At the time when the second study was conducted, the training still aimed at providing basic computer skills to the teachers who attended. It did not provide them with knowledge and skills regarding the educational applications of ICT. This could be related to the way the teachers used ICT at school – as 'extras' rather than learning tools according to the first study.

Furthermore, teachers' responsibilities (in own class/in the school) were also found to be important. Teachers who were more active, who assumed more responsibility in their school, and who maintain good relationships with their colleagues tended to use computers more frequently.

Support within the school (by IT coordinators) was found to be significant in terms of implementation, even if teachers appeared to get help also from outside their professional environment (friends/family).

Available resources (equipment, computer lab, software/hardware access) also emerged as being related to teachers' use of ICT at school.

In summary, it appears that experience in using ICT, help within and outside school, the responsibilities teachers have and the resources available are related to the adoption of ICT in school practices.

### Attitudinal/personal factors

The results of the first study revealed that teacher attitudes toward the computer as a classroom tool was a significant predictor of classroom use. Teachers who expressed scepticism about the value of computers in the classroom tended to use them less frequently than other teachers. This is consistent with prior studies (see Berg et al., 1998; Carvin, 1999; Dexter, Ronald & Becker, 1999), and may help explain why classroom computer usage remains limited even in 'technology rich' schools (see Zhu, 2003).

Another important factor appears to be the way in which teachers evaluate themselves as computer users. Additional personal factors related to the use of computers in school by teachers are the number of the years they have been using computers, the use of computer at home, age and teachers' education beyond their bachelor's degree (i.e., certificate, master's degree and doctorate).

### Policy related factors

The last category that has been found to influence computer use in primary classrooms is related to policy factors. As identified by both studies to some extent or other, the support and help regarding the use of computer that teachers receive from colleagues at school (including principals, IT coordinators and IT advisors) and from friends, family members and others outside school has been found to be important. Somewhat of a surprise in the first study, however, was the relatively low importance that teachers placed on the leadership of the principal as a factor in promoting classroom computer usage. This might suggest that principals are viewed more as managers than as instructional leaders and as having little relevance with regard to classroom instruction.

Guidance and advice from the policy level to educators in schools seem to be important. This emerged from factors such as 'use of the MOEC website' and 'the presence of a ministerial officer, the ICT advisor'.

*TABLE 5: Factors that influence computer use in classrooms*

| Professional Factors | Attitudinal/Personal Factors | Policy Related Factors |
|---|---|---|
| Ineffective pre- and post-service training and development courses (computer skills and computer as a tool in classroom; help from within or outside school).<br><br>Teachers' professional behaviour (more active and responsible in their school; maintain good relationships with their colleagues/ principal).<br><br>Professional culture and school climate (professional or social networks in the school, either formal or informal; ICT level in the school; resources; ICT coordinators; etc.).<br><br>Availability of resources (ICT level at school). | Teacher attitudes/ beliefs toward computer use.<br><br>Self-evaluation as a computer user.<br><br>General use of computer/computer use at home.<br><br>Age (first study).<br><br>Education (certificate, master's degree and doctorate). | Provision of structure and supportive agents (help by ICT coordinators and presence of ICT advisors).<br><br>Clear policy goals communicated to teachers (instructions from the MOEC; use of MOEC website).<br><br>Financial support and availability of resources (ICT level in the schools; computers in every class; computer lab; software and hardware). |

## Suggested theoretical framework for interpreting the findings

This paper uses institutionalist theory to understand how the characteristics of the system influence the implementation process. According to Steinmo (2001), institutionalists are those who think theoretically about institutions, about their impact on behaviour and outcomes. The institutional literature suggests that the coordination between actors, organisations, programmes and policy leads to successful implementation. This highlights the importance of taking into account not only the policy-making at the top and the implementers-actors, but also the context (organisations). A key theme that arises from New Institutionalism (see Hay, 2002) is that there are difficulties in reforming, transforming or replacing institutions due to their culture which is based on routine and convention. In line with these concepts, organisational analyses suggest that there are two types of social actors. First, the rational actor model describes people who think about the consequences of the different actions before they act (by making utility-maximising calculations) (Coleman, 1990; cited in Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). Second, the institutional model assumes that people follow social norms without questioning them or reflecting on them, and without choosing them according to their personal interests (Wrong, 1961; cited in Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). The institutional actor model is related to the logic of appropriateness. Its main idea is that 'humans maintain a repertoire of roles and identities, each providing rules of appropriate behaviour in situations for which they are relevant' (March & Olsen, 2004, p. 4). These concepts are helpful in terms of explaining how teachers behave within their professional environment. They assume that teachers' work is based on a repertoire of roles and identities, and that teachers follow the institutional actor model required within the educational institutions where they work.

In terms of the factors that influence educators in integrating ICT in their school practices, the institutionalist perspective turns the attention to the norms required by educators at their work, and relates these norms to the characteristics of the specific educational system. Thus, the centralised, curriculum-driven, content-oriented and bureaucratic nature of the Cypriot primary education system is assumed to be related to the institutional actor model that teachers follow. The arising questions thus are: When a new policy is transferred to the schools, how do teachers respond to it? Does the 'institutional actor model' prevent them from adopting ICT?

To describe the institutional model that applies to teachers, this paper employs the theory of street-level-bureaucracy (see Lipsky, 1980). In the specific context of the Cypriot educational system, the institutional model that can best describe teachers appears to be the one of street-level-bureaucrats. The street-level-bureaucrats (s-l-b) are 'public service workers who interact directly with citizens

in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work' (Lipsky, 1980, p. 3). The main characteristic of s-l-b is that 'Their work involves the built-in contradiction that, while expected to exercise discretion in response to individuals and individual cases, in practice, they must process people in terms of routines, stereotypes, and other mechanisms that facilitate work tasks' (Lipsky, 1980, p. 140).

Lipsky (1980) names a number of conditions in which people act as street-level-bureaucrats: s-l-b have high discretion in making decisions regarding the quality of services they provide, regarding the people who will receive or not these services, and their discretion increases when the rules about the services are contradictory or constantly change. The conditions of making decisions about the provision of services are restricted, however, by limited time and limited information about the case. The s-l-b usually have to deal with 'large case loads' in comparison to their ideal situation of providing services on individual basis. As Lipsky (1980) argues, 'the fundamental service dilemma of street-level bureaucracies is how to provide individual responses or treatment on mass basis' (p. 140). At their work, they have to deal with limited resources and they experience the ambiguity of their role and their goals. In order to cope with the difficulties and uncertainty of their work conditions, s-l-b create routines and simplifications regarding their work environment and work tasks.

The street-level-bureaucracy theory provides a framework that is useful for explaining the impact of teachers' work on the process of embedding ICT. The discretion that teachers are allowed as s-l-b can be related to the implementation of ICT in schools. Indeed, their work characteristics – such as, limited time, limited information, ambiguity of goals, large case loads and uncertainty – may explain the marginalised role of ICT tools in school practices.

## Discussing the findings from an institutionalist framework

With respect to the integration of ICT in the curriculum, the findings indicate that ICT tools have as yet only partially been integrated in the primary education curriculum. This has resulted in the creation of gaps in the implementation process. While the educational system is curriculum driven, ICT were introduced to schools before the process of including learning goals for ICT in the curricula was completed. The implementation of *Evagoras* (2000-2005) was vague and was mostly based on the personal agency of the people involved, especially the ICT advisors, the ICT coordinators and the principals. In particular, the implementation action plan did not refer to any goals with regard to the role of educators in embedding ICT in schools. Consequently, the initiative for

employing ICT to improve and enrich teaching and learning was left in teachers' hands who, as pointed out in this paper, either adopted or not ICT in their classrooms without having, however, to face any consequences for their decision. The general and non-coercive character of *Evagoras* and the absence of specific guidance to educators generated various responses – each according to the individual's personal experience, knowledge, skills and personality – during the implementation process. Thus, the rational actor model can best describe the educators in terms of their response to embedding ICT. However, when it comes to the institutional actor model, the Cypriot teachers, as street-level-bureaucrats, appear to have constraints on their work because of the characteristics of the wider system. One of the most influential barriers facing teachers in their use of ICT during lessons appears to be the lack of time (in general, across all their responsibilities). This can be explained in relation to the bureaucratic educational system, the control over teachers' practices by the overloaded curricula, the evaluation of teachers' work by inspectors who exert pressure on content completion, and the lack of resources which necessitates time-consuming preparations by teachers. As Lipsky (1980) describes, the availability of resources (hardware/software) and information (including guidance by the MOEC or the ICT advisors) characterise teachers as street-level-bureaucrats. The institutional actor model that describes so well the Cypriot primary teachers, therefore, suggests that the institution itself poses constraints to the adoption of innovations, including ICT.

The three previously identified groups of factors – that is, the professional, the attitudinal/personal and the policy related factors – indicate the different reasons that influence the level of implementation. Although some of them could be related to individuals, they could be also seen from an institutionalist perspective. An explanation from this wider perspective positions these factors as characteristics of the broader educational system rather than as characteristics of smaller units (schools or individuals). More specifically, this paper argues that the phenomenon of sporadic adoption of ICT by educators at school cannot be solely attributed either to the attitudes of educators toward ICT in education or to the ICT policy capacity. This is not to say that personal factors (such as teacher attitudes or skills) are not regarded as being influential on ICT adoption by educators. This paper argues, however, that even if teachers' will and positive attitudes are present, this does not mean that ICT will be fully integrated and institutionalised in the educational system. Consequently, this paper suggests that factors which have been indicated by previous research (see Karagiorgi, 2000; Eteokleous, 2004;Angeli & Valanides, 2005) as possible explanations to the failure of educators to adopt ICT in their daily practice might be interpreted in a different way. In fact, the present paper shifts the focus from the individual

implementers to the broader system, the context and the institutional factors that may influence implementation.

The findings described above create a general picture that confirms the assumptions arising from the theoretical framework. Teachers, as street-level-bureaucrats, have discretion in decision-making with regard to implementation (i.e., to use or not to use the computer in their classroom, and in terms of how to use it). There are reasons to believe, based on the findings presented here, that ICT could be used as a tool for enhancing teachers' work. ICT can in fact support teachers by alleviating some of the difficulties that arise from the bureaucratic system in which they work.

Educational systems across the world have often been characterised as traditional 'hard to change' institutions. When attempting to integrate a modern learning tool in an old system, the institutions' characteristics become more obvious. This paper highlights the fact that the existing Cypriot bureaucratic system prohibits teachers from incorporating ICT as a transformational tool in their classroom. Teachers may be resistant to change, but they cannot take the full responsibility for the failure to implement ICT policy. Instead, they must share this responsibility with the constraints that the 'traditional' educational system poses on their work.

## Implications for policy-makers and educators

The empirical evidence presented in this paper, although it concurs with the evidence produced by other studies, is interpreted however in a different manner. Indeed, the present interpretation seeks to answer the question of implementation not only from the implementers' or the policy-makers' perspectives, but also from the perspective of the system and its capacity. Describing the professional environment where teachers actually work, using the concepts provided by Lipsky's theory of street-level-bureaucracy, proved useful in this paper to explain teachers' responses toward the embedding of ICT integration in schools.

The findings of the two studies presented here, and consequently the interpretations made and the arising questions and dilemmas, call for immediate attention and follow-up action from policy-makers. The factors discussed above revealed problems that are related to the broader system. These factors and underlying difficulties cannot be addressed by the teachers themselves; policy-makers and educators at management level are also responsible. It is undeniable, however, that professional factors can be more easily addressed than the broader changes required in the system (e.g., the change of the curriculum), as the latter

imply long-term transformative changes. Institutionalisation is achieved through long-term changes at a slow pace, as it requires change of the institution's characteristics.

The government's approach toward the embedding of ICT should be modified from seeing ICT as just another educational tool to seeing ICT as a tool that will transform and change the system (e.g., by enabling administrative procedures, by transforming the mass-based classrooms to more individual-based learning, and by saving time and effort for the bureaucrat-teachers). Reform is needed to bring change in teachers' professional environment, so that teachers have more support in adopting innovative policies, including ICT. In summary, it may well be possible that ICT can generate new forms of schooling – something that should be considered further by policy-makers.

## Limitations and further research

This paper has described two different studies that, even though conducted at different times, used similar methods. This helped to achieve the triangulation and validation of the findings. However, it is important to mention that quantitative data only do not provide the whole picture of ICT policy and implementation. These should be enhanced with evidence based on qualitative data, something that was not possible in this paper due to length limitations. Additionally, for reasons of convenience, only information gathered from teachers was used here. Students, parents, principals and government representatives could also be included in future studies.

Finally, an interesting question that could be addressed by future research would be: Is it possible to use the theoretical framework provided in this paper (i.e., institutionalist theory) to explain similar situations in other countries?

## Notes

1. The New London Group – which takes its named after the place where they first met, in New London, New Hampshire, USA – comprises a group of academics who engage in a series of hypotheses about the directions literacy pedagogy might take in order to meet the radically transformed communication demands that students are likely to encounter in their near futures.
2. The research population of the study consisted of 4th, 5th and 6th grade teachers in Cypriot primary schools that had computers in their classrooms since 2000.
3. They were treated as continuous variables and centred around their means before being entered into the regression analysis.
4. Systematic random sampling was used to select an approximate equal number of schools (representing 14-21%) from each rural and each urban area of each district.

5. Not assuming a linear relationship between the variables, the chi-square test was judged to be the most appropriate in this case. Whenever the resulting categories of a variable contained small number of cases, which would return an invalid chi-square result, the data of that variable were re-grouped differently before applying the chi-square test. For instance, the variable 'use of computer at school' initially consisted of 5 categories (i.e., 'about daily', 'about weekly', 'about monthly', 'about every trimester' and 'never') and the last two categories had small number of cases. The five categories were consequently downsized to two: (i) about daily or about weekly; and (ii) about monthly, about every trimester or never.
6. This sample is considered to be representative of the target population in terms of gender, as the teacher population in Cypriot public primary schools was, according to a source from the Teachers' Union (POED), approximately 80% females and 20% males in 2003-2004.
7. In 2003-2004, according to a source from the MOEC, while 80% of the teachers in Cypriot public primary schools were younger than 41 years, the remaining 20% were aged between 41 and 60 years. As the mature teachers were underrepresented in the second study, no valid conclusions related to the 'age' variable could be drawn.
8. That is, the teacher teaches most of the curriculum subjects in one class, to one group of students. This is opposed to having the teacher teaching one or more subjects to different classes, and consequently to different groups of students.

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**Christina Hadjithoma** *holds a BA in Pedagogical Science for Primary School from the University of Thessaly, Greece, and an MSc in Education, Technology and Society from the University of Bristol, UK. In February 2007 she successfully completed her PhD at the University of Bristol with a study that explored the Cypriot ICT policy and its implementation. Dr Hadjithoma's e-mail address is:* christina.hadjithoma@bristol.ac.uk


**Nikleia Eteokleous** *obtained her PhD in Educational Administration in 2004 from the Pennsylvania State University, USA. She currently works as a lecturer in Educational Technology at Frederick Institute of Technology in Cyprus, having previously worked as an assistant editor at the American Journal of Education. Dr Eteokleous' research focuses on educational leadership and management, technology integration in education, and systemic change in education. Her e-mail address is:* pre.en@fit.ac.cy

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# UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' READINESS FOR THE NATIONAL WORKFORCE: A STUDY OF VOCATIONAL IDENTITY AND CAREER DECISION-MAKING

SAMER KHASAWNEH
LANA KHASAWNEH
SALAH HAILAT
MOHHAMAD JAWARNEH

**Abstract** – *The purpose of this study was to determine the level of vocational identity and career decision status of students at the Hashemite University which was assumed to be an indication of their readiness for the national workforce in Jordan. A total of 641 students participated in the study by completing the 'Vocational Identity Scale' (VIS) and the 'Career Decision Scale' (CDS) selected for the study. The results indicated that students have a high sense of vocational identity and greater career decidedness as represented by their overall mean values. Furthermore, there were no significant differences among university students in perceiving the VIS and CDS that are attributed to their gender and academic standing. However, differences on the VIS and CDS were found that are attributed to type of faculty. The study concludes by offering a number of theoretical and practical implications for the field of career and vocational development.*

## Introduction

$\mathcal{T}$he world of work is changing rapidly due to global complexities, technological advances and economic developments which make it unlikely for students to follow the traditional career development path of education-employment-retirement (Brown, 2000; Madaukalom, 2000). The change in one's life to the world of work from the university environment is not always easy and can be a confused experience. The focus in the workplace shifts to persistence toward a career goal, making the right career decision, and meeting project deadlines. With this trend facing today's university students who will soon be entering the workforce, there is one question that remains in mind centring on what will equip these individuals to deal with this new phenomenon in employment.

It is essential for students to develop vocational identities and career decision-making skills during the university years. However, many university students do

not possess adequate vocational self-knowledge and/or the career decision-making skills necessary to enter the workforce (Gati & Saka, 2001; Gaffner & Hazler, 2002). People are expected to know themselves well enough to make a career decision during university years or between 18 and 24 years-of-age (Erikson, 1968; Super, 1987). Students need to acquire the skills necessary to investigate the world of work and to make career decisions in relation to knowledge of self that will provide high level of personal, professional and financial satisfaction throughout life (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Kelly & Pulver, 2003). As a result, the vocational identity and career decision-making status of university students have, for several years, commanded the attention of career development researchers, career counsellors, vocational psychologists and members of academia (Kelly & Pulver, 2003).

Research suggests that individuals who are uncertain about their career direction are undecided due to lack of a clear sense of personal identity (vocational identity) and understanding of the world of work (McAuliffe, 1992; Zagora & Cramer, 1994). Holland, Daiger & Power (1980) defined vocational identity as the 'possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals, interest, personality, and talents [which] leads to relatively untroubled decision-making and confidence in one's ability to make good decisions in the face of inevitable environmental ambiguities' (p. 1). Students who have established a strong vocational identity are more likely to have made good decisions regarding their career choices (Super, Savickas & Super, 1996). Vocational identity is established when an individual has achieved congruence between his/her knowledge of personality and his/her environment. Vocational identity is developed through observations of work, identification with working adults, general environment and general experiences. As experiences become broader in relation to awareness of the world of work, the more the vocational identity is formed (Zunker, 2002). As a consequence, students with strong vocational identities are likely to display strong career decision-making skills (Holland, 1997).

While there are numerous reasons for lack of readiness to make career decisions, many students are not prepared because of a poorly formed vocational identity (Zagora & Cramer, 1994). Links between vocational identity and career decision-making have been proposed in theoretical literature and supported with empirical studies. Research has clearly established the presence of a link between vocational identity and other vocational-related variables, one of which is career decision-making. For example, Erikson (1968, p. 132) stated, 'in general, it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which most disturbs young people' from deciding on a career. Vocational identity is negatively related to social avoidance and distress and is positively related to a high level of career maturity, decisiveness, confidence in decision-making and the tendency to use a rational

career decision-making style (Holland, Johnston & Asama, 1993; Hoang, 1995). Poe (1991) found high vocational identity as an indicator of readiness for career decision-making. Research also suggests that students learn class materials better when it is consistent with their vocational identity (Wolfolk, 1993). Students who have not yet identified career options may feel trapped and frustrated, and may have little or no commitment to school (Lawallen, 1993).

Most often a person is undecided on a career because not enough information has been gathered to allow for a sound and confident decision. Brown & Brooks (1996) mentioned that 'the process of career decision-making include (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitude, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; and (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts' (p. 5). Active participation in one's own career selection would yield higher levels of career satisfaction, lower levels of employer expenditure and increased employee performance (Brown & Brooks, 1996). Korschgen & Hageseth (1997) recognised that setting career goals are often among the most difficult decisions that university students face, and that for many the challenge lies in identifying professions that match their interests and abilities.

The study of vocational identity and career decision-making is a prominent research topic that has received a great deal of attention. Teaching individuals to understand their vocational identity and career decision-making status is crucial. In fact, a review of the career development literature would suggest that students are faced with high levels of career indecision as a result of low levels of vocational identity (Ireh, 2000; Santos & Coimbra, 2000; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that students who experience low levels of vocational identity and high levels of career indecision may also experience varying levels of psychological tension and distress (Kelly & Pulver, 2003).

Based on the above discussion, it is essential for students to develop their vocational identities and career decision-making status during university years. As the world of work becomes more complex and technologically dynamic, vocational identity and the ability to make career decisions becomes more important (Madaukalom, 2000). Therefore, university students need to have adequate self-knowledge, occupational information and the decision-making skills when they graduate to be better prepared for work. To our knowledge, no empirical studies in Jordan have directly assessed the level of vocational identity and/or career decision-making status of university students. Based on that, this is an important area of research that is worth investigating.

## The research problem and research questions

University students across the nation do not have adequate vocational self-knowledge, occupational information and the decision-making skills when they graduate, leaving them unprepared for work (Gati & Saka, 2001; Gaffner & Hazler, 2002). Educationally and vocationally undecided students due to low levels of vocational identity and career decision-making skills have been a concern for university administrators, faculty, counsellors, academic advisors and researchers for many years. There is a lack of theoretical and empirical research addressing the level of vocational identity and career decision-making status of Jordanian university students. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to assess the level of vocational identity and career decision-making status of the Hashemite University students in Jordan. The study also investigated how these two constructs vary by selected demographic variables.

For this exploratory study, the following three research questions have been formulated:

1. What is the level of vocational identity and career decision-making status among the Hashemite University students in Jordan?

2. Does the level of vocational identity of the Hashemite University students vary by gender, academic standing and faculty?

3. Does the level of the career decision-making of the Hashemite University students vary by gender, academic standing and faculty?

