
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH

9239/12

Paper 1 Written Examination

May/June 2019

1 hour 30 minutes

INSERT (RESOURCE BOOKLET)

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Resource Booklet contains Documents 1 and 2 which you should use to answer the questions.

You should spend approximately 10 minutes reading the documents before attempting to answer the questions. This is allowed for within the time set for the examination.



This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

The following documents consider issues related to the impact of the internet. Read them **both** in order to answer **all** the questions on the paper.

Document 1: adapted from *In the Arab World, Social Media Makes a Societal Impact*, an online article written by Jonathan Labin in 2014. It was published by the Huffington Post in partnership with Education For Employment, a non-profit organisation focused on creating job opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The author has degrees in Business Administration and in International Business. He is managing director of Facebook for the MENA region and Pakistan, based in Dubai.

Over 1.3 billion people who are active monthly on Facebook are telling us that when you are connected to the Internet, the opportunities are endless and the impact will be huge. 71 million of them are in the MENA region. The Arab world here can benefit more than Western Europe and the US do from social media's openness and its ability to connect people. In 2014 Deloitte (independent financial consultants) reported that productivity could be increased by as much as 25% in developing countries, by extending their levels of access to the internet. There are several positive and sustainable ways that the internet and social media are already contributing to change in the Arab world.

Social media can help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the MENA region to grow their business. Facebook and other social media help SMEs through high-tech targeting, such as advertisements, to reach the people that really matter. Through their global connectivity, they also enable SMEs to expand regionally and internationally, in a way that used to be only performed by big corporations. A success story is *Just Falafel*, one of the leading enterprises involving traditional Arab food in the MENA region. They used social media to expand internationally and made a profit 18 times greater than their initial financial investment in Facebook.

A United Nations study expects youth unemployment in the Middle East to reach 29% by 2016. One solution is to give young people advanced ICT skills that will allow them to work in the growing mobile "app-economy". Although people in the Arab world are spending more and more time on mobile apps, hardly any apps are currently relevant when it comes to both local languages and content. This gap in the market is a huge employment opportunity for young people in the region. The mobile gaming industry in China and Turkey provides good examples of how a few small business startups can grow into a multi-billion dollar industry by focusing on locally relevant games.

The internet and social media can also play an important role in linking youth to career opportunities across the region and the globe. Traditional ways of finding work left more than one in four Arab young people unemployed. However, many young people are now discovering that social media is the best place to find information and opportunities. In a survey of job seekers in the MENA region conducted by the Dubai School of Government, 71% of those who replied said that they would rely on social media to find their next job. Ahmed Sakr, a former street trader in Egypt, is a good example. He found the Facebook page for a training organization, Education For Employment, which linked him to skills training and a job at one of the leading e-commerce enterprises in the region.

It seems obvious then, that more than ever before, the internet and social media are a positive force in the Middle East. It is therefore up to the MENA region to welcome them and grasp the opportunities they bring.

Document 2: adapted from *The Impact of the Internet on Sociopolitical Changes in the Arab World*, an article written by Oussama Raqui in 2015 in Morocco World News. The author is a teacher and has a degree in Linguistics and Cultural Studies from Chouaib Doukkali University, Morocco.

According to Deborah L Weeler in her book *Empowering Publics*, “Latest estimates suggest that internet use in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is growing at a rate higher than any other place in the world. Between 2000–2005 internet access rates grew at around 411%.” This increased access to the Internet has brought drastic change to Arab societies, including gender relations, family structure, and political activism.

Online activity is changing the way males and females interact. The way of life in many Arab societies differs from the rest of the world. Their cultural norms are shaped by Islamic tradition. Although most MENA countries are conservative, the Internet is introducing more liberal attitudes in gender relations. Yasslem al-saggaf reports on a recent study of the impact of the Internet in Saudi Arabia. He states that new forms of private communication, like email and chat, enable freer communication between males and females in this gender-segregated society. Through social media, members of opposite sexes can share their views and opinions without knowing each other face-to-face.

The excessive use of the Internet may hinder traditional family relationships. According to the Islamic tradition, sons and daughters must support their parents, especially when they grow old. But if the sons and daughters spend too much time socializing on the Internet, their elderly parents will be left out, unable to participate in family life and may feel lonely.

Authors Meena Kumari Rajani and M S Chandio, in *Use of Internet and its effects on our Society*, suggest a solution to empower the elderly and encourage independence: “Through the internet elderly people can get information related to their health and religion, communicate with their friends and do online shopping, without being dependent on their children.” However, the elderly are ignorant about technology and need training. This is particularly difficult because they need foreign languages to operate computers.

Political activism has increased because people are using the Internet to make a change in their societies. As a result, Arab governments are no longer in full control of political changes. Online social networks enable citizens in oppressive countries to discuss political issues more freely through chat rooms and instant messaging. Facebook, Twitter and other social networks played an important role in the uprisings in the Arab World. The only means to communicate and organize was through social networks. Both the Tunisian and Egyptian governments banned access to the Internet during the Arab Spring in 2011. There has also been censorship in Syria, Yemen, and other Arab societies, leading to imprisoning, killing, or exiling those who oppose mainstream politics. As the anthropologist Dale Eickelman says, “Whether Arab societies like it or not ... greater numbers of people, not just a political and economic elite, will now have a say in governance and public issues.”

It is clear that the use of the Internet by such a large number of people has brought both positive and negative effects to the social and political life in the Arab World.

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