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Findings: The findings reveal that Qatar University received the highest relative strength score as compared to Al-Quds University in Palestine and Carthage University in Tunisia.

Applications: This study has several applications to improve the social work education and practice in the three studied universities particularly, and for universities in the Arab world in general. It also sheds light on those 4 components to encourage researchers to study each component of quality levels individually and came with recommendations to improve both social work education and practice.

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I. Introduction

Palestinian society has experienced many foreign systems since the Ottoman governance from the early sixteenth century, through to the British Mandate which granted Jewish settlers 78% of the territory of historic Palestine. This resulted in most Arab Palestinians becoming refugees displaced inside and outside Palestine. The latter changes deprived the Palestinian people of progress and development and produced attendant poverty, unemployment, suffering and low living standards (Ibrahim, 2015). In this context there has been a need to establish social welfare agencies. In 1950, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other associations and agencies were established in order to provide social welfare for Palestinians. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society was founded in 1968.These agencies formed the basis for social welfare and thus the development of social work in Palestine. The first program was established in 1971 which was a two-year program at Hind Al-Husseini College for Girls at AL-Quds University. Bethlehem University started its BA in sociology/ Psychology in 1973/1974, but in 1975 the university added social work as a third stream. The first group graduated from Bethlehem University with BSW in 1978/1979, other Palestinian universities began social work education programs such as Al-Quds Open University in 1990, Ramallah Women's Training Center & Educational Science College –UNRWA in 1992, Al-Azhar University in 1996, Islamic University in 1998 and most recent Ummah University in 2008) (Lindsay, Faraj, & Baidoun, 2007). In more recent years, in 2008, Al-Quds University launched the first Master of Social Work, and then the University of Bethlehem launched the Master of Social Work degree in 2014; both with the aim of developing the profession and enhancing its effectiveness and contribution to the empowerment of members of Palestinian society.

In Tunisia, social work began in 1937 via French Girl Scouts, who worked with the French Marines. In 1945, the assignment of group tasks to women sociologists to work with Frenchwomen residents continued this process, and in the late fifties, a small group of Tunisians received the French award of 'specialist in social work' in France. Subsequently a national school of social work was established in 1964 resulting in the first graduates in 1967. The Tunisian Association of Social Workers was created in 1970 and with the implementation of decision 893 of 2 October 1974, social work was officially recognized as a specialized profession regulated by a professional body of qualified and trained practitioners (Labidi, 2011). In 1988 the National Institute of Labor and Social Studies of the University of Carthage was established, the only academic institution that grants degrees majoring in Social Work in Tunisia (Weslati, 2014).

In regards to Qatar, Qatar University offers the only social work training progamme in the country. The Social Work Program (SWP) at Qatar University is located in the Department of Social Sciences, together with the Sociology and Psychology programs, all within the College of Arts and Sciences. The social work program emphasizes Qatari culture and the needs of Qatari society: The program also claims that the content, objectives, and teaching methods are in line with international standards and norms in the social work field, such as those stipulated by NASW and CSWE in the United States. The social work program in Qatar in its recent revival was modeled along the US social work schools. The Program is making every effort to attain international accreditation and recognition. Thus, presenting that local experience is beneficial to both local and international social work educators (AlKaabi, 2016).

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II. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the level of interaction of the social work profession with community issues in Palestine, Qatar, Tunisia, from the perspective of students, using the following variables: professional practice institutions; societal recognition of the profession; social work graduates; and the interaction of the profession with community issues.

III. Main Study Question

From the perspective of social work students, what is the level of interaction of the social work profession with community issues in Palestine, Qatar, Tunisia?

IV. Methodology

The overall design and approach of this study has been to adopt a qunatitaive survey approach to establishing student perception. The survey was administered to a non-probability sample of social work students (n=113) in three Arab universities in the three countries discussed above, namely. These countries have been chosen because of his interest in doing research beyond national borders in the Arab countries, in the context of growing interest in the social work education in the Arab countries. Also he wanted to gain different perspectives by choosing different Arab countries and see the common and different issues regarding the quality of social work education among these countries with different higher educational systems. There are very few of the scientific research conducted on the obstacles on Social Work Education in some Arab countries. Hence the importance of the return of this study. Also, this helps to reconsider the quality of social work education programs by making adjustments and improvements commensurate with the escalating needs of students in order to empower them commensurate with all the variables.