## Significance of the study

Today, most countries are faced with many challenges and complexities as a result of globalisation, industrialisation and privatisation. These challenges have impacted work practices all over the world. Organisations are expecting university graduates who possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to compete nationally and internationally. One area that students are required to have is knowledge of vocational identity and the ability to make appropriate decisions regarding their future careers (Korschgen & Hageseth, 1997). However, little or no research has been conducted to determine the level of vocational identity and career decision-making status of university students in Jordan. It was anticipated that the present study would make an additional contribution to the literature by utilising standardised measures that can be used with all university students in Jordan. The resulting data would guide career counsellors and vocational guiders in the

selection of specific interventions for the people who are undecided about their career. These can help in identifying what prevents people from reaching closure on their educational and career decisions. Adult programme developers, career counsellors, career development specialists and vocational guiders may become more responsive to the career development needs of university students. This, in turn, can provide researchers and practitioners with challenges to service better those who will be entering the job market in the near future.

## Defining terms

In this paper, the term 'vocational identity' is defined as the 'possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals, interest, personality, and talents [which] leads to relatively untroubled decision-making and confidence in one's ability to make good decisions in the face of inevitable environmental ambiguities' (Holland, Daiger & Power, 1980, p. 1). 'Career indecision' is defined as 'the inability to select, and commit to a career choice' (Tokar et al., 2003, p. 3).

## Methodology

### *Organisational context*

The present study took place at the Hashemite University, one of Jordan's state universities, which opened its doors to students in 1995. The Hashemite University now includes 10 faculties. It also includes the Deanery of Scientific Research and Higher Studies, the Deanery of Student Affairs, a Computer Centre, and the Centre of Studies, Consultations and Community Service. Each semester, the Faculty of Educational Sciences offers the Educational Culture class to all university students. Over the years, it has been noticed that an almost equal representation of all majors are included within this class. Students are required to choose among mandatory university courses. The Educational Culture course, which is one of the most attractive courses, is often chosen. However, as students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences do not require this course, it was also decided to randomly selected courses from within this faculty.

### *Population and sample*

The target population for this study was defined as all the Hashemite University undergraduate students. The accessible population consisted of a total pool of approximately 1,230 students enrolled in the educational culture course

(with 11 sessions) and the vocational education course (with two sessions) that were offered during the second term of the 2006-2007 academic year. The sample for this study included a total of 698 randomly selected subjects who volunteered to participate in this study. A total of 641 students completed the survey, representing a response rate of 92%. The resulting sample included 225 males (35.1%) and 416 females (64.9%). There were 118 freshmen (18.4%), 149 sophomore (23.2%), 223 juniors (34.8%), and 151 seniors (23.6%). The mean age of the sample was 19.8 years ($SD$ = 1.13; range from 18 to 22). Based on their majors, students were classified into 10 faculties as follow: 68 students (10.6%) from the Faculty of Economics, 61 students (9.5%) from the Faculty of Science, 57 students (8.9%) from the Faculty of Arts, 62 students (9.7%) from the Faculty of Engineering, 52 students (8.1%) from the Faculty of IT, 51 students (8.0%) from the Faculty of Allied Health, 118 students (18.4%) from the Faculty of Educational Sciences, 55 students (8.6%) from the Faculty of Nursing, 46 students (7.2%) from the Faculty of Tourism and Heritage, and 71 students (11.1%) from the Faculty of Childhood.

## Research instruments

Instruments in the present study included: (i) demographic items; (ii) the Vocational Identity Scale (VIS); and (iii) the Career Decision Scale (CDS).

### *Demographics*

The demographic questions asked participants to provide information regarding their gender, age, class standing (freshmen, sophomore, juniors, and seniors) and faculty (economics, science, arts, engineering, IT, allied health, educational sciences, nursing, tourism and heritage, and childhood).

### *The Vocational Identity Scale*

The Vocational Identity Scale (VIS) is a subscale of the 'My Vocational Situation' instrument designed by Holland, Daiger & Power (1980), and is used to assess the clarity of participants' vocational identities. The VIS consists of 18 statements rated on a 4-point Likert scale as follows: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – disagree; and 4 – strongly disagree. Whereas the higher scores 3 and 4 indicate a strong sense of vocational identity, the lower scores 1 and 2 reflect a diffused vocational identity and an interest in receiving vocational assistance. This scale takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Internal consistency for the VIS

was reported as .86 for high school students, .88 for college students and .89 for workers (Holland, Gottredson & Power, 1980). The test-retest reliability coefficient for the VIS ranged between .63 and .93 for time intervals of up to two weeks (Lucas et al., 1988; Holland, 1997). Moreover, Holland, Johnston & Asama (1993) reported a test-retest reliability coefficient of about .75 for intervals between one and three months. Regarding the validity of the VIS, small to moderate positive correlations between the scale and age (Holland, Diager & Power, 1980), as well as the number and variety of occupational aspirations (Holland, Gottfredson & Power, 1980) have been reported. According to Holland & Holland (1977), VIS has demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity between the VIS and other career-related measures. Finally, construct validity reported by Holland, Gotttredson & Power (1980) indicated that high scorers tend to be rated as organised, confident and competent to deal with life situations.

*The Career Decision Scale*

The Career Decision Scale (CDS) (named the 'indecision scale') was designed by Osipow et al. (1976) to determine the level of career decisiveness of college students and to focus on reasons that inhibit individuals from making career decisions. The 18 items of CDS required respondents to rate their similarity to various components of educational and vocational decidedness. The rating was on a 4-point Likert scale as follows: 1 – is exactly like me; 2 – is very much like me; 3 – is only slightly like me; and 4 – is not at all like me. Whereas the higher scores 3 and 4 indicate greater career decidedness, the lower scores 1 and 2 indicate greater career undecidedness. The raw score for the CDS is obtained by summing the participants' responses to the 18 items. Two items were reverse coded (items 17 and 18). The CDS has an acceptable reliability coefficient of .88 (Bresbin & Savickas, 1994). Furthermore, the CDS manual (see Osipow, 1987), utilising two separate samples of college students, report CDS test-retest reliability coefficients of .90 and .82 respectively.

## Translating and standardising the instruments

To ensure equivalence of meaning of the items between the English and Arabic versions of the VIS and the CDS, a rigorous translation process was used that included forward and backward translation, subjective evaluations of the translated items and pilot testing (see Lomi, 1992; Sperber, Devellis & Boehlecke, 1994). Two translators – both bilingual in English and Arabic – translated the English versions of the VIS and the CDS into Arabic (forward translation). These

translators were instructed to retain both the form (language) and the meaning of the items as close to the original as possible, but to give priority to meaning equivalence. When the Arabic translations were finalised, the VIS and the CDS were then back-translated (i.e., from Arabic to English) by two other faculty members, also bilingual in English and Arabic.

The back-translated items were then evaluated by a group of five faculties to ensure that the item meanings were equivalent in both the original English versions and the back-translated English versions. If differences in meaning were found between items, those items were put through the forward and back-translation process again until the faculties were satisfied that there were substantial meaning equivalence. The Arabic versions of the VIS and the CDS were then pilot tested with a group of 19 students and 10 faculties to collect feedback about instruments content and usage. The feedback from the students did not lead to any substantive changes. The feedback from the faculties emphasised that the instruments have both face and content validity, and are culture-free.

To standardise the instruments, the VIS and the CDS were pilot tested with a group of 100 students representing the 10 faculties under study. These students were excluded from the main sample of the study. Changes recommended by the validation panel and those identified as necessary during the pilot test were incorporated into the instruments. These changes occurred in the wording of the items and in the instructions for completing the instruments. The internal consistency for the instruments was determined using the same group of students used in the pilot study. The calculated reliability coefficients alpha for the VIS and the CDS were .83 and .80 respectively. Checking the quality of the instruments' reliability against the standards developed by Robinson, Shaver & Wrightsman (1991) (i.e., exemplary reliability: .80 – 1.00; extensive reliability: .70 – .79; moderate reliability: .60 – .69; and minimal reliability: < .60) indicated that both instruments had exemplary reliability. The reliability figures obtained suggest that the two instruments are suitable to measure the vocational identities and career decision-making status of the Hashemite University students.

## Data collection and data analysis

As explained in the methodology section, data collection took place during the second term of the 2006-2007 academic year from students ($N = 641$) enrolled in the educational culture class (with 11 sessions) and the vocational education course (with two sessions). The researchers met with the classroom instructors in charge of the selected students to explain the nature and purpose of the study, and to answer questions regarding the administration process. After

obtaining approval for the collection of data from these instructors, the assessment instruments were assembled as a packet that was distributed and collected by the researchers during scheduled class meetings. Data gathering took approximately 23 minutes to complete. Students in attendance were informed of the purpose of the study by the researchers and were guaranteed confidentiality. The voluntary nature of their participation was also underlined. After finishing, the students returned the completed instruments to the researchers in attendance.

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to answer the first research question. For research questions two and three, independent *t*-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if differences, based on demographic characteristics of students, exist in the levels of vocational identity and career decision-making. The *t*-test was used when there were two levels of the variable (e.g., gender). The ANOVA was used when the variable had more than two levels (e.g., academic standing). Tukey's post hoc test was used in case differences were detected among the groups. An alpha level of .05 was set *a priori*.

## Results

The data collected from all the participants were coded, entered into SPSS spreadsheets and analysed using version 11.5 of the SPSS software package. Descriptive statistics for all the variables in this study were examined using SPSS frequencies. The minimum and maximum values for each variable were examined to check the accuracy of data entry by inspecting out of range values. An examination of these values did not reveal the existence of out of range values. No missing subjects were not detected either. Reliabilities for the VIS and the CDS were .89 and .87 respectively. These results indicate that these two scales are reliable measures for this study.

*Results pertaining to research question 1*

Research question 1 inquired about the level of vocational identity and career decision-making status among the Hashemite University students in Jordan. To answer this question, the overall mean values and standard deviations were calculated for each scale. As shown in Table 1, the overall mean value for the VIS was 3.08 and the overall mean value for the CDS was 3.25, indicating a strong sense of vocational identity and greater career decidedness among the university students at the Hashemite University.

*TABLE 1: Means and standard deviations for the VIS and the CDS among university students*

| Scale | N | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vocational Identity | 641 | 3.08 | .34 |
| Career Decision-Making | 641 | 3.25 | .36 |

*Results pertaining to research questions 2 and 3*

Research questions 3 and 4 inquired about the differences in the level of vocational identity and career decision status among the university students in relation to a number of demographic variables, namely, gender, academic standing and faculty. *T*-tests for independent samples were used to examine the gender variable. As shown in Table 2, there were no significant gender differences among students at the Hashemite University in their levels of vocational identity and career decision status. Examining the confidence intervals of the *t*-values of the effect of gender on levels of vocational identity (-.006, .106) and career decision status (-.100, .010) confirmed the conclusion that, in both cases, no difference can be attributed to the gender variable, as '0' falls within these intervals.

*TABLE 2: The differences between male and female university students on their levels of vocational identity and career decision status*

| Scale | Gender | n | M | t-value | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocational Identity | M | 225 | 3.11 | 1.75 | (-.006, .106) | .08 |
| | F | 416 | 3.06 | | | |
| Career Decision Status | M | 225 | 3.22 | 1.47 | (-.100, .010) | .14 |
| | F | 416 | 3.26 | | | |

On the other hand, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilised to identify whether the Hashemite University students' variances of the four academic standing level groups and the variances of the 10 faculty level groups were significantly different or not. Table 3 shows that there were no significant differences among the four academic standing level groups (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) on their levels of vocational identity and career decision status. However, significant differences were found among levels of vocational identity and career decision status based on the 10 faculty groups (see Tables 4 and 5).

*TABLE 3: The differences among the four academic standing level groups (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior and seniors) on their levels of vocational identity and career decision status*

| **Scale** | Sum of Squares | | *df* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocational Identity | Between Groups<br>Within Groups<br>Total | .089<br>77.623<br>77.712 | 3<br>637<br>640 | .243 | .867 |
| Career Decision Status | Between Groups<br>Within Groups<br>Total | .929<br>84.942<br>85.871 | 3<br>637<br>640 | 2.322 | .074 |

*TABLE 4: The differences among the 10 faculty groups on their levels of vocational identity and career decision status*

| **Scale** | Sum of Squares | | *df* | *F* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocational Identity | Between Groups<br>Within Groups<br>Total | 5.262<br>72.450<br>77.712 | 9<br>631<br>640 | 5.092 | .000 |
| Career Decision Status | Between Groups<br>Within Groups<br>Total | 3.752<br>82.119<br>85.871 | 9<br>631<br>640 | 3.204 | .001 |

*TABLE 5: Post hoc test for differences in levels of vocational identity and career decision status based on the 10 faculty groups*

| Scale | Faculty | *M* | Mean difference | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vocational Identity | Economics vs Allied Health<br>Economics vs Educational Studies | 3.23/2.96<br>3.23/3.00 | .264<br>.231 | .040<br>.019 |
| Career Decision Status | Economics vs Arts | 3.23/3.09 | .277 | .009 |

## Conclusions

This study is an investigation of the Hashemite University students' readiness for the national workforce in Jordan by examining their levels of vocational identity and career decision status. It was concluded that a relatively strong sense of vocational identity and greater career decidedness exist among the Hashemite University students. This emerged from their overall mean values on the VIS ($M = 3.08$) and the CDS ($M = 3.25$), with both scales allowing scores up to 4. This result may be due to the fact that students have been experiencing increased attention from the university administration in the past 10 years. Assisting students with life transitions through the provision of programmes at colleges and universities is among the purposes of higher education. To achieve this purpose, it is expected that educators help students identify career objectives and secure employment by encouraging students to explore their values and interests. To this end, the Hashemite University has established the 'Vocational Guidance Centre' that has the following five goals:

1. To provide undergraduate students with vocational guidance regarding their choice of major and proper future careers. Students (from freshmen to seniors) are guided regularly, each semester, through workshops, seminars and conferences.

2. To provide students with vocational guidance software that helps them match their personality, abilities and interests with the proper career. Students are exposed to an array of assessment tools that lead them at the end to a career that best fits them.

3. To provide students with short-term and long-term forecasts of the existence of their chosen major and/or career along with its future social and financial estimates.

4. To establish a strong alliance with public and private organisations. This provides students with internships that help them experience the real world and help them make decisions about their field of study.

5. To arrange with colleges within the university campus to provide courses that focus mainly on career choice, workplace requirements, workplace ethics, guidance and counselling.

Based on the above discussion, it can be said that the students at the Hashemite University are provided with high levels of vocational guidance. This helps them to have a clear and stable picture of their goals, interest, personality and talents that lead, in turn, to relatively untroubled decision-making and confidence in one's ability to make good decisions regarding major and future careers. The vocational guidance practices at the Hashemite University are consequently in line with current understandings that students should be provided with an opportunity to unearth career possibilities, discover leading-edge interests, assess problems, motivate constructive behaviour, as well as acquire a cognitive structure for evaluating career alternatives, clarifying expectations, planning interventions and establishing ability range (see Spokane, 1991).

Another strand of results regarding demographic variables reveals that gender and academic standing had no effect on levels of vocational identity and career decision status among university students. In line with other research (see Berger & Romano, 1994; Wei-Cheng, 1999; Wilson, 2000), the present study found no significant effect of gender on these two variables. These results can be explained by the fact that both genders are receiving the same vocational guidance at the Hashemite University. With regard to the effect of academic standing on vocational identity and career decision status, it must be said that this is the first study to examine this demographic variable. Students, regardless of their academic rank, are exposed each semester to all types of workshops, seminars, conferences, counselling and guidance. The last demographic variable studied was the type of faculty. Students from the Faculty of Economics had higher levels of vocational identity than students from the Faculty of Allied Health and the Faculty of Educational Sciences. Moreover, students from the Faculty of Economics had higher levels of career decision status than students from the Faculty of Arts. These results can be explained in term of the economical trends, such as privatisation and investments, in Jordan. As a result, the Faculty of Economics is focused on preparing highly qualified students internally (within the faculty) and externally (within the university and the community).

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following theoretical and practical recommendations are being put forward. From the theoretical standpoint, it is recommended to study other demographic variables, such as parental educational level and the type of occupation held, to determine their influence on such high levels of vocational identity and career decision status of university students. It is also recommended to conduct research that encompasses all types of colleges and universities in Jordan. This would render the results more valid and reliable. The final recommendation is to include a qualitative part in future studies, as this would lead to more meaningful findings. From the practical standpoint, university vocational centres should be established and maintained in order to better prepare students for the national workforce. Such centres should study the personality, needs, values, abilities and interests of students and match them with suitable majors and careers. Moreover, there is an urgent need to meet with parents, high school principals, administrators and high-level officials to focus on the importance of preparing students vocationally in their early years of education throughout the university years. This collaborative effort may yield substantial outcomes represented in producing efficient and effective workforce that can have the cutting and leading edge in a technologically, industrialised and globalised economy. Finally, it is urgently needed to have students choose majors and careers that best fits them, as this can have a tremendous impact on their performance.

**Samer Khasawneh** *is assistant professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Hashemite University, Jordan. He has a PhD in vocational education and human resource education from Louisiana State University, USA. Dr Khasawneh's e-mail address is: samer70802@yahoo.com*

**Lana Khasawneh** *is instructor at the second district of Irbid, Ministry of Education. She has a PhD in educational psychology from Yarmouk University, Jordan. Dr Khasawneh's e-mail address is: Lana1234@yahoo.com*

**Salah Hailat** *is assistant professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Hashemite University, Jordan. He has a PhD in social studies from Yarmouk University, Jordan. Dr Hailat's e-mail address is: shailat@yahoo.com*

**Mohhamad Jawarneh** *is assistant professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Hashemite University, Jordan. He has a PhD in social studies from Yarmouk University, Jordan. Dr Jawarneh's e-mail address is: Jawarneh1234@yahoo.com*

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# THE AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL MODEL IN LEBANON: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENT OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION

DIANE I. NAUFFAL
RAMZI N. NASSER

**Abstract** – *Differences between two types of organisational cultures – American and American-based universities – were studied in Lebanon. American and American-based universities are American in both academic and administrative structures. American universities operate in Lebanon; however they are subject to the laws of the State of New York, particularly in terms of the management of the institution. American-based universities are local entities subject to rules and regulations delegated through the Near East church authorities. In both types of organisations, academics share exactly the same values, beliefs and assumptions. American higher education organisations exhibit greater cohesive administrative and academic cultures than the American-based institutes (Nauffal, 2005). The study highlights the differences between the two institutional types in relation to student perceptions of quality and satisfaction with their overall educational experience, such as teaching and learning experiences, and quality of services and facilities.*

## Higher education developments in Lebanon

The robust growth of higher education development in Lebanon started in 1990 and has gone through five important stages since the middle of the 19th century. The first stage was the establishment of foreign schools by missionaries to control higher education systems (Bashshur, 1997). Among those well-known universities are the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Beirut University College (currently known as the Lebanese American University [LAU]), both set up by the American Protestant mission in Syria, and the Saint Joseph University established by the French Jesuit missionaries. The second stage, which ranged from 1950 to 1975, included the establishment of the Lebanese University (the only public university), as well as the Beirut Arab University, creating a balance between indigenous schools and those of foreign establishment. The third period, which extended from 1975 to 1993, was marked by anarchy, chaos and military conflicts, and witnessed a lull in growth in higher education. Many universities in this period

were forced to branch to other regions. For instance, the American University of Beirut opened an 'off-campus' building in the 'Christian side' of Beirut[1], the Lebanese University branched to the East, North and South of Lebanon, and the Lebanese American University established its branches in other demarcated Christian areas in Lebanon. These LAU branches eventually evolved into the Byblos campus and the establishment of Notre Dame University. During the fourth stage, the overwhelming one-sided confessional control of cultural, economic, educational and political institutions held by the Christian establishments was tilted through the Ta'ef Accord. The Ta'ef was a protocol for agreement between the factional bodies promoting greater social cohesion between confessional groups. This agreement led to a new wave and the establishment of the private secular and Islamic universities.

The Ta'ef agreement ended the Lebanese civil war in 1989. It stated categorically that Lebanon was a 'final homeland for all its citizens' and that it was 'Arab in its affiliation and identity' (Abouchedid, 1997). The agreement placed the educational system under a comprehensive curricula reform plan and the Ministry of Education sought to implement the educational reforms introduced by the Ta'ef agreement, particularly in relation to standardised school textbooks in history and civics as a way to promote national integration. This was also evident in a wave of reactionary cultural movements that attempted to advance Islamic schools and universities in Lebanon and the region to offset the asymmetrical confessional university affiliation, such as that of the American University of Beirut and the American University of Cairo. A *laissez fare* attempt at governance gave impetus to the budding of a number of privately run universities. The absence of legislative and government bodies to oversee programmes led to a chaotic dispersal of colleges, universities and branches established across Lebanon. Mazawi (2005) observes that not only Lebanon, but most Arab states witnessed the expansion of higher education in the last quarter of the century, a period devastated by colonialism, regional and national military conflicts, and population displacements. Unlike most Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Qatar where centralised state control has been a dominant characteristic of higher education (Al-Karyuti, 1996; Alkhazim, 2003; Mazawi, 2005), Lebanon's expansion came through the private sector. This sector, encouraged by a tinge for profit, has worked toward the attainment of sustainable human development in the form of highly educated youth forming a mobile economic resource that Lebanon has speared to other nations in the region (UNESCO, 1998).

Falling educational standards, negligible research activity and insufficient financial resources have affected considerably the governance of universities. Beset by a growing concern for quality, many universities have started to vie for accreditation in order to certify the high quality of their programmes and symbolise

the 'full membership' in the international academic community (Mills, 2006). A subsequent fifth stage – currently at play in the Arab Gulf, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon – has been an attempt at improving higher education institutes through quality measures. As a framework for quality assurance precept, organisational culture theories establish grounds for student output studies specifically in their perceptions of quality and overall satisfaction with general university services.

## Introducing the study

Whether quality meets success or failure in achieving its goals in higher education, it is a key mechanism for accreditation and high standards (Miller & Clark, 1999; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2000; Lomas, 2004). The premise is that different organisational cultures of higher education produce different quality core activities in teaching and learning, especially where competition for students – as in Lebanon – depends on the marketable 'quality product'. This study tries to identify for academics and academic leadership in other parts of the world sharing a similar contextual situation a measure of organisational culture in which quality perceptions and satisfaction are used as performance indicators.

