

## Assessing the Quality of Academic Marketing Research Submitted For Publication in the Arab Refereed Journals: A Knowledge Theory –Based Approach

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### Abstract

*This study is the second part of a research project which aimed at exploring the current situation of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in Arab Refereed Journals and diagnosing the relevant problems. The focus of the first part was to explore and assess the role of the peer-review as a mechanism of quality control of the academic marketing research and to diagnose any possible relevant problems. The major outcome of that part was a proposed standardized list of evaluative criteria. The second part (the current study) is an extended work, which aims to assess the quality of the Academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed Journals by using the proposed list of evaluative criteria. For the purpose of this study, the list was attached to a 5-points scale and been integrated into a self-instructed questionnaire and sent to all staff members of the Marketing and Business Administration department's at all Arab universities, which are active members of the Association of Arab universities (AARU) through e-mail. A total of three hundred and five (305) of the returned questionnaires have been considered for the purpose of the data analysis. The findings of the study indicated that the quality of academic marketing research was in general acceptable and it was found to be influenced by some reviewer's related factors.*

**Keywords:** Assess, Academic, Research, Marketing, Arab, refereed, Quality.

### 1. Introduction

This study was based on the researcher's five years of real experience as a chief editor of Al-Zatooneh Refereed Journal of Scientific Research and Studies issued by the Deanship of Academic Research at Al-Zatooneh University in Jordan. It was also based on the researcher's membership of the editorial boards of several Arabic and foreign refereed journals. This accumulative experience enabled the researcher to form what can be considered as a real database about the dynamics and mechanisms used by editorial boards while dealing with the publishing of academic marketing research submitted for publication in Arab Refereed Journals. This database was the major trigger for this research initiative.

Within the context of this study, academic research is defined as that a research that is conducted in an academic environment, such as a university and it is presented in writing using a specific format according to a style guide. The purpose of this of research is twofold: to explain the goals, methodology and results, and to analyze and interpret the findings reached through this research. In fact, it involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting marketing information to answer questions or solve a specific problem. As viewed by Derntl (2014), academic research must have certain characteristics and properties and must, as far as possible, be controlled, rigorous, systematic, valid and verifiable, empirical, and often published in academic journals. Moreover, it is only be valid if it undergoes a process of peer-review before it is considered for publication. Hamp-lyons and Poole(2006) stated that academic research must be written in a certain writing style. They defined it in terms of formality which comes from its readers who must be academics. Peer-review is usually accomplished according to a set of evaluation criteria which are contained in the evaluation form attached to the manuscript. The quality of the research paper depends on how much it complies with these evaluative criteria. The research paper is often rejected when the editor does not find any chance for the paper to be published.

In the current study an attempt was devoted to assess the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals base on the accumulative knowledge and experience of a sample of (305 ) reviewers who are staff members of Marketing and Business Administration departments at the Arab universities which have participated in the study.

## ***2. Diagnosing the problem***

Despite the large number of academic marketing research papers submitted to Arab refereed journals, information collected by the researcher of the current study through his structured discussions with a considerable number of editors of these journals indicated that very little of the these papers are valid or suitable for publication. William (2011) pointed out that many academic works which were considered as research are not in the real meaning of the term. The author adds that in many cases, the data are collected without purpose, findings are presented without interpretation and the devoted research efforts are irrelevant to the real life.

Editors of refereed journals always anticipate a standard form of submitted research. Peer-review plays a central controlling role in maintaining and assuring the quality of academic research (Day, 1983). Journal editors largely agree that the peer-review system is essential to academic research quality control in terms of rejecting poor quality work, even if there are examples of important results which were turned down by one journal before being taken to others. However, scholars have varied positions regarding the efficiency of the peer-review. Some of them (Pullinger, 1996) believe that peer-review should continue exerting its vital role, others are skeptical about the ability of the system to do so.

According to the publishing policies and code of ethics adopted by most of the editorial boards of Arab refereed journals peer- review is a top confidential process and the Editorial Board's decisions regarding the suitability of the research paper for publication are final. Moreover, Arab research authors claim that their peer-review is influence by the subjectivity of the reviewers, and that the papers rejection for publication was attributed to this subjectivity and the peer-review system is unable to determine the suitability of their research for publication. Therefore, the reviewers' recommendations regarding the quality of the research authors are doubtful. So, the main reason behind the current study is to clarify this claim by assessing the quality of the academic marketing research which has been submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals through an independent scientific research and far from the peer- review process. .

## ***3. The importance of study***

The importance of this study stems from the fact that it is the first attempt to assess the quality of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals. It is also important because it follows an evaluative approach which is parallel to the peer-review adopted by the Arab refereed journals, but not to replace it, because it is the most justified method, which can be used to review the academic marketing research and determine its suitability for publication. Peer-review will continue to be the appropriate mechanism to assure the quality of the academic research. The study represents an initiative to benefit from basic notions of the knowledge theory such as, memory, remembering and declarative knowledge and how they can support the reviewers' evaluative abilities in assessing the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals. This study is based on the use of scientific marketing knowledge and experiences stored in the reviewers' memories in assessing academic marketing research. It is assumed that the knowledge stored in the reviewers' memories will be transformed into evaluations and judgments through which they can assess the academic marketing research. Finally, the study also explores the impact of several reviewers' related factors on their assessment of the academic research.