The survey captured respondent's perceptions about the quality of social work education and practice through responding exploring four domains. The qunatative survey was a 48 itemised tool. A descriptive comparative approach analysis is adopted, which includes describing the nature of the phenomenon, situation, or a group of people, units or conditions (Hamzawy, 1993). Regarding the survey, the authors of this research article designed the survey, drawing from previous research and scholarly discussions relating to social work education and practice in the Arab world. The researchers also drew upon experience and expertise in the field of teaching social work and their direct knowledge of social work programs in Arab universities. e. See Table (2) for list of the 4 domains. Each domain contained 12 items, thus comprising a total of 48 substantive items in the survey. The survey used 3-point Likert scale for triple gradation for replies: 'disagree', 'neutral' and 'agree'. The survey was presented for assessment to a group of experts in the field of social work at universities both in the study countries and elsewhere. Specialists shared thoughts and analyses regarding the reformulation of items, some of which were then revised accordingly; specialists then determined the survey appropriate. Expert review evaluation was conducted to assess for reliability of survey questions and domains, but quantitative tests for internal consistency and reliability were not conducted, thus presenting as limitation to the survey and study. The use of a three-point scale also presents a limitation, in being unable to yield additional levels of information. The survey contained 13 items about respondents' demographic data, thus totaling 61 items in the survey.

V. Sampling and Data Collection

Convenience, non-probability sampling was used for selecting the universities and research participants, due to relative ease of access. Convenience sampling is appropriate for studies that examine hard-to-reach populations, such as the present case although this may present issues of selectivity and thus poses a limitation to this study. Presenting as a challenge for the research was the large geographical area of the Arab region, extending from the Gulf States in the east to Africa and Maghreb in the west. Institutional mechanisms for conducting research in and about social work programs in the Arab world are currently not in place, thus making research challenging. There is currently no official information identifying all education institutions with social work departments or programs in the Arab world.

The principal researcher contacted social work programs in several universities that offer social work programs in their colleges and he invited them to participate in the study. Once a program had agreed to participate, a social work faculty member in participating universities was assigned as volunteer researchers for data collection and management. Volunteer researchers administered the survey and conducted data collection in classroom and forums as appropriate for that particular university setting. Volunteer researchers explained to student respondents the nature of the subject of the study and research objectives and answered questions from respondents, if any. The participanting students were assured that their responses will be used for scientific research purposes without revealing their identities. The volunteer researchers would deal with these data in full confidentiality to achieve the study goals. The students were informed that their participation is fully voluntary and they will not lose any benefits if they decided not to participate or stop participating in any of the data collection stages. Students majoring in social work who

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were in their final year in their social work programs were the target group for inclusion in the sample, they are the best to evaluate their programs and their professors and the quality of their education in general. The students are the target of the quality of education category. They also outcomes of the educational process, and thus are more capable more worthy to judge the effectiveness of social work education, they are more honest in sentencing. The principal researcher then provided volunteer researchers with instructions for input of data into a standard format. The principal researcher then compiled all data from each university and data was transferred to SPSS statistical software for analysis. The tests that were used included: Frequency Distributions, Arithmetic Average, and Relative Strength.

VI. Results and Discussion

The following results are presented according to the sequence of the study questions:

First, 'describe the demographic characteristics of the study sample of students in Arab universities', see table (1) for descriptive data.

Table 1 illustrates that Palestine, represented by Al-Quds University, has the most social work students at 53.10%, while Qatar came second represented by Qatar University at 23.90% with Tunisia, represented by Carthage University, in third place at23%. 77.9% of the study sample were female students, while 22.1% were males. Researchers attribute the reason for the high proportion of females to the desire to make changes in the social system and confront injustice and achieve social justice, notions shared with males however given that the social work profession is viewed as female-dominated and suitable for women by many cultures in the Arab world. I is likely that more women will be encouraged by parents to apply, especially when it is imagined that much of the practice activity will be alongside with women professionals and with women service users.