For certain, the concept of a university culture is commonly understood to hold people together and instils in them an individual and collective sense of purpose and continuity. Culture is frequently described in terms of shared meanings – that is, patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals and myths that evolve over time and function to bind the organisation (Pettigrew, 1979; Martin, 1985). Bush (2000) notes that culture is the informal dimension of an organisation. It shapes the character of the organisation through communication and social interaction. Schein (1992) identifies three levels of organisational culture – namely artefacts, values and assumptions – that are important quality factors of higher education. In his definition of organisational culture, Schein (1992) maintains that the basic assumptions underlying the values are that they shape the visible artefacts in form and have certain indirect effects on the quality or the product of the organisation.

For instance, a university can be aggressive, bureaucratic and rule oriented, as it can be characterised by a culture with a distinct identity manifested in the form of physical artefacts embedded in the beliefs shared among individuals to function and run the organisation (Dedoussis, 2004).

Organisational culture is a relatively innovative approach to the theory of educational management. It can be used to ascertain quality benchmarks that the organisation co-produces with its students, staff and faculty. The prevailing academic culture of individual autonomy is cautiously protected in western universities (Colling & Harvey, 1995). This reality seems far-fetched in Middle

East countries and most Arab states like Lebanon (Human Rights Watch, 2005) where American and Lebanese American-based private higher education dominate higher education in quality and quantity (Nauffal, 2005). Moreover, institutional autonomy is largely suppressed and collegiality is effectively lacking (Mazawi, 2005). The most liberal institutions in the region are bureaucratic, centralised and rigid (Dedoussis, 2004). This defines how a university operates and the manner in which it provides services to students. Organisational culture is thus a significant and important framework to the development of total quality management and, in essence, to the strategic development of the university.

It is worth understanding how different organisations promote different types of cultures for effective managerial programmes. From its inception, academia has negated in most parts of the world the teamwork approach, which is considered as a requisite to modern accreditation attributes and quality assurance measures (Stanley & Patrick, 1998) and the essence of what is known as total quality management. For instance, Sinclair (1989) observed that higher education has moved toward a highly bureaucratic-corporate culture in Western and North American contexts. Little (1990; cited in Bush, 2000) found collegiality to be uncommon in the North American context and when it existed, it slowed down decision-making processes, leading to conflict and interferences with accountable bodies. On the other hand, collegiality tends to be the preferred normative model promoted in higher education in the UK, particularly in the historically grounded institutions (Wallace, 1989; Price, 1994). Since the mid 1980s, Arab higher education in general has been undergoing restructuring with sprouting higher educational institutions established along the American-based system and having a highly bureaucratic, academic and administrative structure modelled on the bureaucratic public administrative institutions of the Arab States. In many ways, this has inhibited the emergence of the entrepreneurial culture of academia known to invigorate potentialities, such as research, collaboration between academia and the industry, and an openness to a global market and the print world (Mazawi, 2005). It is not clear how different cultures – whether bureaucratic, collegial, corporate or entrepreneurial – relate to student perceptions of service output.

Organisational typologies are significant in the study of educational organizations. They have the potential to be used descriptively or normatively to understand delegation, organisational purpose and actions (Nauffal, 2005). Cultures offer an image of traditions and character of institutions that determine their mission and identity. For instance, Bergquist (1992) identified four cultures, namely, collegial, managerial, negotiating, and developmental cultures. On their part, Thorpe & Cuthbert (1996) presented the autonomous, professional market, managerial market and market bureaucracy. Birnbaum (1988) referred to the

tightness and looseness framework, and Cooke & Szumal (1993) defined the constructive, passive-defensive and aggressive-defensive. Hooijberg & Petrock (1993) proposed four types of organisational climates, namely, the group, the developmental, the rational goal and the internal process. On the other hand, McNay (1995) developed the framework into collegium, bureaucracy, corporation and enterprise (see next section).

Institutional development has been described by McNay's (1995) generalisation about university cultures in the UK, which has gone from collegium, to the bureaucratic, to the corporate, to the enterprise culture. Similarly, Ramsden (1998) used McNay's model and found that within Australian universities there has been a steady decline in the collegium and bureaucratic cultures, and at the same time an increase in both the corporate and enterprise cultures. This study is interested to determine the type of cultures that prevail in the Lebanese context. In particular, our interest is to describe the American and American-based higher education cultures that are unique to the Lebanese setting. We will use McNay's typology as the analytical framework.

Organisational cultures evolve from the social practices of members of organisations, and are therefore socially created realities that exist in the minds of all members. These assumptions of the organisation are manifested in the formal rules, policies and procedures of organisational structures (Dedoussis, 2004). From a different perspective, Bull (1994) sees universities as traditionally having two co-existing cultures – the 'academic culture' and the 'administrative culture'. The innovative, articulate and creative academics are instinctively at home in the academic or task culture. Sanyal (1995) points out that to keep up with the rapid expansion of knowledge, academics need to be increasingly more involved in their disciplines. The administrative staff, who usually are academics, run the university in an integrated way following through rules, procedures and structures, quite like a bureaucracy with a range of financial, technical and other administrative services in place (Downey, 2000; Bull, 1994).

Bull (1994) claims, however, that the university's present and future achievements will have more to do with shared 'values' – the basic philosophy, spirit and drive of an organisation. This necessitates the integration of the two cultures by encouraging and assisting staff and academics to employ shared values as the framework that informs strategic and policy decisions, and the day-to-day operations (Bull, 1994). It is proposed that higher education organisations, like the American universities operating in Lebanon, have greater cohesive administrative and academic cultures than the American-based ones, even though both institutional types are structurally 'synchronised' with their American counterparts at the level of accreditation and the level of curricula and student socialisation. While academics in both types of universities share the same values,

beliefs and assumptions, this does not rule out possible differences in cultural assumptions and performance output differences between them. This study then investigates the impact of the array of cultures in the various historically grounded American and American-based universities on a range of performance outcomes (quality standards). More specifically, we will look into the different modes of operation adopted by these institutions to facilitate the realisation of clear, tangible mission objectives reflected in a set of demonstrable outcomes, such as student teaching and learning experiences, student satisfaction and the responsiveness of the organisation.

## Organisational cultures: McNay's typology

Four universities were surveyed in this study: two American universities registered within the USA and two Lebanese universities following the American academic system. All, however, were operating in Lebanon and registered with the Ministry of Education. The organisational cultures of American and American-based universities were compared using McNay's four typologies. The study aimed at identifying organisational cultures in the different historically grounded universities in Lebanon, to then analyse the impact of these cultures on student output. This study is significant since, as far as the authors know, no study in Lebanon has as yet attempted to examine the culture of the university in relation to output measures, such as student satisfaction and quality indicators.

The study used McNay's (1995) typology which comprises two dimensions – 'policy definition' and 'control of implementation', both of which span across a continuum from 'loose' to 'tight'. As shown in Figure 1, these two dimensions cross each other to produce four combinations of organisational cultures of a university, namely, collegium, bureaucracy, enterprise and corporation. McNay's (1995) four typologies are defined in Appendix A.

The conceptualisation of satisfaction can be defined as an experience of fulfilment of an expected outcome (Hom, 2002). Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is influenced by prior expectations regarding the level of quality. In some cases, information or disinformation provides some sort of belief about the quality of a product. If what is relayed or communicated to the customer does not match the expectation or experience, a negative effect on the quality of the service or product results (Solomon, 1996). Overall, satisfaction with a product can be of a single component of a service or of the experience. Hom (2002) considers two important dimensions to the conception of satisfaction: the objective type factor that identifies the physical and material parts of products as services, and the

*FIGURE 1: The quartet of organisational cultures based on McNay's typology*

**Policy Definition**

Loose

**Collegium:**

- Decision-making is consensual
- Management style is permissive
- Students seen as apprentice academics
- Faculties main organisational units
- Evaluation is by peer review
- International community sets standards

**Bureaucracy:**

- Decision-making is rule based
- Management style based on standard procedures
- Students are statistics
- University is the organising unit
- Evaluation based on audit procedures
- Regulatory body sets standards

**Control of Implementation**

Loose ———————————————————— Tight

**Enterprise:**

- Decision-making flexible
- Management style is one of devolved leadership
- Students are partners
- Project team dominating unit
- Evaluation based on achievement
- Standards related to market strength

**Corporation:**

- Decision-making is political and tactical
- Management style based on standard procedures
- Students are customers
- Focus on loyalty
- Evaluation based on performance indicators
- Standards related to institutional goals
- Centralised control within the institution

Tight

evaluative type composed of a set of factors used to evaluate service quality categorised as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990). The objective type is distinguished from the evaluative in that customers usually provide a sense of satisfaction with material objects. The evaluative type, on the other hand, is a measure of quality that results from a general attitude with satisfaction objectively measured through a series of transactions and evaluations that give a sense of negative or positive satisfaction (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998). In this study we measure students' perception of quality and satisfaction with general university services in relation to the culture of the university. Our main hypothesis suggests that gain scores in satisfaction vary with the organisational culture of an institution.

The study aims to identify the organisational cultures in the different historically grounded universities in Lebanon in an attempt to analyse the impact of these cultures on a range of demonstrable performance outcomes on the quality and satisfaction among students. The study also investigated whether specific organisational cultures are surrogate to the American or American-based universities.

The first part of the analysis aims at describing and analysing the organisational cultures of the institutes, the power authority relationships and the decision-making processes. The second part aims at determining the satisfaction of students with the quality of their educational experience (particularly in relation to the teaching/learning process), the academic and non-academic services and facilities, and in relation to the output measures to a specific university type.

## Method

The study included four universities each following the American educational system of higher learning. The American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) are institutions of American origins founded by foreign missionaries and registered in the State of New York. Notre Dame University (NDU) and the University of Balamand (UOB) are indigenous institutions founded by churches originating from the Near East. All four institutions are officially recognised as 'universities' by the Lebanese Government. In 2001, the 18,859 students in these four universities accounted for approximately 13.5% of the student body in Lebanon, or 92% of the higher education cohort of students registered in universities following the American educational model (Center for Educational Research and Development, 2001).

A questionnaire was constructed to survey the faculty on their conceptions of the organisational cultures in each of the four universities. Initially, a group of four faculty members were given the description and definition for each of McNay's

organisational cultures (i.e., collegial, bureaucratic, corporate and enterprise). They were asked to construct ten questions for each type. Once the faculty constructed these questions, one of the investigators collected the questions and removed all redundant information and repetitions. Three other faculty members were then given the questions, definitions and descriptions of each of the organisational types, and were asked to rate the questions according to their compliance with the four cultural types. This method is based on Campbell & Fiske's (1959) convergent and discriminant validity paradigm. This paradigm is also known either as panel design (Lanza & Carifio, 1992) or as method of triangulation (Borg & Gall, 1992). In the first trial, a large number of disagreements were noted. Subsequently, following a set of successive reviews and changes, the instrument was progressively fine tuned until the final, definite version was obtained.

To measure student output, a questionnaire with two satisfaction 'bundles' – the teaching/learning process and the quality of academic and non-academic facilities – was designed. Research literature regarding the outcomes of higher education for both faculty and students, and their relationship to the concept of institutional effectiveness, informed the construction of the student questionnaire (Feldmen, 1976; Marsh & Roche, 1997; Sheehan & DuPrey, 1999). The investigators constructed the items and a pilot study was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved a sample of 40 third year students, 20 from an American university and 20 from an American-based university. Upon the completion of the questionnaire, the respondents discussed with one of the investigators various issues, such as, format, clarity, language, vocabulary, ambiguities and conceptual difficulty. Modifications to the questionnaire were then made based on the findings of the initial pilot study.

The finalised questionnaire had 31 faculty organisational culture items and 24 student satisfaction items. Each item was close-ended, with respondents having to choose from a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Negative items were recoded to keep with the directional rating of the positive items.


## Sampling

*University sample*

This study involved four of the seven Lebanese universities surveyed for a more comprehensive study. The three universities that have been excluded from this study did not follow the American educational model. To gain access to

the universities, letters were mailed to the presidents of each institution. The access letters indicated the scope of the project, the procedures and the questionnaires to be used in the study. All universities responded within a two-month period.

*Student and faculty samples*

A stratified sampling procedure was used to select students. The strata were the departments. About 10 students from each stratum were selected for the sample. For each university, the sampling of students stopped at 210. This led to a total of 840 students being selected from the four universities in this study. The selection was made so that students from all the various departments in a university were surveyed. Not all the students responded to all the questions.

The faculty sample (10 from AUB, 10 from LAU, 11 from NDU and 11 from UOB) consisted of members with a minimum of 3 years teaching experience within their institution. The faculty sample was such that it represented the various departments as well as the different levels of the organisational hierarchies in each university.

Both the student and the faculty questionnaires consisted of a number of sections, each with a specific theme that was indicated clearly at the beginning of the section. The faculty questionnaire had four main dimensions, which were conceptualised to reflect McNay's four typologies. The students' questionnaire was divided into two sections[2]: while the first evaluated teaching, the second evaluated the quality of non-academic facilities and services, and explored career opportunities and destination upon graduation.

## Results

The items that were recognised by raters (judges) as representing a dimension were added and divided by the number of items to form a mean rating for each of the organisational culture attributes (see Appendix B). The first analysis compared the means of the four organisational cultures between American and American-based universities. No significant differences between American and American-based universities were found on each of the typologies (see Table 1). A Z-test was also run to determine whether there was any difference between the response mean rating and the ideal mean of '3' from a 5-point Likert scale. Both American and American-based universities appeared to be bureaucratic and corporate (see Table 1).

*TABLE 1: McNay's four organisational cultures*

| The Four Organisational Cultures | Universities | | | | | | t-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | American | | | American-Based | | | |
| | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | |
| Bureaucratic | 3.32α | 0.47 | 20 | 3.37α | 0.47 | 22 | 0.33 |
| Collegial | 2.96 | 0.30 | 20 | 2.95 | 0.43 | 22 | -0.10 |
| Corporate | 3.39α | 0.40 | 20 | 3.31α | 0.46 | 22 | -0.61 |
| Entrepreneurial | 2.31 | 0.41 | 20 | 2.39 | 0.74 | 22 | 0.44 |

α indicates a mean that is different from the middle point '3', which is the population mean

Table 2 reports the satisfaction levels of students in both American-based and American universities. In general, the results indicate that students in American universities expressed greater satisfaction with the quality of the university in terms of teaching and learning than those in the Lebanese American-based institutes. In particular, students in American universities felt that these universities have set higher performance academic standards than the American-based universities. In addition, students in American universities believed that the method of instruction was innovative. The traditional lecturing approach was found to be more prevalent among the American-based universities.

It was also found that students in American universities enjoyed peer teaching more than those in Lebanese universities. American-based universities appear, however, to offer one advantage over the American universities: they offer smaller classes. For while the American universities may have a huge number of students in all their majors, this is not the case with the newer Lebanese American-based universities that are still at the initial stages of establishing their programmes and majors.

On the satisfaction measures, students in American universities appeared more satisfied than those in American-based universities. This included all aspects of services, such as, the library, electronic resources, laboratories, equipment, extra curricula activities, and the student and recreational services. So much so that the students in American universities rated higher satisfaction levels with regard to

overall services than those in the Lebanese American-based universities. It is evident that the older and more established campuses of the American universities, in comparison to the newer campuses of the Lebanese American-based universities, offer a more advanced campus infrastructure that provides greater levels of interaction, support and modern services.

*TABLE 2: Students' mean satisfaction levels in American (A) and American-based (A-B) universities*

| | Satisfaction Measures | A-B | A | *t*-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The University has set standards at which participants are to perform academically. | 4.11 (0.85) | 4.26 (0.77) | -2.71** |
| 2. | Students are clearly informed at the beginning of each course of the evaluation procedure to be followed. | 3.97 (0.93) | 4.00 (0.97) | -.48 |
| 3. | Professors may in general be considered competent. | 3.70 (0.94) | 3.64 (0.99) | .78 |
| 4. | Professors mainly use the traditional lecturing approach (teachers talk and students listen) in their teaching. | 2.88 (1.14) | 2.61 (1.16) | 3.43** |
| 5. | Professors use a variety of teaching and learning approaches in a course, such as the traditional lecturing approach, the interactive discussion approach (teacher-student or student-student discussions), etc. | 3.84 (1.34) | 3.80 (0.93) | .49 |
| 6. | Professors use modern technologies in their teaching. | 3.61 (0.99) | 3.68 (1.00) | -1.02 |
| 7. | Classes, in general, are too large to allow for effective teaching and learning. | 2.75 (1.30) | 2.95 (1.18) | -2.327* |
| 8. | Courses are designed in a manner that allows all issues (social, political, religious, etc.) to be discussed openly and freely. | 3.42 (1.04) | 3.29 (1.08) | 1.81 |

| **Satisfaction Measures** | | **A-B** | **A** | *t*-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. | Courses are designed to encourage student participation in projects and research activity. | 3.78 (0.96) | 3.69 (0.98) | 1.25 |
| 10. | The curriculum is designed in a manner that ensures students get practical experience related to their education. | 3.47 (1.21) | 3.40 (1.09) | .91 |
| 11. | Students have a wide range of elective courses to choose from. | 3.13 (1.28) | 3.18 (1.20) | -.63 |
| 12. | Professors set specific office hours to allow individual students or small groups of students to obtain additional instruction or assistance in their courses outside regular class sessions. | 3.80 (1.05) | 3.89 (0.97) | -1.33 |
| 13. | Academically excellent students (teaching assistants) provide instruction for students with weaknesses in certain areas under the supervision of faculty advisors. | 2.92 (1.21) | 3.19 (1.16) | -3.11** |
| 14. | As a student you progressed through your field of study toward graduation with few problems, such as, failing or withdrawing from courses or changing your major. | 3.49 (1.26) | 3.40 (1.24) | .99 |
| 15. | Student evaluation of the teaching performance of instructors is very important to the instructor. | 3.45 (1.20) | 3.32 (1.21) | 1.56 |
| 16. | Student evaluation of the teaching performance of instructors is very important to the administration. | 3.46 (1.22) | 3.39 (1.21) | .81 |
| 17. | The level of resources in the library/ libraries is: | 3.37 (1.10) | 3.91 (0.98) | -7.38** |
| 18. | The level of access to electronic resources through online databases is: | 3.23 (1.18) | 3.91 (0.96) | -9.02** |

| Satisfaction Measures | | A-B | A | *t*-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | The ease of access to the internet for educational and research purposes is: | 3.14 (1.20) | 4.01 (0.97) | -11.48** |
| 20. | The standard of computers in the laboratories you have access to in your course of study is: | 3.25 (1.24) | 3.75 (1.01) | -6.29** |
| 21. | The standard of equipment in the various laboratories you have accessed through your course of study is: | 3.38 (1.07) | 3.67 (1.03) | -3.90** |
| 22. | The standard of extra curricula activities and clubs is: | 3.09 (1.24) | 3.34 (1.02) | -2.99** |
| 23. | The standard of student services (such as housing, food services, health services, etc.) is: | 2.95 (1.12) | 3.35 (1.03) | -5.10** |
| 24. | The standard of recreational facilities (such as gym, sports grounds, etc.) is: | 2.91 (1.37) | 3.36 (1.11) | -5.03** |

\* $p < .01$; \*\* $p < .001$

## Discussion

Western missionaries who established American universities in Lebanon sought to implant ideologies and European languages in the culture of the indigenous. The more recent American-based universities originating from Christian churches, such as the Maronite and the Greek Orthodox of the Near East, sought all factions of the Lebanese community, while emphasising the Arab roots and reaching out to cultures of the West. Both the American and the American-based universities, however, are embedded in the Arab and Islamic world and are influenced by its culture that is characterised by an extensive history of conflict and struggle. It is no surprise then that this culture should impact on the management styles of higher education institutes in Lebanon regardless of their origins and roots. Such an environment of continuous struggle and sporadic violent conflicts seems to necessitate the enforcement of authority by those in power. The civil war that broke out in Lebanon in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century led to increased fundamentalism and fanaticism in the Lebanese community and to sporadic conflicts. Those in power felt the need to reinforce further their authority, resulting in control becoming an integral part of the culture. This may explain the lack of political democracy manifested in the management culture of the institutions.

The colonial past of Lebanon has not really provided a continuous development toward an efficient and effective indigenous higher education system. Instead, it imposed structures, epistemologies and languages that were foreign to the local. The high level of bureaucracy found in the two types of universities is characteristic of the excessive exercise of control in Lebanese higher education. The implementation of tight measures of control which characterise the bureaucratic and corporate management cultures exhibited by the two types of universities is perhaps necessary to neutralise the conflicting spheres of power and influence within the Lebanese community. Nonetheless, American universities have had to deal less gravely with such spheres of power in comparison to the Maronite Church or the Greek Orthodox Church. Accordingly, the American universities tend to exercise less control than their American-based counterparts, as the latter have shown centralised hierarchical decision-making and latent managerial structures with distinctive leader-centred decision approaches. However, the data illustrates that there was no significant difference between the management cultures in the two types of higher education institutes.

No neat categorisation of cultures or organisations of higher education is possible in the Lebanese higher education context. Elements of all four cultures highlighted in McNay's model exist in all the universities studied in this paper. The two types of universities clearly tend to exhibit features of a bureaucracy and of a corporation that reflect the highly bureaucratic corporate model of the American university in the USA, which both the American and American-based institutions tend to replicate structurally and epistemologically in Lebanon. Sabour (1999) notes that the process and context of global internationalisation has impacted positively on institutional participation in global intellectual activity and culture. As many universities now seek international accreditation, it then seems plausible to adopt McNay's western typology to higher education in the Middle East higher education cultural context.

