The influence of contextual factors on the adoption and development of Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) programmes in the Arab Gulf States

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Objectives:

• To examine the development and adoption of ETD programmes in the Arab Gulf States.
• To examine contextual factors influencing the development and adoption of ETD programs in the Arab Gulf States.
Methodology:

• First phase: qualitative approach:
  
• Interviews cover the key stakeholders, postgraduate students, library managers, system administrators, postgraduate officers and academic staff.

• Forty-five participants from five universities.
Methodology:

• Second phase: quantitative approach:
• Three hundred and nine participants from four universities in the Gulf States completed the online survey.
Findings: (Contextual factors)

- Misunderstanding of plagiarism.
- Strong economy.
- Recency of research programmes.
- Younger society.
Misunderstanding of plagiarism:

• About two thirds of the survey respondents (67.3% n=163 out of 242) and less than half of the interviewees indicated that theses would be more vulnerable to plagiarism when published electronically.
Reasons:

• The appropriate policies to protect theses online had not been implemented.
• People in the Gulf States did not fully understand the concept of plagiarism.
Strong economy:

• About two-thirds of the survey respondents indicated that the financial resources were adequately available at their institutions.
Reasons:

• The Gulf States are categorised as have strong economies compared to other developing countries.
• Have some of the fastest growing economies in the world.
• Recent discoveries of and investments in oil and natural gas.
• Small populations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official language</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official religion</td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area</td>
<td>2,423,300 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>46 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total local outcomes (GDP)</td>
<td>US $1372 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average income per capita per year</td>
<td>US $30 thousand</td>
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Recency of research programmes:

• Academic institutions in the Gulf States were established in the last few decades.
• Colleges and universities started with bachelor programmes and the postgraduate programmes were introduced at a later stage only.
Effects:

• Low quantity of theses.
• Low quality of theses.
• Shortage of appropriate policies.
• Shortage of qualified staff.
Low quantity of theses:

• The number of postgraduate students and theses were as yet not at the extent sufficient to warrant the adoption of an ETD programme.
• Sultan Qaboos University (started postgraduate programs in 1992/93) (35 students)
Low quality of theses:

• Universities: such works might damage the reputation of these institutions.
• Students: other individuals will read and criticise their work.
Shortage of appropriate policies:

• Universities did not have the appropriate policies in place to give the university the right to publish students’ theses.
Shortage of qualified staff:

• Shortage of qualified staff to perform the technological processes.
Younger societies:

- Two third: had the confidence to adopt new technologies from the outset.
- Older academic staff might be reluctant to use new technologies.
- Population statistics in the Gulf States show that the Gulf societies are dominated by younger persons (30%).
Thank you for your attention