Students younger than 25 years old were 82.3%, while 15.9% were between 25 and 30. 1.8% was older than 45 years. Researchers attributed the reason for the high percentage of students less than 25 years to the standard age for students to attend universities. Single students were 69%, 27.4% married, 2.7% of students were divorced and 0.9% were widows. Nearly 70% declared that they did not take any training courses in social work.

VII. Results and Analysis of the Study Questions

a) *The first axis: from the perspective of social work students relating to professional practice institutions*

Qatar University's strength here is due to the institution's management specializing in social work, students' visits to the agencies of the field training, the presence of a social worker in social work agencies, good channels of communication between faculty and the field. Carthage University's "weak" was largely due to difficulties in identifying appropriate social work agencies and the work that they do, poor communication between faculty and the field, lack of involvement of social work practitioners in the delivery of the program, e.g. in giving lectures. Al-Quds University has a "weak" and the reason for this is also largely due to difficulties in identifying appropriate social work agencies and the work that they do, poor communication between faculty and the field, lack of involvement of social work practitioners in the delivery of the program, e.g. in giving lectures. There was also an absence of a distinct social work presence in some social work agencies.

The result of this study is consistent with the Naji's study (2000), which showed that the field training agencies were unfit to prepare students for practice, but there was also weak institutional supervision of fieldwork training. It is also consistent with the result of the Osei-Hwedie, et al study (2006) which revealed a lack of communication between educational institutions and the social service agencies that employ social workers and may offer field work opportunities to graduates.

b) *The second axis: from the perspective of social work students relating to societal recognition of the profession*

Researchers attribute Qatar University's "great" as due to the lack of dissemination of public awareness among the citizens of the concept of social work and its role in development, the attention of the community to the establishment of social work educational institutions according to the needs of the community, the availability of strengthening the profession mechanisms and raise its position in the society, and the lack of clarity as regards the social work identity and social work's role and function in wider society.

Al-Quds University has a "weak" largely due to the scarcity of social work specialists in civil agencies, reduced government funding in support of the social work profession, lack of encouragement by the professional organizations, lack of action to assist the community in recognizing the profession, the absence of mechanisms to strengthen the profession and raise its standing in the community and a contraction of the clarity of the social work identity in some areas of professional practice.

Carthage University received a "weak" largely due to the contraction of the clarity of the social work identity, a failure to protect the social work profession from non-qualified entrants, the general lack of encouragement of professional organizations, including social workers, lack of channels for community recognition of the profession, lack of attention to the legitimacy of professional social work.

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These results are consistent with that of the Ibrahim's study (2011) that showed that there is a need to work on improving the image of social workers inside and outside the organization and increase the trust and respect of members of the community in the professional competence of social workers, thus increasing community recognition.

c) *The third axis: from the perspective of social work students relating to social work graduates*

Researchers attribute the reason that Qatar University got "high" here was due to existence of specialists in the social work profession and their commitment to the social worker task, the needs of the labor market being taken into account and related to expectations of graduates, clear identification of social workers' roles in the various areas of professional practice assignments. Also contributing to the high rating were the existence of administrative resources to determine the social work functions of the social service agencies, the disallowing of non-specialist practice in social work and commitment to appoint graduates of Social Work to the profession.

Al-Quds University is "weak" and the reason for this is the lack of application of practice in different cultural contexts, the large number of administrative tasks assigned to the social worker, poor professional performance of the graduates of social work level, the allowing of non-specialists and unqualified people into social work, the increasing number of social work graduates, the lack of delineation of social work roles in various areas of professional practice and the absence of any definition of the social work functions of social service agencies.

Carthage University has a "weak" and the reason for this is the increased number of social work graduates, the large number of administrative tasks assigned to the social worker, inadequate application of practice in different cultural contexts, the absence of any definition of the social work functions of social service agencies, the allowing of non-specialists, unqualified people into social work and the low social status of the social work profession.