Bureaucracy essentially implies that regulation, efficiencies through standard operating procedures and consistency of treatment in areas such as equal opportunity or financial allocations (McNay, 1995) are implemented at all levels of the organisational hierarchy and follow a clear chain of command. A sense of tightness appears for most universities, as decisions appear to be made in an environment where the general desired outcomes are made explicit to all concerned. As communicated to one of the authors by a senior faculty member,

no one 'dares to fall out of line'. It seems that this type of culture has married itself to a corporate one where faculty may feel to some extent sidelined, and consequently avoid involvement in decision-making processes. In addition to the tight control found in both universities, effective decision-making is confined to senior officers.

Strong structures and organisational hierarchies often place excessive delays in the decision-making process or, at least, in the implementation of decision-making accountability measures. The high bureaucracy and corporate cultures in both types of universities suggest that such differentiation does not exist between these universities, but cuts across both types of universities and is manifested by the patron-client and collectivist culture so characteristic of the East (Kashima et al., 1995). This culture enters the calculative part in decision-making and allows for a highly bureaucratic dimension.

Although the expected complete differentiation between the two different types of higher education systems did not emerge, significant differences did appear between the quality and satisfaction expressed by the students of the two types of universities. In general, students in the older American universities were more satisfied with the quality of their educational experience than those in Lebanese American-based universities. This finding is not surprising considering that American universities, which have received accreditation from accrediting boards or associations in North America, have effectively been achieving standard levels with regard to their provision of services and quality education. Lebanese American-based universities, on the other hand, have not received accreditation. Instead, they have recently started to grapple with issues of standardisation, accreditation, quality assurance and performance benchmarks so as to compete with the remaining 42 universities that exist in Lebanon, only one of which is a public institution.

The distinctiveness of the American universities is in their academic and student affairs bodies. These bodies provide them with a competitive edge over other universities in the Lebanese higher education market. The American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) – both American universities – have had a long tradition of encouraging social and secular progressive ideals with regard to human life, and both attend carefully to maintaining this culture in their campus life.

No specific organisational culture pattern appeared to allow the establishment of a relation between the organisational culture and the quality of the institution's output as reflected through students' perceptions of satisfaction with their overall educational experience. This finding suggests that there is no relation between quality and satisfaction measures on one hand and organisational culture on the other. However, students within American universities seemed to generally rate

quality – such as the novel ways of teaching and the use of peer teaching methods – significantly higher than students in Lebanese American-based universities, suggesting greater satisfaction on their part with the teaching-learning experience. In the North American context, empirical evidence shows that college experiences and learning influence student development and satisfaction (Chickering, 1969; Baird, 1988). Student satisfaction with services and facilities was significantly higher for American universities on all aspects of service, as these universities are both older entities and have gone through accreditation. This contrasts with the fact that the Lebanese American-based universities, none of which have as yet applied for accreditation, still experience some deficiencies in academic and non-academic resources, particularly with regard to their inadequate physical infrastructure and facilities. These problems, however, are the result of these universities still being in the construction and developmental stages. A supportive management culture – one that encourages the introduction of innovative teaching methods, the use of modern technologies, the production of collective research and continuous self-appraisal and evaluation – may help these young universities create a niche for themselves within Lebanese and regional communities.

## Note

1. During the civil war Beirut was divided into two areas: the Muslim west part of the city and the Christian east. The central area of the city, previously the focus of much of the commercial and cultural activities, became a no man's land.
2. Although the actual students' questionnaire had more than two dimensions, these were not included in the present analysis.

**Diane I. Nauffal** *is assistant professor and director of Special Programmes at the University of Balamand, Lebanon. Her research interests include qualitative and quantitative approaches in educational management and mathematics education. Dr Nauffal's e-mail address is: diane.nauffal@balamand.edu.lb*

**Ramzi N. Nasser** *is associate researcher at the Centre of Applied Research in Education (CARE) and the Department of English, Translation and Education at the Notre Dame University, Lebanon. His research interests include attribution theory, gender studies, evaluative approaches and mathematics education. Dr Nasser's e-mail address is: rnasser@ndu.edu.lb*

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# APPENDIX A

## McNay's Four Typologies

*Collegium* is characterised by loose policy definition and loose control over implementation. It focuses on freedom to pursue university and personal goals unaffected by external control. The discipline-based department is the main organisational unit. Standards are set by the international scholarly community, and evaluation is by peer review. Decision-making is by consensus and the management style is *laissez-faire*. Students are viewed as apprentice academics.

*Bureaucracy* is characterised by loose policy definition and tight control over implementation. It represents managerialism in higher education. It allows a degree of autonomy for individuals in the selection of goals and objectives within a context of precise rules for implementation. The university is the main organising unit. Committees typically negotiate goals or policies that are loosely defined, but implementation draws on standard procedures, which are generalised to the institution as a whole. Decision-making is rule based. Standards are related to regulatory bodies. Evaluation is based on the audit of procedures. Students are statistics.

*Corporate* culture is typified by tight policy definition and tight control over implementation. The goals and the means by which they can be met are constrained. There is a strong centralised control in the institution promoting articulation between the parts and the whole. The focus is on loyalty to the organisation and senior management. The management style is charismatic and commanding. Decision-making is political and tactical. Standards are related to organisational plans and goals. Evaluation is based on performance indicators. Students are customers or units of resource.

*Enterprise* has clearly defined central policy but control over implementation is more loosely exercised. Clear goals are established for the institution, but it allows considerable autonomy in the way they are met. Primarily, its mission defines the institution. The management style is one of devolved leadership. The decision-making process is flexible. A small project team is the dominant unit within the institution. Standards are related to market strength and evaluation is based on achievement. Students are seen as clients and partners in the search for understanding.

# APPENDIX B

## The Questionnaire Items by McNay's Four Typologies

| | | Bureaucracy | Corporate | Collegial | Enterprise |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1. | The University has set standards at which participants are to perform academically. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| 2. | The University has standard operating procedures highlighting the manner in which participants are to relate to one another within the institution. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| 3. | The University has standard operating procedures highlighting the manner in which activities are to be performed within the institution. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| 4. | Holding on to traditional management practices hinders change in the University. | √ | | | |
| 5. | University goals are loosely defined. | √ | | √ | |
| 6. | There is loose control over the implementation of institutional goals. | | | √ | √ |
| 7. | Committees negotiate University goals to be pursued by the institution. | √ | | | |
| 8. | The management style adopted by the University allows participation of individuals in determining University goals. | √ | | √ | |
| 9. | The management style adopted by the University allows a degree of freedom for individuals to work toward the University goals they think most important. | √ | | √ | |
| 10. | The management style adopted by the University allows a high degree of freedom for faculties (discipline-based departments) in the selection of their goals. | | | √ | |
| 11. | Within the University, faculties are the main organisational unit. | | | √ | |
| 12. | Within the University, a small project team (or teams) is the dominant organisational unit. | | | | √ |
| 13. | As an institution, the University is a self-governing community of scholars. | | | √ | |
| 14. | There is a strong centralised control of administrators in the institution. | | √ | | |

| 15. | The University is a top-down managed institution. | √ | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. | The management style is one of delegated (passed on or entrusted) leadership. | | | | √ |
| 17. | The management style is liberal (*laissez-faire* or non-judgmental). | | | √ | |
| 18. | Decision-making is consensual (by agreement) within the University. | | | √ | |
| 19. | Decision-making is rule-based (follows a fixed set of rules). | √ | | | |
| 20. | Decisions are made by appointed rather than elected committees or working parties. | √ | √ | | |
| 21. | The number of levels of authority in the University is satisfactory (not too many) to enable decision-making to be effective. | √ | | | |
| 22. | The management style adopted by the University focuses on loyalty to the organisation. | | √ | | |
| 23. | The management style adopted by the University focuses on loyalty to senior management. | | √ | | |
| 24. | The management style adopted by the University allows considerable freedom for faculty to teach courses of interest to them. | | | √ | |
| 25. | The management style adopted by the University encourages research with more commercial application as opposed to pure, curiosity driven research. | | √ | | |
| 26. | The management style adopted by the University favours offering courses having greater direct job applicability (commerce, computing and media) as opposed to university courses such as history, philosophy and classics. | | √ | | |
| 27. | Faculty members enjoy considerable freedom to decide their own job description. | | | √ | |
| 28. | The management style adopted by the University views students as customers who are entitled to be satisfied with the product (education) they are purchasing. | | √ | | |
| 29. | The management style adopted by the University views students as clients and partners in search for understanding. | | | | √ |
| 30. | The management style adopted by the University views students as a statistic. | √ | | | |
| 31. | The management style adopted by the University views students as apprentice (trainee) academics. | | | √ | |
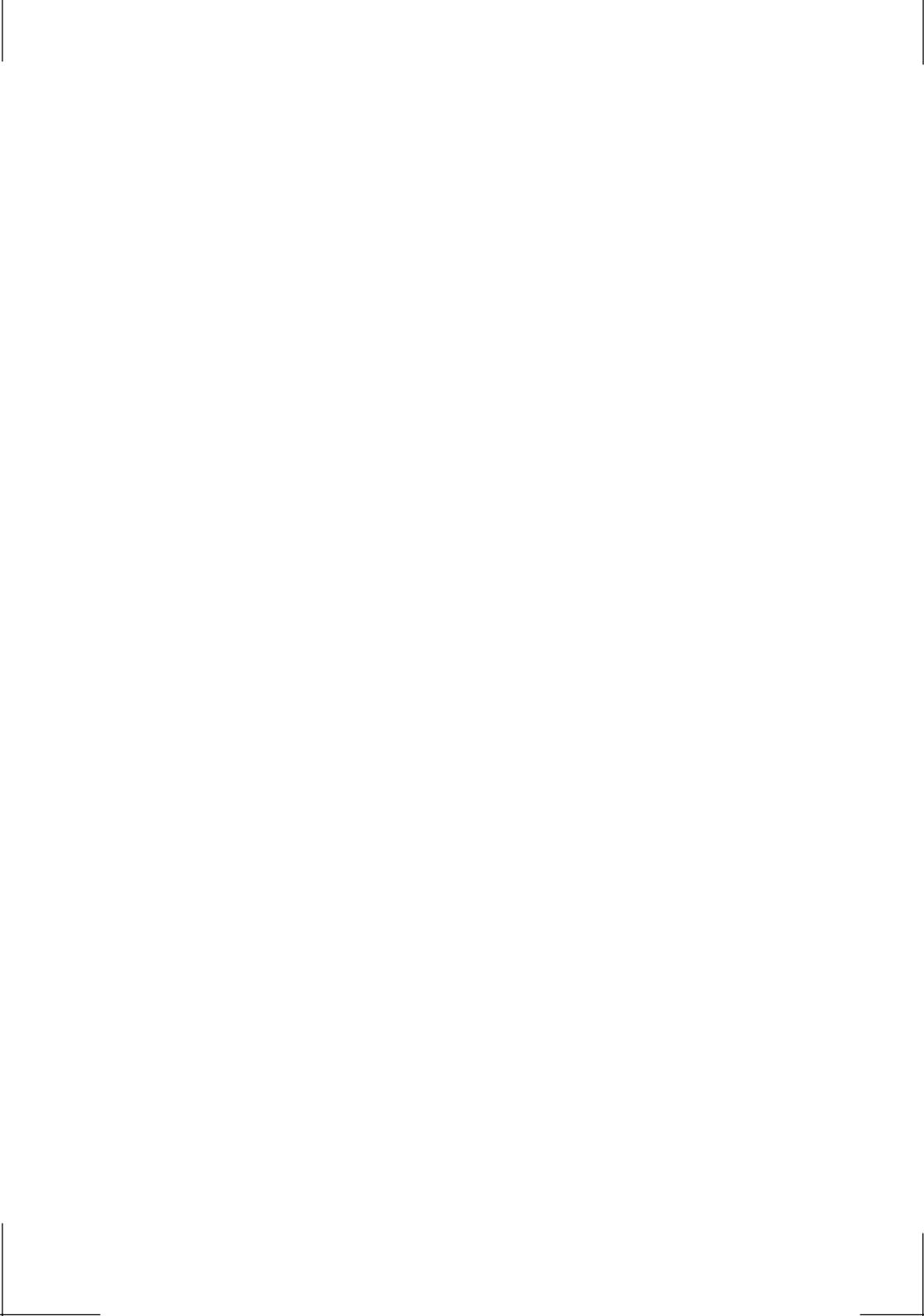
# STUDENTS' SATISFACTION AT JORDANIAN UNIVERSITIES AND ITS RELATION TO SOME VARIABLES

KHALIL A. QARAEEN
AIEMAN A. AL-OMARI
ABDULLAH M. ABU-TINEH

**Abstract** – *The purpose of this study is to determine and compare the importance and the various levels of satisfaction related to undergraduate students at public and private universities in Jordan. The study sample consists of 304 students distributed over two groups: public university (n = 120) and private university (n = 184). Means, standard deviations and three-way analysis of variance (MANOVA) are used to compare students' perception to the levels of importance and satisfaction, and the mean difference between the two levels in two different institutions. All significant MANOVAs were followed by one-way ANOVA to determine which group differs significantly from the others. Results of the study reveal that students at public and private universities consider the importance of the Satisfaction Scales to be 'somewhat important'. Students at public universities consider the satisfaction to be 'neutral', while students at private universities consider it to be 'somewhat dissatisfied'. In general, students at public and private universities believe the performance gap levels to be high.*

## Introduction

*P*ost-secondary institutions are now faced with a myriad of questions, both from within and without, regarding the value, effectiveness and costs of academic programmes. Moreover, faculty, counsellors and administrators are expressing more concerns when advising students about educational and career options, especially in this heightened era of student consumerism. Given this new context of higher education, it would seem desirable to develop a better understanding of the factors behind students' satisfaction relative to college environment.

For example, in Australia, approximately one-third of all students entering college fail to graduate, and approximately half of those who withdraw do so in their first year (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000). Moreover, a high proportion of these withdrawals or failures are due to adjustment

or environmental factors, rather than due to intellectual difficulties (Williams, 1982). The environmental factors include lack of clearly defined goals on the student's part, mismatch between the student and the course or college culture, as well as the feeling of isolation (Tinto, 1995).

Lack of skills and attitudes, which should have been developed prior to enrolment in higher education, have an impact on students' satisfaction toward the college environment and the decision to remain enrolled in a college (Nora & Lang, 2001). In Jordan, the number of universities has increased from 4 in 1990 (all public) to 24 in 2006, of which only 10 are public. This increase is a direct response to the vast demand on higher education in Jordan and in the surrounding countries. Over the past 15 years, number of university students jumped from 34,984 in 1990 to 194,041 in 2005. Around 23,000 students come from neighbouring countries, the main ones being Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Syria (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2006).

Not only has the number of students entering college increased substantially, but the aims and objectives of a college degree have undergone significant changes as well. Today, the combination of changing demographics, advancements in technology and the increased international competition in world trade and tourism make the preparation of workers for the modern workplace a critical issue. Today, more 18 year-olds in Jordan continue their studies after compulsory education, with the expectation that post-secondary education would enhance their employment opportunities.

Sanders & Burton (1996) suggested that the assessment of students' efforts needs to cut across the courses to make the connection with the academic experience. This would create a better understanding of the degree, which is the main aim for attending college, and how it meets the students' educational and social needs. Focusing on the students' satisfaction and experiences puts emphasis on the customer, rather than on the desired ends of the institution. In a highly competitive market, the drive for quality enhancements demands that all higher education sectors work for institutional improvement.

Knox & Lindsay (1992) interpreted student satisfaction as an evaluation of the educational experiences that justify present and past commitments. Given that the individual students are the primary beneficiaries of the college experience, asking students how satisfied they are is an obvious way to measure post-secondary success. Consequently, student satisfaction is an educational outcome over which post-secondary institutions have considerable influence (Gielow & Lee, 1988). One might expect the characteristics of colleges to have a great influence on educational satisfactions and perceptions. Positive attitudes and perceptions of

education, which do not result from the completion of the steps in the process of educational attainment, encourage further pursuit of education (Knox & Lindsay, 1992).

The 2001 National Student Satisfaction Report[1] revealed that good classes and the opportunity of joining those classes without difficulty remains one of the most important aspects of college life for students. Other aspects measure the areas in which institutions are best performing in terms of the quality of instruction, faculty knowledge, and students' ability to register for classes while facing few conflicts. While the performance gaps, financial aid and practices remain problematic for students at all types of institutions, campuses are meeting however their students' expectations with regard to campus parking. The report also addressed the increasing dissatisfaction in the areas of academic advising, the concern for individual students and student-centeredness for students at the four-year private institutions.

Walker (1999) pointed that the major factors influencing the retention rates in a college are related to the activities or processes that take place before matriculation. The goal of these activities is to equip prospective college students with survival skills necessary for succeeding in college, and to enhance the feeling of belonging through the building of personal connections between diverse groups of students. Studies of Australian first-year students revealed that initial experiences on campus are important, and that these experiences influence the students' persistence in higher education (McInnis, James & McNaught, 1995; McInnis, James & Hartley, 2000). Although differences exist among college campuses, each institution must understand the needs and experiences of its own students if it is to address student attrition. As each college environment is different, it will require measures that are appropriate to its own circumstances (McInnis, James & McNaught, 1995).

Nora & Lang (2001) found that skills and attitudes developed prior to enrolment in higher education have an impact on students' satisfaction with the college environment and the decision to remain enrolled in a college. Today's students are indeed diverse, not only in terms of age, ethnicity, socio-economic level, sexual orientation and whether they study part-time or full-time, but also in terms of expectations, attitudes, intellectual capabilities and learning styles (Schroeder, 2003). Upcraft, Gardner & Barefoot (2003) pointed out that colleges and universities have an obligation to create learning environments that are challenging and supportive to students. Colleges should also create a balance between the two, both inside and outside of the classroom. To accomplish this, institutions of higher education should create a first-year experience that is intentional, comprehensive, systematically coordinated and integrated.

As Sanders & Burton (1996) argued, satisfaction is a continuous variable: It captures a range of responses. Although strongly connected to retention, student satisfaction is a more powerful measure as it can continue to improve and develop to guide quality enhancement efforts even in institutions with high retention and graduation rates.

On the basis of the above argument, the following remarks were observed: (i) research on student satisfaction remains highly contradictory; and (ii) research on the relationship among students at public and private universities and other variables still holds value.

In examining previous research, the researchers did not find any studies that address Jordanian students, specifically among students at public and private universities. Therefore, there is a need for additional research on the level of students' satisfaction among students at public and private universities.

## Stating the problem

The purpose of this study was to determine and compare the importance and the various aspects of the satisfaction levels of campus life for undergraduate students at public and private universities in Jordan. While research relating to student satisfaction was found for many groups, none was found for the group used in this study. In particular, no research was found that compares the student satisfaction in public and private universities in Jordan.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the scores of the importance, satisfaction and performance gap on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) among students attending public and private universities?

2. Are there significant mean differences in the perceived level of importance on the SSI among students in relation to the institution type, gender and discipline?

3. Are there significant mean differences in the perceived level of satisfaction on the SSI among students in relation to the institution type, gender and discipline?

4. Are there significant mean differences between the levels of importance and satisfaction (performance gap) on the SSI among students in relation to the institution type, gender and discipline?

## Significance of the problem

Higher education administrators, students and scholars are interested in what happens to students' satisfaction in public and private colleges in Jordan. With no existing research addressing student satisfaction in public and private universities in Jordan, this study has the potential of helping institutions to reduce the failure rates in higher education, to promote student-faculty and student-student interactions, and to encourage students' autonomy, combined with appropriate integrated language and learning support that benefits students in colleges and universities in Jordan. In addition, the results of this study provide some valuable information that might change, enhance and challenge the present methods being used to ease the transition students make in public and private colleges in Jordan. It is also desired that this study helps college administrators and faculty in developing activities to assist students in adjusting to campus life.

The information presented in this study will aid us as faculty to better understand the following issues, and to plan for the future accordingly:

- Which aspects of the campus life do our students consider most important?
- Of these, which aspects do our students consider most and least satisfying?
- What are the ways that we as faculty can follow to better meet our students' expectations?

## Research framework

One of the most important decisions an institution will make is how to collect information about its students' levels of satisfaction. Although there are several ways of assessing student satisfaction, many instruments lack some critical feature, resulting in incomplete or inaccurate data (Juillerat, 1995). The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) (Schreiner & Juillerat, 1993) is a comprehensive measure that utilises a two-dimensional approach to the assessment of student satisfaction. Each measure criterion is stated as an expectation that a student may have concerning some aspect of college life: Students are asked to rate how important each expectation is to them (which generates an 'importance score'), as well as how satisfied they are that the expectation is being met (which generates a 'satisfaction score'). A difference score, called the 'performance gap score', is also calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score, thus giving an indication on how well the college is meeting a particular expectation. This approach allows institutions to gather data about the level of student expectations as well as about the levels of satisfaction that their

expectations are being met. 'By utilizing all the scores produced through the SSI, an institution can get a more comprehensive and meaningful picture of its students' assessment for the institution, as well as how to plan to accurately prioritise those areas for intervention' (Juillerat & Schreiner, 1996, p. 8).

The data from the SSI scores can be interpreted and utilised in a number of ways. By collecting information from students about how satisfied they are with the aspects of the campus and about how important those aspects are to them, a college can prioritise its interventions. One way in which campuses can begin to interpret their data is by developing a two dimensional quadrant with satisfaction scores along a horizontal axis and the importance scores along the vertical axis, while using the median importance and satisfaction scores as the intersection point of the two axes (see Figure 1). By plotting the coordinates of each SSI item on the quadrant, a system of prioritisation for intervention is provided. For example, items above the median importance score and below the median satisfaction score (the upper left quadrant) represent the areas in need of immediate intervention (areas that are high in importance to students in which they are not satisfied). Items that appear in the upper right quadrant (items that are above the median importance and satisfaction scores) indicate the institution's strengths, and items in the lower right quadrant represent areas of lesser priority. Items in the lower right quadrant may be the ones for which the budget can be adjusted, because although the campus is doing very well in those areas, they are of little importance to students. This type of data analysis allows an institution to begin a system of prioritisation for effective intervention.