This result is consistent with Ewiess's study (2005) which confirmed that the development of social work programs regularly comes without reference to the labor market needs. It also consistent with the result of Hamza's study (2006) that revealed the need for the introduction of the principle of continuing to meet the actual needs of social workers to study in diverse fields so as to improve the professional level of performance in order to ensure the quality of service provided to clients in all areas of practice.

d) *The fourth axis: from the perspective of social work students relating to interaction of the profession with community issues*

Researchers attribute the cause of Qatar University's "high" as due to the responsiveness of social work education to social change programs and the needs of the labor market. Qatar's link between art and theory and how to employ this when engaging with clients was strong. An increase in resourcing the program was also contributory to the "high" as was development of research in the social work being more closely related to societal realities.

Al-Quds University has a "weak" because of the lack of relation to the labor market, declining effectiveness of the program's ability to meet the needs of the community, atrophy in the effectiveness of the social work education program in dealing with the challenges of development, the absence of a citizens 'contribution to social reform programs, and a lack of a link between societal problems and curriculum content.

Carthage University's "weak" was largely due to social instability, a decline in the effectiveness of social work education program in preparing graduates to meet the needs of the community, atrophy of the effectiveness of social work education program in dealing with the challenges of development, lack of citizen input in achieving social reform programs and the lack of any link between art and theory.

The result of this study is consistent with the Mansour's study (1990) that showed that there is a mismatch between local reality and theoretical content and a dependence on imported models. It is also consistent with the result of the Khalil's study (2000) which concluded that improved social work learning content is needed to bring change and development in order to suit the requirements and the future of the practice in the social welfare and development areas, thus bringing about a better alignment between the programs and community/society.

VIII. Implications and Conclusion

a) *This study has many recommendations according to the results and in different components of social work education in these areas:*

The first axis: relating to professional practice institutions: It is highly recommended for training agencies to cultivate dedicated field supervisors, to follow up qualified students and train them to the level of supervisor.

The second axis: relating to societal recognition of the profession: In order to gain more recognition from the community it is important to spread awareness among citizens of the concept of social work and its role in societal welfare and development.

The third axis: relating to social work graduates: This study emphasizes that the practice of the profession

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can only be undertaken by specialists in the field of social work by determining the job description for a social worker to better determine the functions and roles of the social worker in the social work agencies.

The fourth axis: relating to interaction of the profession with community issues: It is recommended to put pressure on the social organizations and encourage including social workers in their positions and to increase government funding to support the social work profession. At the same time social work research should be developed to be more closely related to societal realities and meet their needs.

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Table (1): The distribution of the students in the universities by state, university, gender, age and maritalstatus

Variable	e state	Variable level	Freq.	%
The state and the university	Palestine	Al-QudsUniversity	60	53.10
	Qatar	QatarUniversity	27	23.90
	Tunis	CarthageUniversity -National Institute of Labor and Social Studies	26	23.0
	Total		113	100
Age	less than 25 years		93	82.3
	25 to less than 30 years		18	15.9
	more than 45		2	1.8
	Total		113	100
Gender	Male		25	22.1
	Female		88	77.9
	Total		113	100
Marital status	Single		78	69

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	Married	31	27.4
	Divorced	3	2.7
	Widowed	1	0.9
	Total		**100**
Academic title variable of the social work profession in the universities	Social Work Program	60	53.10
	Department of Social Work	27	23.90
	School of Social Work	26	23
	Total		**100**
Have you received any training courses in Social Work at the University?	Yes		29.2
	No		70.8
	Total		**100**
Take advantage of training sessions	Yes		29.2
	No		70.8
	Total		**100**

Table (2): Outcomes by Domain

Themes	Palestine		Qatar		Tunisia	
	Relative strength	Ranking	Relative strength	Ranking	Relative strength	Ranking
Professional practice institutions	46.38	3	84.36	1	48.92	2
Societal recognition of the profession	47.12	2	86.42	1	44.43	3
Social work graduates	47.17	2	84.35	1	46.47	3
Interaction of the profession with community issues	48.28	2	83.02	1	45.29	3

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