*FIGURE 1: Quadrant approach to analysing SSI data*
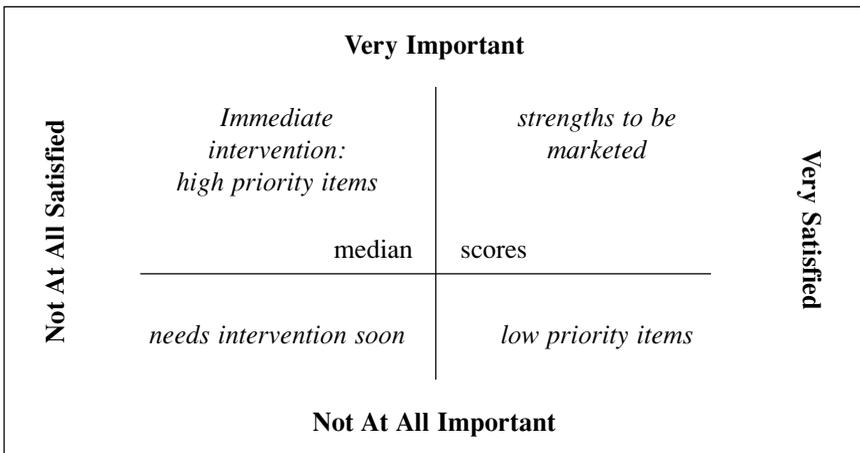
## Procedures

*Population and sample*

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) was administered in the first semester of 2005 in classrooms during class time with the cooperation of faculty in the two selected universities. The target population for the study included all undergraduate students enrolled in one of the elective courses offered by the public Hashemite University and the private Zarqa University. From a total of 1503 registered students representing a variety of academic majors, a random sample of 400 students was chosen. A total of 304 students completed the survey, leading to a response rate of 76%. The resulting sample included 120 students from the Hashemite University and 184 students from Zarqa University. With regard to gender, there were 154 male and 150 female respondents. With regard to discipline, there were 190 students enrolled in a science discipline and 114 in the humanities.

*Instrumentation*

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) consisted of 43 student satisfaction statements extracted from the literature (Schreiner & Juillerat, 1993; Juillerat, 1995). Each item of the SSI described the students' satisfaction with their campus experiences (see Appendix A). The students had to rate each of these 43 items against two measures, namely, the 'perceived level of importance' and the 'perceived level of satisfaction'. While the first showed the students' perceived importance on how institutions meet their expectations, the second showed how students perceived the level of satisfaction in terms of how institutions were meeting their expectations. Both were measured using 7-point Likert scales as follows:

- Perceived level of importance: 1 – not important at all; 2 – not very important; 3 – somewhat unimportant; 4 – neutral; 5 – somewhat important; 6 – important; and 7 – very important.

- Perceived level of satisfaction: 1 – not satisfied at all; 2 – not very satisfied; 3 – somewhat dissatisfied; 4 – neutral; 5 – somewhat satisfied; 6 – satisfied; and 7 – very satisfied.

Respondents were provided with statements that relate to all aspects of campus experience. The students were asked first to rate each item according to importance (expectation). The students were requested then to rate each item in

terms of how satisfied they were (performance). These two sources of data permitted a third assessment tool, called the 'performance gap'. This third rating, which is determined by subtracting 'performance' from 'expectation', indicates the difference between what students consider important and how it measures up. Scoring is on a seven-point scale, with one as the lowest score and seven as the highest score. A large performance gap score for an item (e.g., 1.5) indicates that the institution is not meeting its students' expectations, whereas a small gap score (e.g., 0.5) indicates that an institution is meeting its students' expectations. On the other hand, a negative gap score (e.g., -0.25) indicates that an institution is exceeding its students' expectations.

The 43 items were analysed 'statistically and conceptually' to produce the following five subscales or dimensions:

- Registration Effectiveness (assesses issues associated with registration and billing);
- Academic Advising Effectiveness (academic advisors and counsellors are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, competence and personal concern for the students' success, as well as their approachability);
- Academic Services (assesses issues associated with library resources and the adequacy of computer laboratories);
- Instructional Effectiveness (assesses issues associated with the quality of instruction and the care of students as individuals); and
- Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness (assesses issues associated with financial aid and awards, and the knowledge of admission staff).

Each of these subscales was examined in details with regard to 'importance' and 'satisfaction'.

*Instrument standardisation*

To ensure equivalence of meaning between the English and Arabic versions of the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), the items were translated both forward and backward. The goal of this process was to produce Arabic items that were equivalent in meaning to the original English items.

The Arabic version of the SSI was pilot tested with a sample of 50 students. Although drawn from the same population, these students were different from those of the study. A reliability coefficient for the SSI was established for the five main dimensions as follows: Registration Effectiveness (.91), Academic Advising Effectiveness (.89), Academic Services (.85), Instructional Effectiveness (.83), and Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness (.87). In view of the careful

translation process and these reliability estimates, the Arabic translated version of the SSI seemed to be a valid and reliable measure that could be used with a Jordanian population.

*Data collection*

After acquiring the instructors' permission, the questionnaire was administered during regular class periods to students in the first semester of the 2005-2006 academic year. The students received written instructions that specified the purpose of the study and explained the procedures to be followed while responding to the questions. In particular, the students were told that there were no right or wrong responses. Students were asked to return the survey to the class instructor who passed it on to the researchers. The questionnaire included a brief demographic sheet that required students to provide basic demographic information about themselves. The students were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

## Results

*Research question one*

The importance, satisfaction and performance gap scores were determined for both public and private universities. Expectation scores (importance) were interpreted using the following measures: 1.00-1.99 – not important at all; 2.00-2.99 – not very important; 3.00-3.99 – somewhat unimportant; 4.00-4.99 – neutral; 5.00-5.99 – somewhat important; 6.00-6.99 – important; and 7.00 – very important. These measures indicated the level of expectation (importance) held by the students with regard to the institutional services according to the selected scale. Respondents were also requested to rate their satisfaction for each of the student satisfaction inventory items. The categories for satisfaction were identical to those for the expectation (importance) scores. These were as follows: 1.00-1.99 – not at all satisfied; 2.00-2.99 – not very satisfied; 3.00-3.99 – somewhat dissatisfied; 4.00-4.99 – neutral; 5.00-5.99 – somewhat satisfied; 6.00-6.99 – satisfied; and 7.00 – very satisfied.

The criterion score that was used to interpret performance gap scores was 1.50. Performance gap scores at or above 1.50 were considered to be high and indicative of the institution's need to focus efforts on improving that specific service area. Performance gap scores between 0.00 and 1.49 were taken to indicate that the institution is meeting the students' expectation (importance) and satisfaction for

the selected services. Finally, negative performance gap scores were taken to indicate that the institution is exceeding the students' expectation for those services.

Table 1 reports the importance, satisfaction and performance gap mean scores for undergraduate students in public and private universities.

*TABLE 1: Importance, satisfaction, and performance gap mean scores for public and private undergraduate students*

| Dimensions | Importance | | Satisfaction | | Performance Gap | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public | Private | Public | Private | Public | Private |
| Registration Effectiveness | 5.95 | 6.08 | 3.87 | 3.74 | 2.08 | 2.34 |
| Academic Advising Effectiveness | 5.94 | 6.01 | 4.26 | 4.13 | 1.68 | 1.88 |
| Academic Services | 6.17 | 6.21 | 4.02 | 3.79 | 2.15 | 2.42 |
| Instructional Effectiveness | 6.17 | 6.21 | 3.65 | 3.68 | 2.52 | 2.53 |
| Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 5.86 | 5.95 | 4.49 | 4.41 | 1.37 | 1.54 |
| **Total** | 5.59 | 5.61 | 4.05 | 3.94 | 1.54 | 1.67 |

- *Importance scores*: Study findings reported in Table 1 show that, in all SSI dimensions, the students at a private university had higher expectations (importance) than the students at a public university. The undergraduate students at the private university rated four subscales as 'important'. These were: Registration Effectiveness (6.08), Academic Advising Effectiveness (6.01), Academic Services (6.21) and Instructional Effectiveness (6.21). The same group of students rated the Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness subscale as 'somewhat important' (5.95). On the other hand, the students at the public university rated two subscales – namely, Academic Services (6.17) and Instructional Effectiveness (6.17) – as 'important'. These students rated the remaining three subscales – namely, Registration Effectiveness (5.95), Academic Advising Effectiveness (5.94) and Admission and Financial Aid

Effectiveness (5.86) – as 'somewhat important'. These results indicate that, in general, students at public and private universities consider the five subscales to be either 'important' or 'somewhat important'.

- *Satisfaction scores*: Results reported in Table 1 show that the students at the public university experienced higher satisfaction than the students at the private university in four out of the five dimensions of the SSI – the only exception being Instructional Effectiveness. The undergraduate students at the private university rated three subscales as 'somewhat dissatisfied'. These were: Registration Effectiveness (3.74), Academic Services (3.79) and Instructional Effectiveness (3.65). The same students rated Academic Advising Effectiveness (4.13) and Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness (4.41) as 'neutral'. On the other hand, the students at the public university rated three subscales – namely, Academic Advising Effectiveness (4.26), Academic Services (4.02) and Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness (4.49) – as 'neutral'. The remaining two subscales – namely, Registration Effectiveness (3.87) and Instructional Effectiveness (3.65) – were rated by public university students as 'somewhat dissatisfied'. These results indicate that, in general, while students at public universities consider the satisfaction scales to be 'neutral', the students at private universities give them a rating of 'somewhat dissatisfied'.

- *Performance gap scores*: The performance gap scores of private university students exceeded those of public university students on all subscales. These results indicate that there is a higher level of unmet student expectations at the private university than at the public university. The relatively big gaps for both the public and private universities indicate that the two types of universities need to focus their efforts to improve the specific service areas.

### Research question two

Three-way MANOVA were conducted to determine whether there are significant mean differences in the perceived level of importance on the SSI among students in relation to the institution type (public and private), gender (male and female) and discipline (sciences and humanities).

Table 2 presents the three-way MANOVA results. MANOVA results revealed significant differences between institution type (Wilks' Lambda = .960, $F(5, 292)$ = 2.413, $p$ = .036) and discipline categories (Wilks' Lambda = .945, $F(5, 292)$ = 3.424, $p$ = .005) on the combined dependent variable of students' importance level. A univariate analysis was conducted as a follow-up test.

*TABLE 2: Three-way MANOVA for importance level by institution type, gender and discipline*

| Effect | Wilks' Lambda Value | $F$ | Hypothesis *df* | Error *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution Type | .960 | 2.413 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .036* |
| Gender | .976 | 1.453 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .205 |
| Discipline | .945 | 3.424 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .005* |
| Institution Type X Gender | .966 | 2.045 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .072 |
| Institution Type X Discipline | .977 | 1.348 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .244 |
| Gender X Discipline | .994 | 0.324 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .898 |
| Institution Type X Gender X Discipline | .987 | 0.757 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .581 |

\* indicates significant result

MANOVA results indicate that gender (Wilks' Lambda = .976, $F(5, 292)$ = 1.453, $p$ = .205) and interaction between institution type, gender and disciplines (Wilks' Lambda = .987, $F(5, 292)$ = .757, $p$ = .581) had no significant effect on the combined dependent variable of students' importance level.

Table 3 presents the ANOVA results. ANOVA results indicate that only the Registration Effectiveness dimension ($F(1, 296)$ = 5.372, $p$ = .021) differs significantly by the institution type.

Table 4 shows that in general, with regard to the Registration Effectiveness dimension, while students at the private university are at the 'important' level, students at the public university are at the 'somewhat important' level.

*Research question three*

Three-way MANOVA were conducted to determine whether there are significant mean differences in the perceived level of satisfaction on the SSI among students in relation to the institution type (public and private), gender (male and female) and discipline (sciences and humanities).

*TABLE 3: ANOVA summary for students' importance level regarding their institution type and discipline*

| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | Registration Effectiveness | 7486.843 | 1 | 7486.843 | 16241.830 | .000 |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 7591.209 | 1 | 7591.209 | 9333.780 | .000 |
| | Academic Services | 7944.000 | 1 | 7944.000 | 12250.110 | .000 |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 7944.000 | 1 | 7944.000 | 12250.110 | .000 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 7189.330 | 1 | 7189.330 | 6572.460 | .000 |
| Institution Type | Registration Effectiveness | 2.476 | 1 | 2.476 | 5.372 | .021* |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 1.332 | 1 | 1.332 | 1.638 | .202 |
| | Academic Services | 1.126 | 1 | 1.126 | 1.737 | .189 |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 1.126 | 1 | 1.126 | 1.737 | .189 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 0.826 | 1 | 0.826 | 0.755 | .386 |
| Discipline | Registration Effectiveness | 0.717 | 1 | 0.717 | 1.556 | .213 |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 0.511 | 1 | 0.511 | 0.628 | .429 |
| | Academic Services | 0.502 | 1 | 0.502 | 0.774 | .380 |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 0.502 | 1 | 0.502 | 0.774 | .380 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 0.314 | 1 | 0.314 | 0.003 | .957 |
| Error | Registration Effectiveness | 136.444 | 296 | 0.461 | | |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 240.738 | 296 | 0.813 | | |
| | Academic Services | 191.951 | 296 | 0.648 | | |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 191.951 | 296 | 0.648 | | |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 323.781 | 296 | 1.094 | | |
| Total | Registration Effectiveness | 11216.086 | 304 | | | |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 11118.816 | 304 | | | |
| | Academic Services | 11882.224 | 304 | | | |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 11882.224 | 304 | | | |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 10959.000 | 304 | | | |

* indicates significant result

*TABLE 4: Means and standard deviations for students' importance level by dimension (Registration Effectiveness) and institution type*

| Institution Type | Registration Effectiveness | |
|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* |
| Public | 5.885 | .070 |
| Private | 6.103 | .063 |

*TABLE 5: Three-way MANOVA for satisfaction level by institution type, gender and discipline*

| Effect | Wilks' Lambda Value | *F* | Hypothesis *df* | Error *df* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution Type | .972 | 1.706 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .133 |
| Gender | .986 | 0.845 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .519 |
| Discipline | .945 | 3.367 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .006* |
| Institution Type X Gender | .968 | 1.901 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .094 |
| Institution Type X Discipline | .981 | 1.127 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .346 |
| Gender X Discipline | .992 | 0.480 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .791 |
| Institution Type X Gender X Discipline | .968 | 1.940 | 5.00 | 292.00 | .088 |

* indicates significant result

Table 5 presents the three-way MANOVA results. MANOVA results revealed significant difference between discipline categories (Wilks' Lambda = .945, $F$ (5, 292) = 3.367, $p$ = .006) on the combined dependent variable of the students' satisfaction level. A univariate analysis was conducted as a follow-up test.

*TABLE 6: ANOVA summary for students' satisfaction level regarding their discipline*

| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | Registration Effectiveness | 2836.603 | 1 | 2836.603 | 2205.905 | .000 |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 3489.536 | 1 | 3489.536 | 1623.427 | .000 |
| | Academic Services | 3042.764 | 1 | 3042.764 | 2626.541 | .000 |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 2732.972 | 1 | 2732.972 | 1762.835 | .000 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 4076.000 | 1 | 4076.000 | 1847.351 | .000 |
| Discipline | Registration Effectiveness | 10.630 | 1 | 10.630 | 8.266 | .004* |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 0.878 | 1 | 0.878 | 0.409 | .523 |
| | Academic Services | 16.341 | 1 | 16.341 | 14.106 | .000* |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 1.901 | 1 | 1.901 | 1.226 | .269 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 1.442 | 1 | 1.442 | 0.653 | .420 |
| Error | Registration Effectiveness | 380.630 | 296 | 1.286 | | |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 636.248 | 296 | 2.149 | | |
| | Academic Services | 342.907 | 296 | 1.158 | | |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 458.897 | 296 | 1.550 | | |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 653.207 | 296 | 2.207 | | |
| Total | Registration Effectiveness | 4771.383 | 304 | | | |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 5959.449 | 304 | | | |
| | Academic Services | 4950.893 | 304 | | | |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 4560.551 | 304 | | | |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 6665.806 | 304 | | | |

* indicates significant result

Table 6 presents the ANOVA results. ANOVA results indicate that only the Registration Effectiveness dimension ($F(1, 296) = 8.266$, $p = .004$) and the Academic Services dimension ($F(1, 296) = 14.106$, $p = .000$) differ significantly by the disciplines.

*TABLE 7: Means and standard deviations for students' satisfaction level by dimensions (Registration Effectiveness and Academic Services) and disciplines*

| Discipline | Registration Effectiveness | | Academic Services | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Sciences | 3.916 | .105 | 4.101 | .100 |
| Humanities | 3.464 | .117 | 3.541 | .111 |

Table 7 shows that in general, with regard to the Registration Effectiveness and Academic Services dimensions, students in science disciplines score higher at the 'satisfaction' level than students in the humanities.

*TABLE 8: Three-way MANOVA for performance gap level by institution type, gender and discipline*

| Effect | Wilks' Lambda Value | *F* | Hypothesis *df* | Error *df* | *p* |
|:---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| Institution Type | .956 | 2.219 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .041* |
| Gender | .991 | 0.428 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .860 |
| Discipline | .936 | 3.339 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .003* |
| Institution Type X Gender | .964 | 1.802 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .099 |
| Institution Type X Discipline | .977 | 1.143 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .337 |
| Gender X Discipline | .988 | 0.582 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .744 |
| Institution Type X Gender X Discipline | .979 | 1.028 | 6.00 | 291.00 | .407 |

* indicates significant result

*TABLE 9: ANOVA summary for students' performance gap level regarding their institution type and discipline*

| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | Registration Effectiveness | 1106.678 | 1 | 1106.678 | 625.211 | .000 |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 787.097 | 1 | 787.097 | 261.972 | .000 |
| | Academic Services | 1153.816 | 1 | 1153.816 | 627.867 | .000 |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 1358.017 | 1 | 1358.017 | 589.701 | .000 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 438.520 | 1 | 438.520 | 145.848 | .000 |
| Institution Type | Registration Effectiveness | 12.045 | 1 | 12.045 | 6.805 | .010* |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 7.329 | 1 | 7.329 | 2.439 | .119 |
| | Academic Services | 13.650 | 1 | 13.650 | 7.428 | .007* |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 1.685 | 1 | 1.685 | 0.732 | .393 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 5.983 | 1 | 5.983 | 1.990 | .159 |
| Disciplines | Registration Effectiveness | 16.870 | 1 | 16.870 | 9.530 | .002* |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 2.728 | 1 | 2.728 | 0.908 | .341 |
| | Academic Services | 22.572 | 1 | 22.572 | 12.283 | .001* |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 4.357 | 1 | 4.357 | 1.892 | .170 |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 1.310 | 1 | 1.310 | 0.436 | .510 |
| Error | Registration Effectiveness | 523.946 | 296 | 1.770 | | |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 889.336 | 296 | 3.005 | | |
| | Academic Services | 543.952 | 296 | 1.838 | | |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 681.656 | 296 | 2.303 | | |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 889.979 | 296 | 3.007 | | |
| Total | Registration Effectiveness | 2081.790 | 304 | | | |
| | Academic Advising Effectiveness | 1905.449 | 304 | | | |
| | Academic Services | 2210.750 | 304 | | | |
| | Instructional Effectiveness | 2634.980 | 304 | | | |
| | Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness | 1566.972 | 304 | | | |

* indicates significant result

*Research question four*

Three-way MANOVA were conducted to determine if there are significant mean differences between the levels of importance and satisfaction (performance gap) on the SSI among students in relation to the institution type (public and private), gender (male and female) and discipline (sciences and humanities)

Table 8 presents the three-way MANOVA results. MANOVA results revealed significant differences between institution type (Wilks' Lambda = .956, $F(6, 291) = 2.219$, $p = .041$) and discipline categories (Wilks' Lambda = .936, $F(6, 291) = 3.339$, $p = .003$) on the combined dependent variable of students' performance gap level. A univariate analysis was conducted as a follow-up test.

Table 9 presents the ANOVA results. ANOVA results indicate that the Registration Effectiveness dimension ($F(1, 296) = 6.805$, $p = .010$) and the Academic Services dimension ($F(1, 296) = 7.428$, $p = .007$) differ significantly by the type of institution. The ANOVA results also indicate that the Registration Effectiveness dimension ($F(1, 296) = 9.530$, $p = .002$) and the Academic Services dimension ($F(1, 296) = 12.283$, $p = .001$) differ significantly by discipline.

Table 10 shows that in general, with regard to the Registration Effectiveness and the Academic Services dimensions, private university students score higher at the 'performance gap' level than public university students.

*TABLE 10: Means and standard deviations for students' performance gap level by dimensions (Registration Effectiveness and Academic Services) and institution type*

| Institution Type | Registration Effectiveness | | Academic Services | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Public | 2.064 | .137 | 2.097 | .140 |
| Private | 2.545 | .123 | 2.609 | .126 |

Table 11 shows that in general, with regard to the Registration Effectiveness and the Academic Services dimensions, students in the humanities score higher at the 'performance gap' level than students in the sciences.

*TABLE 11: Means and standard deviations for students' performance gap level by dimensions (Registration Effectiveness and Academic Services) and discipline*

| Discipline | Registration Effectiveness | | Academic Services | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Sciences | 2.020 | .123 | 2.024 | .125 |
| Humanities | 2.589 | .137 | 2.682 | .140 |

## Discussion and recommendations

This study revealed that although university students, from both public and private institutions, think that the factors listed in the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) are all somewhat important, they are largely not satisfied with the related services provided.

This study revealed that the type of institution significantly influenced the perceived levels of importance for Registration Effectiveness. This could expose some issues that students are concerned with and the type of problems students actually encounter. These may include 'Who do students consult when they experience problems?', 'Would they recommend their institution?' and 'How could the quality of their experience be improved?'. The findings of this study are consistent with a study by Gielow & Lee (1988) who believed that students' satisfaction is an educational outcome over which post-secondary institutions have considerable influence. Positive attitudes and perceptions of education    not only result from the completion of the cycle of educational attainment itself, but also from the encouragement to further pursue education (Knox & Linsay, 1992).

Another thing that emerged from this study was that public university students rate the Registration Effectiveness, Academic Advising Effectiveness, Academic Services, Instructional Effectiveness, and Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness to be of less importance than do the private university students. There are two possible main reasons for this finding. The first reason has to do with the fact that the government of Jordan supports the national public universities. Among other things, the good reputation of national public universities, their top ranking, their students' performance in society, and their facilities, budgets, buildings, locations and campus services contribute to the lower perceived importance level and higher satisfaction level. Secondly, the institutions that occupy the top positions in the hierarchy tend to be the same ones

that have the most resources, such as, money, prestigious faculty and high-performing students.

This study also revealed a significant gap between the students' perceived levels of importance and satisfaction according to the institution type and discipline. Moreover, the study pointed out a growing dissatisfaction in the areas of Registration Effectiveness and Academic Services. With regard to these two factors, the issue is whether institutions are performing their best in the quality of instruction, in faculty knowledge and in students' ability to register for classes while encountering few conflicts. In terms of performance gaps, Academic Advising Effectiveness, Instructional Effectiveness, and Admission and Financial Aid Effectiveness remain problematic for students at all types of institutions.

The recognised diversity among today's students extends to their expectations (see Schroeder, 2003). And satisfaction, being a continuous variable, captures a range of responses (see Sanders & Burton, 1996). Although student satisfaction is strongly connected to retention levels, it is a more powerful measure that continues to improve and develop in order to guide the quality enhancement efforts, even in institutions with high retention and graduation rates.

The point is that integrated data, such as the one presented here, provides a comprehensive and informative picture of students' experiences that should help decision-makers develop successful institutional strategies (Sanders & Burton, 1996). Although perceived differences exist among college campuses, each institution should understand the needs and experiences of its own students if it is to address student attrition. Each institution should consequently endeavour to come up with measures that are appropriate to its own particular circumstances (McInnis, James & McNaught, 1995).

Once the satisfaction data are interpreted and prioritised, they may be used for effective change. Yet this is precisely where many campuses falter. Too many researchers analyse, interpret data and make written recommendations, then watch as data and recommendations sit on a shelf. For data to have any impact, it must be *used* effectively. There are many ways in which the satisfaction data can be used to make a positive impact on the campus. The following are some practical recommendations.

- *Market the strengths*: The campus community, as well as the outside community (e.g., donors and prospective students), need to hear about what the campus does well. While prioritising areas for intervention, one should not forget to publicise and celebrate the things that are done right.

- *Address student expectations*: One of the most positive features of the SSI is that it addresses two dimensions. Sometimes, students are dissatisfied because

the quality of a service is genuinely poor. But students may also be dissatisfied because their expectations are not realistic. In some instances, students have unrealistically high expectations regarding what college is supposed to be like; in other instances, their expectations are too low because no one has told them what they should expect from their college.

- *Work on high-priority items*: This is an obvious first step in the intervention process. Target those areas in which importance scores are high and satisfaction scores are low, resulting in large gap scores. These are the areas in greatest need of intervention and which will have the most leverage in changing student perceptions. Satisfaction scores cannot be examined in a vacuum; they must always be evaluated in light of the importance scores.

- *Look for interventions that are low cost, quick fix, or both*: Identify the high-priority items, select the ones that can be remedied quickly or which will not cost a lot of money, and address all those items quickly. Then make these changes and publicise to the students that the faculty has responded to their requests. On one campus, several changes were made in response to the SSI results, but no one told the students that the changes were in response to their requests. As a result, many students did not even notice. Once the changes were pointed out (along with the reasons for them), students' perceptions improved.

- *Use SSI data for reallocating existing funds*: Another way to improve institutional efficiency is to look for items with low importance scores and very high satisfaction scores, and make some budget adjustments.

- *Use SSI data for long-range planning*: Not everything identified as a high priority can be fixed in a short amount of time. Some issues are complex, involving personnel, policies, budget priorities and a significant investment in time and money. Researchers recommend that issues that cannot be addressed within one year should become part of the strategic plan. In this way, changes do not get lost in the shuffle or put off from year to year due to lack of funds. By intentionally including high-priority areas in the strategic plan, institutions are able to have the most impact on students' perceptions over the long run. And because strategic planning is supposed to reflect an intentional effort to improve institutional effectiveness and to meet goals over a five to ten-year period, what better way than to focus that plan around the issues that most dramatically affect students? Assessing student satisfaction is not the only way to improve an institution's effectiveness. However, utilising student

satisfaction data is one of the best ways to get input from students about their perceptions regarding the quality they are receiving at a particular institution. Using this information along with other forms of assessment enables an institution of higher education to plan interventions that can have a significant and positive impact on the campus environment.

- *Encourage communication*: The principal value in a research of this kind, and for that matter the entire SSI assessment effort, is to stimulate discussion and communication among all components of the University. University leadership, from the President to the departments that have access to information, can provide a more insightful focus for planning, budgeting and enrolment management. Student leadership across the campus can use SSI findings when planning student initiatives.

- *Speak up*: Students enrolled in higher education institutions must be self-advocates and communicate with their instructor about the difficulties they are having, seeing, hearing, and/or understanding in the campus. Dissatisfaction can interfere with student learning if the instructor and students are not vigilant in monitoring the communication.

- *Get involved*: It is relatively easy to feel a sense of disconnect in the campus. To remedy this problem, students need to become actively involved in class and campus. Participating in class discussions, posing questions to students in other sites and generally behaving as an active class and campus participant helps in fostering a sense of connectedness with instructor and peers. Feeling part of the class and campus can increase learning and overall satisfaction with the class and campus.

- *Collaboration*: It would be presumptuous to draw conclusions and make recommendations for strategic changes in policy without the benefit of a campus wide dialogue. All parties, armed with common assessment results, should be able to collaborate together for an improved campus environment and ultimately for a better and more successful university for all.

- *Improve the quality*: The outcomes of the study may provide an impetus for leaders of higher education institutions to improve the quality of their institutions' learning environment. They can achieve this while transforming the organisational culture of the institution and improving student retention. All this results in the accomplishment of students' educational goals, including improved graduation rates for both public and private institutions. In addition

to that, university administrators and policy decision-makers may use the findings to revise, improve, and/or create new curricular offerings, educational programmes and student support services.

- *Foster a sense of connectedness*: A positively connected personal relationship among university administrators, faculty members and learners must be present for significant learning to take place. Special emphasis should be placed on improving university authorities' knowledge of students' perceived levels of importance and satisfaction, especially among those in university administration, faculties and personnel.

Suggestions for future research include the following:

- Replicate this study in higher education institutions located in Jordan and beyond. Future research on similar populations in these regions could assist universities in identifying the institutional variables that are unique to their university environment.

- Comparisons of results, university-by-university and region-by-region, could further enhance and increase the understanding of students enrolled in similar institutions. Today, studies of this nature are not conducted in universities. Thus, the opportunity for replication exists.

- Further studies need to consider if other factors (such as, students' entrance scores and the reputation of the schools) lead to some comparable effects on students' perceived levels of importance and satisfaction.

- Future research investigating students' perceived levels of importance and satisfaction with regard to their campus experiences should focus on public and private universities using different student populations in Jordan and in other countries.

**Note**

1. The findings of this report are cited in a brief article entitled 'Quality access and service remain top priorities for most students' in issue October 11, 2001 of *Black Issues in Higher Education* (see http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_17_18).

**Khalil A. Qaraeen** *is assistant professor and chairman at the Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Hashemite University, Jordan. He earned his PhD in Foundations of Education from Ein Shams University, Egypt, in 1993. He has written numerous articles related to educational foundations and students' affairs. Dr Qaraeen's e-mail address is: kqaraeen@hotmail.com*

**Aieman A. Al-Omari** *is assistant professor and dean's assistant at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Hashemite University, Jordan. He earned his PhD from Washington State University, USA, in 2005. His research interests include higher education administration, students' affairs and leadership. Dr Al-Omari's e-mail address is: aieman66@hotmail.com*

**Abdullah A. Abu-Tineh** *is assistant professor at the Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Hashemite University, Jordan. He earned his PhD from Florida State University, USA, in 2003. His research interests include educational leadership, leading change, students' affairs and learning organisations. Dr Abu-Tineh's e-mail address is:* abutineh@hu.edu.jo

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# APPENDIX A

## The 43 Items of the Student Satisfaction Inventory

1. Faculty care about me as an individual.
2. The personnel involved in registration are helpful.
3. My academic advisor is approachable.
4. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
5. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
6. My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.
7. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.
8. Library resources and services are adequate.
9. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
10. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
11. Financial aid counsellors are helpful.
12. There are a sufficient number of study areas on campus.
13. Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
14. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
15. Library staff are helpful and approachable.
16. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
17. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my programme requirement.
18. Admission counsellors accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices.
19. Computer laboratories are adequate and accessible.
20. Policies and procedures regarding registration and course selection are clear and well publicised.
21. Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.
22. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.
23. Admission staff are knowledgeable.
24. The equipment in the laboratory facilities is kept up to date.
25. Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.
26. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
27. Counselling staff care about students as individuals.
28. Admission counsellors respond to prospective students' unique needs and requests.
29. Tutoring services are readily available.
30. There are convenient ways of paying my school bill.
31. This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.
32. Faculty are interested in my academic problems.
33. Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students.
34. The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students.
35. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
36. Billing policies are reasonable.
37. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
38. Bookstore staff are helpful.
39. Nearly all classes deal with practical experiences and applications.
40. Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.
41. Programme requirements are clear and reasonable.
42. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
43. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.

# RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS TO TURKISH LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN ANTALYA

SULTAN TURKAN

**Abstract** – *This study explores to what extent Turkish learners of English identify with the orientation of cultural content of English language textbooks used in their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. The study took place at a Teacher Training High School in Antalya, a Mediterranean city and capital of the Antalya province. The participants were 10th and 11th grade English and non-English majors selected on a voluntary basis by the co-operating teacher. Data were collected through a survey examining students' perceptions and ideas about the relevance of textbooks to their lives. Descriptive statistics were employed during the analysis. The findings indicate that the cultural content of the mainstream English language textbooks being used in Turkey is of little relevance to the reality of Turkish learners. Turkish learners of English seem to suggest that the content incorporated in English language textbooks should correspond to their cultural reality. Based on the findings, a series of pedagogical implications for future study are provided.*

## Introduction

C onscious of the need for learners of a foreign language to have access to the culture of that language, many publishers have integrated Anglo-American cultures into English language (EL) textbooks. The problem is that they have not considered the relevance of the cultural content to the local realities of particular groups of students. The fact that English is an international language spoken in many countries leads to varieties and different accents. Learners of English as a foreign language should therefore have the opportunity to acquire intercultural competence in attempting to communicate with other speakers of English who may also be coming from many different cultural backgrounds. When one starts to learn a foreign language, original linguistic and cultural information is presented to the learner. Unless relevance between one's native cognitive or cultural schema and the cultural schema of the target language is established, the learner is most likely to experience alienation and feel distant. Alptekin (1993) cited Widdowson's (1990) theoretical framework on *schematic and systemic knowledge* to make the following argument:

'A learner of English who has never resided in the target-language culture will most likely experience problems in processing English systemic data if these are presented through such unfamiliar contexts as, say, Halloween or English pubs. Even if these are explained, the learner may still fail to perceive Halloween or the pub in the same way in which they are normally evoked in the mind of the native speaker of English, as one's natural tendency is to assess a novel stimulus with respect to one's own cultural system.' (Alptekin, 1993, p. 137)

In most developing countries where English is spoken as a foreign language, teachers normally plan their lessons around imported textbooks published by renowned USA or UK publishers. Since students are the primary recipients of the linguistic and cultural content presented in these English language textbooks, it is crucial to examine students' perspectives on these textbooks. Given that textbooks play an influential role with regard to the input that the learners of the target language receive, it was decided to undertake a study in Turkey where textbooks play powerful roles in English language classrooms. Hence, this study sought to answer the following research question: Do Turkish learners of English perceive mainstream English language textbooks as culturally relevant to their lives?

This paper argues that the orientation of imposed cultural content in mainstream EL textbooks should not be merely around Anglo-American cultures. Instead, intercultural and cross-cultural awareness should be invoked through integrating information about worldwide English speaking contexts. I suggest that textbooks should reinforce international competence, understanding and awareness rather than an understanding of only certain cultures (i.e., the Anglo-American). Ultimately, it is hoped that the reader develops an understanding and sensitivity toward the relevance of content presented in EL textbooks to learners of English in the Mediterranean diaspora. It is also hoped that the study provides insights, both for teachers and publishers, about the sensitivity of material use and design, and the need for alternative designs of EL textbooks.

## Literature review

English has become an international language. Speakers of English have the privilege of communicating their ideas and news to millions of other people all around the globe. This study is grounded in the literature that discusses the role and domination of English as an international language and to what extent this international status is reflected on the mainstream English language textbooks used in English language education.

*English as an international language*

Cross-cultural communication has grown as one of the effects of rapid globalisation. Many acknowledge that learning a foreign language is a requirement to succeed in today's world. The need to have access to information all over the world has made English an international language. Indeed, English language has become the *lingua franca* of the world. Being the default language of today's world, English is the key to stay in touch with the information age. Phillipson (1992) also adds that 'at the present time English, to a much greater extent than any other language, is the language in which the fate of most of the world's millions is decided' (p. 6). With cultural phenomena (such as broadcasts, media, cinema, music and literature) being discussed cross-culturally through English, it is hard to ignore the international dimension of English language texts.

An inevitable consequence of English being an international language is that English language texts convey culturally oriented content such as the media, the cinema, music, literature, the organisation and nature of family, home life, interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions (Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990). It is therefore an overwhelming task for any English language curriculum designer to integrate all of this content into English language education. The fact that English is spoken in a variety of ways in numerous contexts all over the world makes it even harder. The vast range of the usage of English consequently makes it difficult for both teachers and students to decide which English culture to incorporate (Prodromou, 1992) or else to integrate all the specific varieties of English (e.g., Indian English) into English Language Teaching (ELT). To cite Smith (1987): 'English already represents many cultures and it can be used by anyone as a means to express any cultural heritage and any value system' (p. 3).

Learners of English are expected to communicate with English speakers residing in countries where English is the predominant language. Textbooks, therefore, consist mostly of texts, content, and lifestyles of English speaking countries like the UK and the USA. This results in the domination of those cultures. Alptekin & Alptekin (1984) point out that the 'local culture may, regrettably, be submerged into the dominant culture of the foreign language' (p. 14). The international dimension of ELT necessitates that, in EFL contexts, ministries of education should take precautions so as not to allow the Anglo-American socio-cultural domination to take over during English language education. Otherwise, 'English language teaching would have to deal with the Anglo-Saxon oriented "traditional ethnocentric views of English language" ' (Prodromou, 1992, p. 39). On their part, Alptekin & Alptekin (1984) argue that language educators should help the learners of English develop

'an identity which is able to transcend the parochial confines of the native and target cultures by understanding and appreciating cultural diversity and pluralism thanks to the new language, while not losing sight of native norms and values in the process. In short, it is a bilingual and *intercultural* identity.' (p. 19; emphasis in original)

In a study of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in South Asia, Canagarajah (1999) reported that the students felt alienated and negative toward the English language and culture. It was found that this was due to the implicit Western bias of the materials and the instructor, further reinforced by the fact that the cultural content was never explicitly discussed. Consequently, students felt anxious about and disconnected from the target language and culture. Because of these circumstances, the students indicated that they favoured the more traditional approach of memorising the grammar and vocabulary, presumably because it was a process that allowed them to keep a certain distance from the target language and culture. The second language students' fear of being *absorbed* by the culture of the language they are studying is repeatedly identified as a problem by researchers in the USA and in other countries.

### Cultural context of textbooks

Textbooks are usually the primary sources of providing linguistic and cultural input especially for the learners of English as a foreign language. No longer thought to be value-neutral, textbooks and other materials used in language learning generally present a certain way of looking at the world, i.e., through the cultural lens of the authors. According to Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet (1992), many textbooks were written from a mono-cultural perspective prior to the 1940s.

There are two other factors to be considered while analyzing the integration of cultural content into mainstream English language textbooks. On the one hand some textbooks are structural and cover grammatical and lexical usage of the language without incorporating situational, topical subject matter; on the other, others focus more on situational contexts, which reinforce socio-cultural subject matter. Since EFL teachers tend to follow situational or functional textbooks, the textbooks may play various roles, including being the 'teacher,' a cultural resource, and the authority in the language class.

Richards (1993) claims that less experienced teachers and some teachers whose native language is not English may understandably personalise textbooks in this way and fail to look at them critically. A textbook often carries the *imprimatur* of important publishers or ministries of education. In addition, when school administrators, or the ministry itself, select textbooks on behalf of all the teachers within their purview, they greatly lend them an aura of 'authority' with

regard to both instructional and cultural standards. As a result, even experienced teachers can become over-dependent on textbooks (Shannon, 1987; Richards, 1993). But when a textbook provides everything that the teacher needs for instruction, it becomes a 'de-skiller' in that the teacher may not use a more creative, interpretative, or critical approach toward the materials being used (Hinkel, 1999).

The textbook can also function as the ideology of the English language class, in the sense that it reflects a world view or cultural system, a social construction that may be imposed on teachers and students and that indirectly creates their view of culture (Hinkel, 1999). De Castell, Luke & Luke (1989) claim that English textbooks can serve as a form of cultural politics by including or excluding aspects of social, economic, political or cultural realities. Textbooks may become cultural icons or symbols, a representation of the cultural reality. But what these symbols represent varies from culture to culture. Especially in the case of ELT, the standard cultural symbol is usually representative of the Anglo-American world, particularly the UK and the USA. In such case, the commercial textbooks marketed in the Third World or developing countries lack focus on local students' needs, and most importantly, they lack the local cultural content. However, since English language textbooks are seen as the heart of many ELT programmes, their relevance to students' reality or cultural background is equally important.

*English language textbooks based on English speaking cultures*

There is a large number of EFL textbooks that focus on target cultures. Some of them deserve Brumfit's (1980) description of 'masses of rubbish that [are] skilfully marketed' (p. 30). The design and content of such textbooks are obviously influenced by commercial values. However, there are now changes in this respect. Current sales techniques compel textbook publishers to include environmental and social issues. Thus, not only do recent EFL textbooks include materials designed to promote awareness of race, gender and environmental issues, but these points are also often highlighted in the publishers' promotional materials. Effective examples of this contemporary approach to integrating social and cultural content in elementary level English language textbooks are the two volumes that constitute Walker's (1994) *Success-Communicating in English*, which is set in the USA but marketed worldwide. The multicultural nature of the American society is portrayed by including members of minority groups, shown positively in responsible positions or professional roles. From a realistic social perspective, issues concerning health, crime, the environment and the role of women are raised by providing information in simple graphic formats. In an explicit move to counter stereotypes, some texts feature husbands as responsible

for childcare and housework, while their wives are the breadwinners. A unit in Volume 2, under the heading 'What Are You Concerned About?', gives details of contemporary social, moral, and economic issues, such as, child abuse. The text communicates aspects of such problems, but does not provide solutions. Students are asked to share their own opinions and concerns.

A second example of a more realistic textbook is Hennig's (1991) *English G, Band A6, 10th Class*. This book is aimed at advanced level German EFL students. Its English speaking culture focus is the USA. Among the various themes mentioned in the book, one finds 'Blacks in America'. This theme is set within a detailed historical framework, covering the days of slavery up to the more recent elections of black men and women to the USA Senate and state governorships. Students are invited to analyse alternative interpretations of the progress made by black Americans by examining data comparing black and white income groups and percentages of college graduates. Further alternative perspectives are offered in the interviews with black families of differing social backgrounds when these collective interviews are matched with actual demographics. On the whole, these texts offer complex, in-depth versions of the target culture.

It is easy to assume that textbooks should reflect a target culture. However, Prodromou's (1992) survey of Greek students reveals that some students have mixed views about the cultural focus of their English lessons. When a sample of 300 students were asked what language teaching should be about, 60% wanted to focus on British culture and 26% on American culture. When they were asked what they thought the content or subject matter of their English language classes should be, 36% said it should be about the culture of other countries and 27% said it should be about Greek culture. Since there is no available study that discusses the preferences of Turkish learners of English concerning the cultural content of English language textbooks, this study attempts to investigate the textbooks' perceived cultural relevance to Turkish students.

*Textbooks aimed at international cultures*

The rationale for international target cultures is that speakers who do not speak English as a first language frequently use it in international situations. One example of such a situation would be German teachers teaching English in Japan to Japanese factory technicians who need English to speak to American and German engineers. None of these groups has English as a first language.

A pre-intermediate EFL textbook that aims at international target cultures is Priesack & Tomscha's (1993) *One World, Secondary English*. This textbook is accompanied by cassettes drawing attention not only to a range of native speaker

accents, but also to some accents of non-native speakers from around the world. Volume 3 of *One World, Secondary English* has units focusing on British history, Australian geography, Spanish tourism, the Chinese New Year, a Canadian story, Greek mythology, and other topics. Potter's (1990) *Panorama*, which is an elementary to intermediate series, offers another approach toward integrating intercultural content. The theme of an American family living in Rio de Janeiro, which allows some focus on Brazilian culture compared with American culture, is spread across three volumes. A second theme of visits focuses on Istanbul, Marrakech, Seoul and Buenos Aires, and also compares Bangkok and Tokyo. Elsewhere, themes such as job applications in Milan and attending an international conference in Nairobi offer international contexts where English is portrayed as the *lingua franca*.

While such textbooks offer interesting cultural mirrors, the learning of culture and the development of intercultural skills depend largely on how the textbooks are used in the classroom, that is, on the quality of interaction between students, texts and teachers. Therefore, one should bear in mind that encouraging cultural awareness and integrating the international cultures in ELT classes are crucial components to achieving intercultural competence.

*Intercultural competence*

In view of being the *lingua franca* or international language, English language teaching becomes tricky as its culture inevitably carries the cultures of the world. The literature suggests that intercultural competence and awareness should be fostered in English language education so that learners are exposed to the pluralistic ways in which English is communicated.

Meyer (1991) defines intercultural competence in relation to a broader foreign speaker competence and recognises this ability if one behaves in a flexible way while communicating to individuals representing other foreign cultures. Intercultural competence then implies adequacy and flexibility that allow the person to be aware of the cultural differences between his or her native culture and the foreign culture. In addition, 'Intercultural competence includes the capacity of establishing one's self identity in the process of cross-cultural mediation, and of helping other people to stabilise their self-identity' (Turkan & Celik, 2007, p. 23).

In intercultural foreign language education, the learner assumes the role of a 'comparative ethnographer' while learning a particular foreign language (Buttjes & Byram, 1991, p. 19). Kramsch (1993) introduces the concept of cognitive modification, which suggests that materials should not only consider the cultural, social background of the learner, but should also help to develop the skill to

operate in the cultural contexts of the 'other'. Moreover, in order to develop cultural and language awareness, materials need to secure more thorough integration of cultural adjustment that one inevitably goes through while learning a foreign language.

The shift toward a functional approach to EFL teaching, driven by needs analysis and predictable performance objectives, has coincided with a developing awareness of the growing role of English as an international language rather than a cultural specificity. Cunningsworth's (1984) *Evaluating and Selecting EFL Materials* makes the case against culture-specific course books that clearly continue to echo well with major ELT publishers. Cunningsworth (1995) argues that culture-specific course books will be limited unless students can relate to the cultural background that the textbooks are based on. According to him, a strong depiction of British life might block learning rather than help the learner. That is, it could be worth learning the structures of the language rather than trying to put the learners into a social world that is foreign to them. The literature, in fact, frequently refers to establishing a sense of relevance to learners' reality as being critical (see Alptekin, 1993). Alptekin (1993) alludes this sense of relevance to cultural schemas and emphasises that foreign language learners need to relate to the cultural content given in texts, because 'When the relevant cultural background assumptions and constructs are missing … reading tends to turn into a time consuming, laborious, and frustrating experience' (p. 137). But, as critics have pointed out, textbooks still run 'the risks of imposing a one-size-fits-all solution … on problems that are by nature very local and very complex' (Ranalli, 2003, p. 4).

Phillipson (1992), Holliday (1994), Pennycook (1994) and Canagarajah (1999) have criticised the marketing imperatives of a publishing industry that attempts to increasingly satisfy the perceived needs of a global clientele. These scholars, following their critical scrutiny of EFL teaching practices, adopted the notion of imperialism, which basically refers to the dominance of one society or community over another. The types of imperialism – such as economic, political, military, communicative, cultural and social – were extended to include linguistic imperialism in the ELT field as well (Galtung, 1980). According to Phillipson (1992), 'the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (p. 45).

The lenses provided by *intercultural competence and awareness* literature thus seem to argue that recently published mainstream English language textbooks should have cultural relativism and more pluralistic representations of English speaking cultures rather than the specific culture of an English speaking country.

## The present study

The literature review has served as a base for understanding the integration of cultural content in ELT textbooks, cultural domination in ELT textbooks and adverse effects of irrelevant ELT textbooks on students. Based on this understanding, this study attempts to fill the gap in the literature about the relevance of English language textbooks to learners of English in Turkish educational settings. Based on the data gathered, the next sections discuss the issue of textbooks providing relevant content for the students to cultivate intercultural competence and awareness. It is also argued that students should be able to raise their consciousness about cultures other than the frequent emphasis on Anglo-American cultures. In other words, students should be aware that there are other learners of English, just like them, all over the world and that there are different ways of doing things, not just Anglo-American cultural approaches.

Adopting this theoretical perspective, the present study aimed to reveal whether Turkish learners of English actually find their textbooks culturally relevant or not. More precisely, the study explored the following research question: Do Turkish learners of English perceive mainstream ELT textbooks as culturally relevant to their lives? To answer this question, a survey yielding both qualitative and quantitative data was administered.

### The participants

The participants of this study consisted of 45 students attending the 10th and 11th grade at a prominent Anatolian Teacher Training High School in Antalya, Turkey. Twenty-seven of them were English majors focusing on learning English, while the remaining 18 were non-English majors studying applied sciences, social sciences, Turkish and mathematics. These grade levels were chosen because the students, by this point in their studies, would have been exposed to many years of English language education. On the other hand, the school was selected because the researcher knew it well by virtue of being one of its former students. The co-operating teacher selected the participants on a voluntary basis. Although the participants' general demographic information was collected as part of the questionnaire, their age, gender, socio-economic level, family background, years of English language education, and living environment are not included in the present analysis.

All the students were native Turkish speakers. Their ages ranged between 16 and 19. The majority, 57.8%, were 16 year-olds. The females accounted for 51.1%, while the males for 48.9%. With regard to their family's socio-economic background, 40% came from a low socio-economic background, 31.1% were

middle class, and the rest came from high class families. While the vast majority lived in the city of Antalya, 13.3% lived in other towns, and one participant lived in a village.

The majority, 82.2%, had 8 years of exposure to English language education. These participants were considered to be a reliable source of information about attitudes toward English. Of the other participants, 11.1% had 7 years of experience, and the remaining three had 5, 9 and 10 years respectively. The English majors had 14 hours of English per week, while the non-English majors had 4 or 5 hours. Only three of the students had been abroad for a period ranging between ten days and one month. The rest of them had always lived in Turkey. The vast majority of the participants, 95.6%, thought they were studying British English. Only 2.2% thought that the variety they were studying was American English. The remaining few students chose not to respond. With regard to language variety preference, 37.7% preferred American English to British English and 60.1% preferred British English to American English. The rest chose not to respond.

*Data collection and analysis*

In order to investigate what the participants aimed to achieve from learning English and what the textbooks actually had to offer to them, they were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire, which consisted of three parts, had been previously piloted with 6 students in the United States (3 from Turkey and 3 from the USA). The first part (Questions 1-36) focused on the students' purposes for learning English and their attitudes toward English. The second part (Questions 37-40) was administered two days after the first part. Its main aim was to determine the correlation between the communicative acts presented in the textbooks and students' purposes for learning English. The third part, which was administered on the same day of the second part, centred on students' perceptions and ideas about the cultural relevance of their textbooks to their own reality. During administration, the coordinating teacher gave special attention to handing the second and third parts only to those who had completed the first part. The third part consisted of five sub-sections. These referred to: (i) the usefulness of the textbooks; (ii) how appealing the textbooks are to the students; (iii) the perceived roles of the textbooks; (iv) in whose economic and cultural interests the textbooks are produced; and (v) which parts of the textbooks relate to students' learning purposes. There were three types of questions: multiple choice questions, open ended questions and some using a 4-point Likert scale. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the responses to multiple choice questions and the Likert-type questions.

The qualitative data (i.e., the students' responses to the open ended questions) were translated from Turkish to English by the researcher. Due to space limitations, this paper focuses only on some of the results from the third part of the questionnaire.

## Results

*Learning language through a textbook*

Thirty percent of English majors indicated that they like learning English through textbooks. However, 48% of them did not find the textbooks appealing. In their view, the textbooks are boring, grammar-oriented and offer an unappealing choice of topics and content. Some of their statements were:

> 'They are so boring. The only benefit is that we can learn about other cultures, but we could learn that from other sources anyway.'

> 'I don't hate them, but they were obviously not written with an attractive updated style suitable for today's topics.'

> 'The textbook is very boring and has formal language. Sometimes the topics are just useless.'

> 'The topics and cultural content of the textbook are very distant to me and irrelevant.'

On the other hand, 55% of non-English majors indicated that they do not like learning English through textbooks. Some of their comments were:

> 'I like them because they are colourful and fun. However, sometimes they are like the newspapers; very boring.'

> 'I cannot say I hate them, but I don't like them either. However, they are good for teaching us English.'

Although the non-English majors generally tended to dislike using the textbooks, some of the students found the textbooks 'interesting', 'products of another culture', 'informative about every topic' and 'appealing'.

As far as the textbooks' choice of topics is concerned, 11% on non-English majors indicated that textbooks help them to learn English idioms, pronunciation and useful expressions.

With regard to the role of textbooks in the classroom, 33% of the English majors affirmed that textbooks are the ultimate authority in the language class.

While 30% indicated that their textbooks are not designed effectively enough to teach about the English speaking cultures, 26% reported exactly the opposite. Fifteen percent were of the opinion that the textbook played the role of a teacher, effectively replacing the teacher when he or she is inefficient. When it comes to the non-English majors, 28% expressed the view that the textbook is the authority in class. A higher percentage of non-English majors (i.e., 28% in comparison to the 15% of English majors) consider the textbook as a teacher. These students see the textbooks as the ultimate authority in the language class. They also think that textbooks have as much power as the teacher in teaching about English speaking cultures. Both English majors and non-English majors report that textbooks govern most of the instructional activities in the classroom.

The questionnaire also queried the participants if they could learn English without the use of textbooks and to what extent they saw the textbooks as being influential in their English classes. While 22% of the English majors agreed that textbooks are necessary resources from which they learn about English speaking cultures and English language, 11% disagreed. With the non-English majors, while 22% claimed that it was necessary to use textbooks, 56% pointed out that they could do without them. One of the students, however, put forward a much more balanced view that effectively put the learning needs of the students firmly at the centre of the discussion:

> 'Just like we need the teachers for effective instruction, we also need effective tools such as the textbooks. So textbooks should exist, but their selection should be done according to what the students need to learn and what they are interested in.'

The participants also expressed their views about the efficiency with which their textbooks give information about English speaking cultures. Only 9% of them were of the opinion that textbooks are not an efficient means by which students learn about the English speaking cultures. It could therefore be inferred from this study that the majority of Turkish students think that they could learn about English speaking cultures from textbooks.

*Cultural orientation of textbooks*

The English language textbooks used by the participants had an Anglo-American orientation. Seven percent of the students expressed concern about this ethnocentric nature of their textbooks. One participant suggested that students, instead of simply focusing on British and American cultures, should be allowed to use resources other than the textbook so that they could learn about other cultures.

The English majors and the non-English majors deemed to differ about how far it is possible to learn English speaking cultures through the textbooks. While 30% of the majors said that they do not learn English speaking cultures through textbooks, only 17% of the non-majors were of the same opinion. A possible explanation could be that since English majors take more English classes than non-majors, they are more exposed to the 'limitations' of textbooks. Most of the participants believed that the publishers, specifically the British and American, are the ones who benefit financially (71.1% supported this view) and culturally (75.5% supported this view) from textbooks, and that they are therefore the ones whose interests are taken into account when producing textbooks. They also believed that the textbooks are of no benefit to Turkish culture. Textbooks emerged as distant productions made to benefit mostly those who produce them. Apart from the obvious financial gains made by the foreign publishers, the participants appeared also concerned that the countries of these publishers were benefiting by freely exporting their culture under the guise of educational textbooks. The statements reproduced below are typical of the arguments made by the participants:

'The British benefit from textbooks, both by selling their educational products and by introducing and spreading their culture.'

'It's the Americans who benefit!! It's always them! I'm not benefiting from them. I don't think the others do either. The textbooks are very dumb.'

'Since the textbooks come from abroad, it is the importing agencies or institutions that earn a lot.'

'Our textbooks serve the imperialist purposes of imperialist and colonist countries.'

On the other hand, the statement 'Those who do not know about those cultures benefit from textbooks', written by one of the students, gives voice to the minority of participants who appeared less or not concerned about the financial and cultural 'difficulties' attached to the imported textbooks they used in class. With regard to the benefits of using the English language textbooks on Turkish culture, 20% of the students indicated that the textbooks enable them to compare their culture with the British culture, and in the process gain insights into both. One student did however raise an interesting point concerning the importance of preserving one's culture:

'The only benefit for our culture is that we get to look at issues from a wider perspective as long as we preserve our own culture.'

Fifty-three percent of the students were of the opinion that English language textbooks disadvantage rather than benefit Turkish culture. The reasons they put forward were mostly linked to exposing the inadequacies of Turkish culture, the destruction of Turkish culture and loss of own identity:

'I think textbooks show what kind of inadequacies or underdevelopment our Turkish culture has.'

'There are no benefits at all. On the contrary, they spoil our culture.'

'No benefit at all, because they never publish any textbook related to our culture.'

'None at all. Actually, it damages our culture. The young are losing their identity!!!'

'Textbooks do not benefit our culture. Instead they damage and disadvantage our culture because our culture is being assimilated.'

The students were also asked to comment about the relevance of the textbooks to their purposes for learning English and about the cultural relevance of the English language textbooks to their lives. Forty-two percent of the students stated that doing grammar exercises and listening to dialogues that focus on the British and American cultures do not correspond to their purpose for learning about different cultures. Moreover, 20% of them said that none of the parts of the English language textbooks appeal to them as far as learning about different cultures goes, because, as one student put it, 'the target culture is not even incorporated'.

The participants were further asked to visualise themselves teaching Turkish culture abroad using textbooks. From the English majors, most of whom were going to become English language teachers, 19% indicated that they would never use textbooks to teach Turkish culture. One of them even expressed the view that 'Culture cannot be taught through textbooks'. Having said that, 56% of the students did come up with alternative ways of teaching Turkish culture without depending completely on textbooks. These participants, who saw no need for adhering strictly to any particular textbook, seemed mostly concerned about familiarising their prospective students with the customs, traditions and way of life of the Turkish people. Here are some of their suggestions:

'I would teach the traditions and conventions of the Turks.'

'I would talk about the prominent people in our history. I would talk about our customs and traditions. I would tell how to behave appropriately and where.'

'I would use the textbook, but mostly I would relate my own observations.'

'Before using the textbooks, I would try to talk about Turkey by showing photographs and videos about Turkey. After that, I would make use of the textbooks.'

'I would not be putting a special effort into spreading the Turkish culture. I would just inform my students about things that they would need to know if they came to Turkey.'

'I would focus on the parts related to the Turkish culture and try my best to convey the culture by teaching Turkish songs.'

'I would bring in videos about Turkey. I would briefly talk about the culture without boring the students. I would talk about topics that interest my students in addition to the topics in the textbooks.'

Sixteen percent of the students, writing statements such as 'I wouldn't use the textbooks, but rather newspapers and magazines' claimed that they would never use textbooks. The overall picture was therefore one in which students considered their Anglo-American culturally oriented textbooks to be irrelevant to their reality. In general, the students also expressed the opinion that textbooks should not be the mere authority in class.

*Relation of textbooks to own culture*

Within this theme, although the English majors and the non-English majors responded similarly to some of the questions, there were also differences to warrant presenting the responses of the two groups separately. Among the majors, 15% claimed explicitly that the culture in the English language textbooks does not relate to Turkish culture. With the non-majors, the corresponding figure increased to 28%. While just 7% of the majors did not consider the textbooks as useful, this figure rose to 39% with the non-majors. An aversion to learning English through textbooks was evident in 48% of the majors and 56% of the non-majors. Most of the students reported being bored with textbooks because these did not attract their interests or meet their needs. Here are some of their written comments:

'The topics and cultural content of the textbook are very distant to me and irrelevant.'

'The textbooks are obviously designed on behalf of the British culture.'

'I don't hate them, but since they don't relate to the Turkish culture, I am not very interested.'

With regard to the cultural relevance of the textbooks to the Turkish culture, 41% of the students indicated that they are not relevant. This view was expressed in statements such as:

'The topics are not too bad. The level is appropriate, but they are not relevant to the Turkish culture.'

'Our textbook does not have anything to do with the Turkish culture except for some proper Turkish individual names at the end of the textbook.'

But not all the students complained about the textbooks' obvious lack of relevance to the Turkish culture. In fact, while some students praised their relevance to the British culture, others suggested that their textbooks would have been even better had they also been similarly relevant to other English speaking cultures, not just the British or American. The following statements represented these points of view:

'The cultural relevance is good because I believe it should not talk about the Turkish culture, but the English culture.'

'The textbooks are useful. However, if it could give information about other cultures, it would be great.'

### Intercultural understanding

Slightly more than half the students (i.e., 56%) found the topics in the textbooks appropriate for their interests in learning about various cultures. The fact that 43.8% of the students disagreed suggests that this issue almost divided the participants into two equal parts, with those agreeing slightly tipping the scales. With regard to whether textbooks helped them to develop an awareness of intercultural norms, 62.5% of the students responded in the affirmative, while 25% disagreed. This suggests that the students are generally interested in developing intercultural norms and understandings, and that this interest appears to be largely accommodated by their textbooks. As far as the accuracy of the cultural pictures presented is concerned, 43.8% of the students reported that their textbooks provide inaccurate or sanitised views of the USA or the UK. In fact, 56.3% of the participants strongly agreed that social realities, such as unemployment, poverty, family breakdowns and racism are not included in the textbooks. This implies that

only ethnocentric images from the US or the UK are represented – a reality that does not meet the needs and interests of the students who want to have an awareness of intercultural norms. In addition, 62.5% of the students indicated that their textbooks are either too British or too American, and that therefore these do not relate to their interests and cultural background. Having said that, 50% of the participants do not find the relationships, behaviours and intentions of the characters portrayed in the textbooks foreign to them. In view of this, they did not find it hard to interpret those portrayals. At the same time, 31.3% of the students reported that they find it hard to interpret the relationships, behaviours and intentions of the characters portrayed in the textbooks.

Taken globally, the majority of the students indicated that they find the English language textbooks useful. But, in reality, there was a significant difference between the English majors and the non-English majors. While 93% of the majors considered the textbook to be of considerable value to them, only 44% of the non-majors were of that opinion. Statements such as 'The textbooks are very useful because we can learn about their culture, but nothing else', suggest an awareness among the students that while they need to practise English more, their textbooks do not serve this purpose.

## Discussion

There were three main themes that emerged from the data. The first theme explored for whose cultural and financial interests the textbooks are written. The second theme was related to students' perceptions of the benefits derived from using textbooks. The third and last theme concerned students' opinions regarding the cultural content they would like to be exposed to in the EL textbooks.

Regarding the first theme, which dealt with for whose cultural and financial interests the textbooks are written, most of the English majors and even the non-English majors demonstrated a considerable level of critical consciousness. Although their answers varied along a continuum, the most commonly expressed opinion was that textbooks are either written for the benefit of the American and British cultures (which the literature review presents as the two main English speaking cultures), or else written for the benefit of publishers who make a living out of publishing the English language textbooks. With regard to cultural benefits, the participants were more inclined to mention the British rather than the Americans, because they believed it is the British who normally produce textbooks. Although in most cases the students mentioned either the cultural or the financial interests, 8 mentioned both. Interestingly enough, one student made the point that textbooks are not published in the interests of students and their

teachers. Instead, in line with the claims made by Phillipson (1992), Holliday (1994), Pennycook (1994) and Canagarajah (1999), some of the majors and a number of non-majors made a direct link between the publication of textbooks and the imperialist interests of colonist countries. Imperialism, as now understood in the field of Applied Linguistics, basically refers to the policy of reassuring the dominance of one culture over another (see Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 1994; Pennycook, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999).

The second theme centred on who or what benefits from the use of the students' English language textbooks. This theme brought up a net division between the English majors and the rest of the students. For while 25 out of the 27 English majors responded that it is the students and the readers of the English language textbooks that benefit mostly from using textbooks, most of the non-majors, in line with the literature, responded that it is the foreign countries (most notably the USA, the UK and the EU) that benefit mostly in the process. The students were, however, more of one mind when asked about the benefits that the textbooks have for their own culture (i.e., the Turkish culture). Most of them responded in fact that they could see no benefit for Turkish culture. On this particular aspect, the students' ideas seem to be consistent with Alptekin & Alptekin's (1984) position that the culture of EFL students (i.e., the Turkish culture in present study) subordinates itself to the dominant culture (i.e., the Anglo-American cultures in present study).

The third theme explored the cultural content that the participants would have welcomed in their EL textbooks. Apart from putting forward some suggestions regarding how to incorporate cultural content in EL classes, the students seemed to generally agree that a textbook should also serve to broaden students' knowledge of the different cultures of the world. Believing this, they made the point that the textbook, instead of concentrating simply on British and American cultures, should also cover aspects from other cultures. The textbooks they were using at the time of the study were criticised in fact for not having this wider perspective. This is how one student put it:

> 'The textbooks I have looked into focus on the British and American cultures. However, the textbooks I had previously used to cover the cultural content of other cultures.'

The Turkish students' general wish to have a wider and more balanced cultural focus in their textbooks suggests that they are different from the Greek students mentioned in Prodromou's (1992, pp. 39-49) study. For while some of his Greek students had mixed views on the cultural focus of their English lessons, the Turkish students in the present study indicated that the cultural content in EL textbooks should not focus merely on British and American cultures.

## Implications and conclusion

Since it is the students who are mostly immersed in the cultural and structural content of the English language textbooks, importance should always be given to their purposes, interests and needs. Parallel to this view, this study indicates that textbooks should include culturally relevant input so that students can be successfully involved in the communicative situations that are likely to occur in their real lives. Special consideration should therefore be given to the cultural content of the textbooks in order to make it relevant to the realities of the students involved.

The cultural content of textbooks is considered to be important in view of the fact that most students consider textbooks as the ultimate authority inside English language classrooms. This renders students reliant on the socio-cultural input that the English language textbooks provide with regard to acquiring an understanding of the English speaking cultures. A pedagogical implication would therefore be that teachers should try to link the cultural relevance of the topics presented to the students' own backgrounds. Moreover, it is advisable that English language textbooks should not revolve merely around British or American cultural content.

Given the international status of English, teachers should help students develop intercultural competence 'by equipping them with linguistic and cultural behavior which will enable them to communicate effectively with others and also by equipping them with an awareness of difference, and with strategies for coping with such difference' (Hyde, 1998; cited in Alptekin, 2002, p. 63). In other words, students should be cognitively ready to encounter English speakers from India, Poland and so on. Students should also realise that Anglo-American English is not the only norm or variety. Intercultural awareness and competence would make it possible for students to openly and effectively communicate the differences with these 'other' speakers of English.

For students to decipher whether or not intercultural awareness is being invoked as opposed to simply presenting a mono-cultural context (most likely the British one), the notion of 'critical language awareness' should be introduced to both teachers and students. As a result, the teachers would be able to develop a critical attitude in students regarding the cultural orientation of the English language textbooks. This course of action would also make it possible for teachers not to submit themselves to the de-skilling effect of the authoritative decisions being made by publishers or ministries of education. Teachers should demand their right to choose the textbooks in agreement with their students. The control and authority of the teacher over the textbooks was highlighted in one of the statements made by an English major student:

> 'The teacher should not be dependent on the textbooks. It is the textbooks that should be dependent on the teacher.'

Future studies in this area might consider a number of different directions. For instance, the findings of the present study may be explored further by using qualitative methods, such as classroom observations and individual interviews with the students. In addition, it is felt that the domination of Anglo-American cultures needs to be objectively scaled by students. This can be achieved by having students categorise the cultural content in ELT textbooks according to which culture (the target language culture(s) or source culture or international cultures) they think is being emphasised. Another direction could be to explore alternative representations of target language culture(s) by designing and discussing sample plans of textbook chapters.

To conclude, it appears that the cultural content of the mainstream English language textbooks being used in Turkey is of little relevance to the realities of Turkish learners of English. This study consequently established that the content incorporated in English language textbooks should correspond to the cultural realities of the students using them. This study has also highlighted the need for textbook materials that foster intercultural and cross-cultural awareness. It might also be a good idea to introduce such notions to the EL curriculum designers. This might help to foster an appreciation of and encourage intercultural competence in learners of English language, which would be a welcome development to the current practice of almost encouraging such learners to idealise the monolithic Anglo-American cultures presented in textbooks.

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**Sultan Turkan** *is a PhD student in Teaching and Teacher Education at the University of Arizona, USA. She holds a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching (ELT) from Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey, and a master's degree in Applied Linguistics from Texas Tech University, USA. Her professional interests include enacted curriculum in English language classes, English language teacher education, activity theory and its implications for assessment practices in EFL/ESL classrooms, native and non-native language teachers, culture teaching and socio-linguistic/intercultural competence, language planning and policy. Ms Turkan's e-mail address is: sultant@email.arizona.edu*

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RESEARCH NOTE

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL COHESION SKILLS IN TURKISH IMMIGRANT CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE IN TURKEY AND SWITZERLAND

ADALET KANDIR

**Abstract** – *Immigration has social, cultural, political, demographic and economic outcomes that go beyond simply being a movement of changing locations. In particular, negative experiences during the post-immigration process affect the development of children and consequently their social cohesion. The survey reported in this paper was carried out in order to make a comparative analysis of the social cohesion skills of immigrant children of Turkish origin attending primary schools in Turkey and Switzerland. The population of the survey was composed of primary school age children of Turkish origin living in Turkey and Switzerland. The sample consisted (with α = 0.5 and 5% deviation) of 351 children of Turkish origin aged 7 to 11. Of these children, 167 came from families that had immigrated to Turkey from the Balkans and were attending primary schools affiliated to the Directorate of National Education of Bursa Province in Turkey. The remaining 184 were emigrant children of Turkish origin attending schools affiliated to eight of Switzerland's twenty-six cantons. The Scale of Social Cohesion and Skill (SSCS), which was used for data collection, included the following three factors: (i) social cohesion; (ii) social disharmony; and (iii) limited social cohesion. Data analysis was carried out separately for each factor using graphical analysis and the Mann-Whitney U-Test according to their point average by taking into consideration the factors relevant to the scale. It was concluded that the social cohesion level of primary school age children living in Switzerland is higher than that of corresponding children living in Turkey. It was also determined that the limited social cohesion and social disharmony points of primary school age children living in Turkey are higher than the points of those living in Switzerland. In view of these findings, suggestions are made to the Turkish Ministry of National Education and universities regarding state policy.*

## Introduction

S ocial life enables people to co-operate with each other and to solve their common problems. By living and interacting with one another, individuals influence the economic, social, cultural and administrative requirements of their societies.

Societies are dynamic structures and change is an important part of this structure (Ömeroglu, Kandır & Ceylan, 2006). An important indicator of social change is immigration. Members of immigrant families cut themselves loose from their existing environment and relations, and lose their previous social roles. They experience reduced feelings of belonging, efficiency and supervision. Experienced together, these disharmonies bring about problems of social cohesion. In particular, all the negativities experienced during the process of harmonisation with the society to which people immigrate affect the development of children and consequently their social cohesion (Türkyılmaz et al., 1998; Kagitçibasi, 2000).

As a result of immigration, children are confronted with a new natural and social environment. The resulting socio-cultural disadvantages that these children experience can permanently scar the development of their personality. Since children are at an age when they cannot protect themselves from negative external effects, they are influenced multi-dimensionally by immigration (Gökçe, 1996).

The feelings of lack of confidence, anxiety and helplessness that children experience are believed to play an important role in their social cohesion. Immigration can thus be seen as a situation that adds new problems to their existing ones. There is however limited research that focuses on this issue both in Turkey and internationally. Most studies focus instead on the cohesion of adults who have migrated from rural to urban areas or the effects of immigration on the physical development of children (Tezcan, 2000).

Putting forth children's social cohesion problems for consideration and focusing on possible solutions are important steps toward the development of healthy personality characters. For this reason, this survey also analysed the social cohesion skills of children at primary school age from Turkish families who immigrated to Switzerland from Turkey.

## Method

The survey uses a screening model since the aim was to analyse the social cohesion skills of primary school children from families who came to Turkey and Switzerland by way of immigration.

### Population and sample

The population of the survey comprised primary school children living in Turkey and Switzerland. It was decided that it would be appropriate to study a representative sample rather than the whole population due to time, accessibility

and control reasons. The resulting sample consisted of 351 children of Turkish origin. One hundred and sixty-seven of these children had immigrated to Turkey from the Balkans. They belonged to the Turkish minority living in that area. At the time of the study, these children were attending primary schools affiliated to the Directorate of National Education of Bursa Province. The remaining 184 children were Turkish immigrants living and studying in Switzerland. Their families had emigrated from Turkey to Switzerland for work purposes. At the time of the study, these children were attending schools affiliated to a number of Swiss cantons, namely, Bern, St Gallen, Basel Land, Basel Stadt, Aargau, Zug, Thurgau and Tessin. Using a sample of 351 individuals was considered appropriate to represent the entire population (with $\alpha = 0.5$ and 5% deviation) (Çingi, 1994).

The study focused on immigrant children of Turkish origin living in Switzerland and Turkey, as these two groups share a common cultural background. In order to be able to observe the effects of immigration, the researchers only admitted in the study those children whose families had been living in the host country for at least 5 to 6 years. All children in the sample were in the 7 to 11 age group. All families were legal residents in Turkey and Switzerland.

*Data collection instruments*

Data was collected using the Scale of Social Cohesion and Skill (SSCS) developed by Ömeroglu and Kandır in 2004 (see Ömeroglu, Kandır & Ceylan, 2006), which had been tested for validity and reliability for use with primary school children. The SSCS has three factors spread over 32 items. Factor 1 comprises 16 items regarding Social Cohesion, factor 2 comprises 11 items regarding Social Disharmony and Factor 3 comprises 5 items regarding Limited Social Cohesion (Ömeroglu, Kandır & Ceylan, 2006). Revolved Basic Component Analysis, which was developed to evaluate the social cohesion and skill behaviours in children, was used in order to analyse the factor structure of the scale of 32 items given to teachers and parents. Before using the Basic Component Analysis, the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis was tested. Firstly, the correlation between each item was found. It was seen that the calculated correlations between item points were generally around .30. Secondly, the analysed Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was calculated to be .82. Finally, it was determined that the results of the Barlett Test ($\chi^2 = 2214$, *df* = 76, *p* < .001) proved meaningful. Based on these findings, it was concluded that the data was appropriate for factor analysis. The reliability of the scale item total point (Cronbach's alpha .90) was found to be fairly high (Ömeroglu, Kandır & Ceylan, 2006).

*Data analysis*

Data analysis was performed by graphical analysis according to the point averages, taking into consideration the factors relevant to the scale. In addition, the data was analysed separately for every sub-factor of the scale using the Mann-Whitney U-Test to determine whether living in Turkey or Switzerland had a measurable effect on the social cohesion and skills of immigrant children.

## Results

The findings of the study regarding the social cohesion and skills of primary school children living in Turkey and Switzerland are summarised in the figures and tables below.

*FIGURE 1: Comparison of the results obtained on the factor of Social Cohesion*
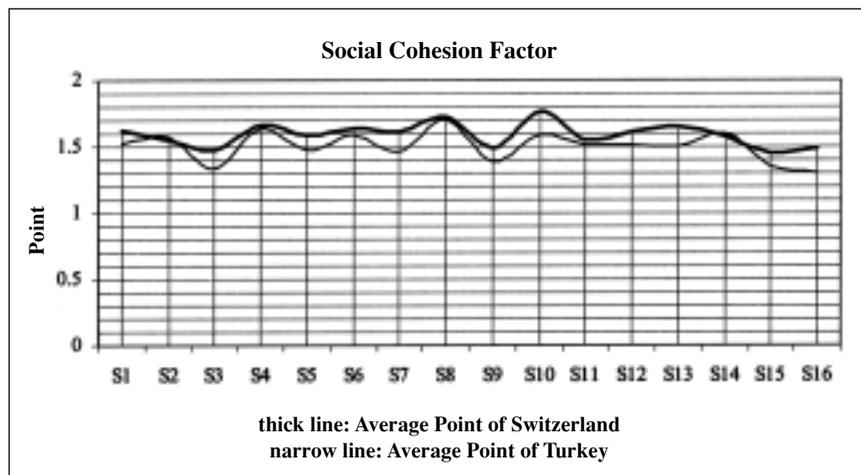


Figure 1 shows that the Social Cohesion level average for immigrant primary school children living in Turkey and Switzerland fluctuates around 1.55. At the same time, the points of the immigrant Turkish children living in Switzerland are higher than those of the immigrant children living in Turkey on all items of the factor of Social Cohesion. It can also be observed that the increases and decreases along the two curves representing the factor of Social Cohesion almost run parallel to each other.

*TABLE 1: Results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test regarding the factor of Social Cohesion*

| Social Cohesion Factor | Country | $N$ | Average | Ranking Point Average | Total Sum of Ranking Points | $z$-value | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Switzerland | 184 | 1.5900 | 187.08 | 34423.00 | -2.152 | 0.031 |
| | Turkey | 167 | 1.5022 | 163.79 | 27353.00 | | |

Table 1, which summarises the Mann-Whitney U-Test results, shows that there is a significant statistical difference on the factor of Social Cohesion in favour of the Turkish students living in Switzerland ($p < 0.05$).

*FIGURE 2: Comparison of the results obtained on the factor of Social Disharmony*
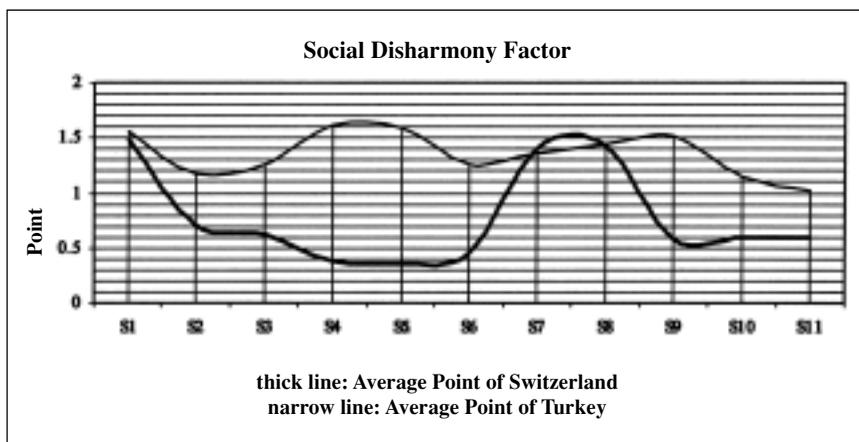


It can be seen from Figure 1 that the average of the factor of Social Disharmony for primary school children living in Turkey and Switzerland is around 1.05. The points of the immigrant children living in Turkey are higher than those of the immigrant children living in Switzerland for all the items of the factor of Social Disharmony. Whereas the results of the children living in Switzerland show an uneven progress, those of the children living in Turkey are more stable. It can be claimed that, generally speaking, the immigrant Turkish children living in Turkey tend to score higher than the immigrant Turkish children living in Switzerland on all the items of the factor of Social Disharmony.

*TABLE 2: Results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test regarding the factor of Social Disharmony*

| **Social Disharmony Factor** | Country | $N$ | Average | Ranking Point Average | Total Sum of Ranking Points | $z$-value | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Switzerland | 184 | 0.7824 | 109.54 | 20155.00 | -12.922 | 0.000 |
| | Turkey | 167 | 1.3615 | 249.23 | 41621.00 | | |

Table 2, which summarises the Mann-Whitney U-Test results, shows that there is a significant statistical difference on the factor of Social Disharmony in favour of the immigrant Turkish students living in Turkey ($p < 0.05$).

*FIGURE 3: Comparison of the results obtained on the factor of Limited Social Cohesion.*
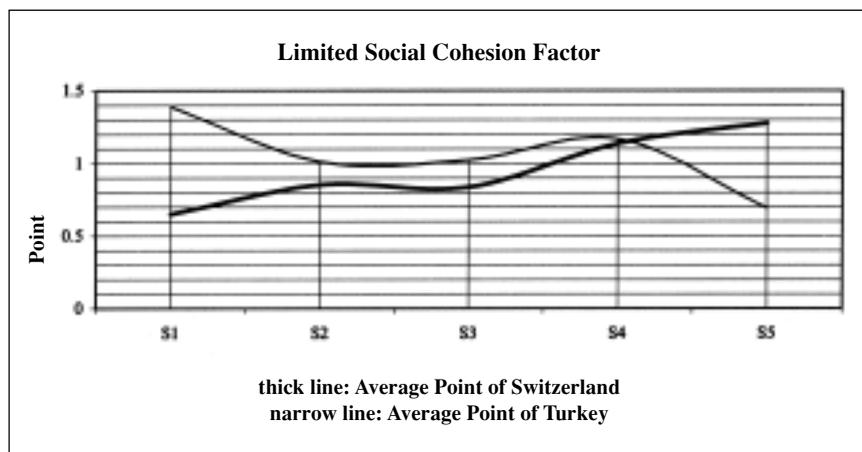


It can be seen from Figure 3 that the average level for Limited Social Cohesion of primary school children living in Turkey and Switzerland is around 1.00. Moreover, the points of the immigrant children living in Turkey are higher than those of the immigrant children living in Switzerland on most of the items of the factor of Limited Social Cohesion.

Table 3, which summarises the Mann-Whitney U-Test results, shows that there is a significant statistical difference on the factor of Limited Social Cohesion in favour of the immigrant Turkish students living in Turkey ($p < 0.05$).

*TABLE 3: Results of the Mann-Whitney U-Test regarding the factor of Limited Social Cohesion*

| Limited Social Cohesion Factor | Country | $N$ | Average | Ranking Point Average | Total Sum of Ranking Points | $z$-value | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Switzerland | 184 | 0.9511 | 163.39 | 30064.00 | -2.493 | 0.013 |
| | Turkey | 167 | 1.0575 | 189.89 | 31712.00 | | |

## Discussion

The aim of the survey was to analyse the social cohesion skills of primary school children who live as immigrants in Turkey or Switzerland.

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the Social Cohesion ranking point average for children of Turkish origin living and studying in Switzerland is higher than the ranking point average for immigrant children of Turkish origin living and studying in Turkey. Although both groups have similar family structures and socio-cultural backgrounds, and have spent almost equal time in their host country, it can be seen that the Social Cohesion level of immigrant Turkish primary school children living in Switzerland is higher than the Social Cohesion level of immigrant Turkish primary school children living in Turkey.

Immigrant children may be adversely affected by the education system in their host country. For instance, the education system in Turkey is not designed to accommodate the needs of immigrant children. Moreover, it is a rather centralised system. As a result, there may be conflicts between the education given at school in the host country and the cultures that immigrant children bring with them from their previous countries. This may lead in turn to conflicts between parents and these children. This can cause negative identity perceptions, development of lack of confidence and social disharmony in immigrant children (Hakan, 2003). This may explain the low Social Cohesion levels of immigrant Turkish primary school children living in Turkey.

An examination of Table 2 shows that the Social Disharmony ranking point average of children of Turkish origin living and studying in Turkey is higher than the ranking point average of children of Turkish origin living and studying in Switzerland. This suggests that the Social Disharmony level of immigrant Turkish primary school children living in Turkey is higher than the Social Disharmony level of immigrant Turkish primary school children living in Switzerland.

Kolaitis et al. (2003) examined in their survey the academic skills and social cohesion of 65 immigrant and 41 native Greek children aged between 8 and 12. The immigrant children had returned to Greece in the 1980s after living in the former Soviet Union. Kolaitis et al. (2003) found that the teachers described immigrant children as more anxious, more careless and socially more disharmonious than the native group. The children's families also confirmed this.

Immigration is one of the factors that affect social cohesion in its own right. However, when the host country presents difficult conditions and lack of facilities, social disharmony levels can be even higher. Since Switzerland is a rich and developed country, it has been home to many immigrants for a long time. The cantons in Switzerland strive to meet the needs of immigrants and value their integration in society. This may explain why children of Turkish origin living in Switzerland have lower Social Disharmony levels than children of Turkish origin living in Turkey. The underlying philosophy of the Swiss approach to immigration is that, apart from presenting problems of disharmony, it also enriches the host country.

Table 3 shows that the Limited Social Cohesion level of immigrant children of Turkish origin living in Turkey is higher than the Limited Social Cohesion level of immigrant children of Turkish origin living in Switzerland.

Hakan (2004) reports a survey by Takac in Switzerland that compared the harmonisation of immigrant children with others. This survey concluded that immigrant children were more anxious, aggressive and dependent than others. The survey also revealed that immigrant children have poor relations with their peers and their self-esteem seems to be lower than that of others. In line with Takac's findings reported by Hakan (2004), Table 3 shows that primary school children returning to Turkey after living in the Balkans display more borderline social behaviours than the immigrant children of Turkish origin living in Switzerland.

## Suggestions

The survey found that the Social Cohesion levels of primary school children living in Switzerland are higher than those of primary school children living in Turkey. It was also determined that the Social Disharmony levels and the Limited Social Cohesion levels of immigrant Turkish children living in Turkey are higher than those of immigrant Turkish children living in Switzerland. Based on these findings, the following are some suggestions that can be made for Switzerland and Turkey:

- Switzerland has a huge number of immigrants and a sound immigration policy. However, the Swiss public may still be better encouraged to appreciate the

cultural enrichment brought by immigrants and to cherish their cultural differences. Activities may be organised to increase harmony between different immigrant groups.

- Research centres may be established in Turkey in order to identify the educational needs of immigrant families and their children. These may initially be established in cities that receive significantly high numbers of immigrants.

- The number of youth centres in Turkey should be increased and social cohesion studies should be undertaken for the benefit of teenagers and their families.

- Social cohesion centres should be established in Turkey to serve not only immigrant children, teenagers and their families, but also every individual in society.

- In-service training should be arranged for teachers to focus especially on the problems concerning social cohesion that immigrant children and families are confronted with in Turkey.

- School administrations should offer parent education and information meetings with the aim of facilitating the social cohesion of immigrant parents in Turkey. Additionally, social activities – such as, picnics, parties and trips – can be arranged in order to enable immigrant families to mix with local families.

- School administrations should arrange in-class activities, introducing the region's cultural features in order to promote respect for cultural diversity in Turkey.

- Teachers can rely on their observations and arrange in-class environments so as to facilitate socialisation between immigrant and local children in Turkey.

- Turkish non-governmental organisations should offer economic support to social cohesion centres by co-operating with state institutions.

- Universities should conduct research to identify the problems that children of immigrant families are confronted with. Social cohesion projects should be planned that offer implementation-oriented solutions in co-operation with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and non-governmental organisations.

**Adalet Kandır** *is assistant professor in the Division of Early Childhood Education within the Department of Child Development Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Gazi University, Turkey. Dr Kandır received her PhD in 1997 (Ankara University, Turkey) and has since published, both locally and internationally, in the fields of child development and education, preschool education programmes, peace education in preschool, and socially disadvantaged children and their education. Her e-mail address is: akandir@gazi.edu.tr.*

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The manuscript can be submitted as an e-mail attachment, to be sent to: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt Alternatively, **three** complete copies of the manuscript can be submitted, typed double-spaced on one side of the paper. A diskette version of the article (preferably formatted on Word for Windows) should be included with the manuscript.

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*Article in Journal:* Surname, Name initials (date of publication) Title of article, *Title of Journal*, Volume(issue), pages.
*Chapter in Book:* Surname initial/s, Name initials (date of publication) Title of chapter. In Name initials and Surname of (editor/s) *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher.

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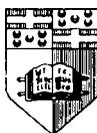
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The **MJES** is a biannual refereed international journal with a regional focus. It features educational research carried out in Mediterranean countries, as well as educational studies related to the diaspora of Mediterranean people world-wide. The journal offers a forum for theoretical debate, historical and comparative studies, research and project reports, thus facilitating dialogue in a region which has strong and varied educational traditions. There is a strong international dimension to this dialogue, given the profile of the Mediterranean in the configuration of the new world order, and the presence of Mediterranean peoples in Europe, North America and elsewhere. The **MJES** is of interest to scholars, researchers and practitioners in the following fields: comparative education, foundation disciplines in education, education policy analysis, Mediterranean studies, cultural and post-colonial studies, Southern European and area studies, intercultural education, peace education, and migrant studies.

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