## ***4. Objectives of the study***

This study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- 1) Diagnosing the possible problems that are related to the academic marketing research submitted for publications in the Arab refereed Journals.
- 2) Providing the Editorial Boards of the Arab refereed journals with an integrated database, which may help them establishing a consolidated publishing policy regarding the academic marketing research?
- 3) Assessing the quality of academic marketing research submitted to the Arab refereed journals by using the standardized evaluation form, which has been developed in the previous study.

- 4) Examining the effect of some reviewers' related factors on their assessment of the quality of academic marketing research. .

### 5. The Research design

This type of research design basically depends on the use of some of the basic concepts and notions of the knowledge theories such as, the declarative knowledge, memory recall (remembering) of what has been stored in the in the memories to of a sample of reviewers were randomly selected from the staff members of the Marketing and Business Administration Departments at the universities which are active members of the Association of the Arab universities (AARU). The data required for this study were collected by a self-instructed questionnaire attached with an evaluation form consisting of twenty evaluative criteria. This form was developed in a previous study conducted by the researcher as a part of a research project carried out by him. In fact, two principles of the knowledge theory stand behind this research design. It was assumed that the knowledge and experiences stored in the reviewers' memories will be transformed to constitute the basic evaluative frame of reference which influence the reviewers' judgments about the quality of the academic marketing research they have reviewed.

### 6. The Population and sampling procedure

The population of this study was consisted of all staff members of both the Marketing and Business Administration departments at the Arab universities which are active members of the Association of Arab Universities (AARU) which count two hundred and nine (209) universities. A total of (305) staff members from one hundred and twenty three (123) universities located in (15) Arab countries have responded, with (58.9 %) rate of response. Thus the sample size which has been considered for the purpose of this study was (305) staff member (reviewers) and the data required for this study was collected from them. Table (1) shows the population of the study and the framework sampling and procedure:

**Table 1: Sampling framework procedure**

No.	Country	The Number. of universities	The Number. of responding universities	Number of respondents (reviewers & authors)
1	Jordan	22	18	46
2	Arab Emirates	10	7	27
3	Bahrain	3	1	2
4	Tunis	2	2	4
5	Algeria	7	5	6
6	Saudi Arabia	20	15	36
7	Sudan	20	11	10
8	Syria	7	5	13
9	Iraq	25	17	37
10	Oman	1	1	2
11	Palestine	14	8	17
12	Qatar	1	1	2
13	Kuwait	1	1	1
14	Lebanon	16	11	24
15	Egypt	26	19	59
	<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>305</b>

#### 6.1. The major characteristics of the sample

The data displayed in Table (2) summarize the major characteristics of the sample. Specifically, it presents the distribution of the reviewers according to their countries, the number of the research papers they reviewed and the type of that research:

**Table 2: Reviewers' distribution according to their countries, number of the research papers they reviewed and the type of their research**

No.	Country	No. of reviewers	Approximated number of the reviewed Articles	Type of research	
				Conceptual	Empirical
1	Jordan	42	756	47	709
2	U.A.E *	23	345	26	319
3	Bahrain	2	14	5	9
4	Tunis	4	17	5	12
5	Algeria	6	23	9	14
6	K.S.A **	37	299	45	254
7	Sudan	10	419	136	260
8	Syria	13	267	57	248
9	Iraq	25	334	92	242
10	Oman	2	28	7	21
11	Palestine	17	109	27	82
12	Qatar	2	17	3	14
13	Kuwait	1	63	12	51
14	Lebanon	28	494	52	419
15	Egypt	81	911	156	763
	<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>4096</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>3417</b>

\* United Arab Emirates

\*\*Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

The distribution of the respondents (reviewers) according to the number of research papers they reviewed, was also analyzed and the results are shown in table (3):

**Table 3: Reviewers' distribution according to the number of articles they reviewed**

No. of research papers	No. of reviewers	Percent (%)
1-5	53	17.4
6-10	47	15.4
11-15	89	29.2
16- 20	65	21.3
More than 20	51	16.7
Total	305	100

As the data displayed in table (3) shows, almost (73.2 %) of the respondents have reviewed more than (10) research papers, while, only 26 % of them have reviewed (1-10) research papers. The most significant observation is was the highest percentage of those referees who have reviewed more than (20) research papers. This result provides a strong evidence that the sample of the study was highly reliable and more capable to provide high level of accuracy in assessing the quality of the Marketing Academic Research. In addition, the distribution of the reviewers according to the number of the journals with which they are in contact was shown in table (4):

**Table 4: Reviewers' distribution according to the number of journals with which they are in contact**

No. of journals	No. of reviewers	Percentage (%)
1-3	25	8.2
4-6	28	9.2
7-9	36	11.8
10-12	94	30.8
More than 12	122	40
Total	305	100

The data displayed in table (4) indicated that the majority of the staff members (referees) in the Arab universities (70.8%) were accredited by ten journals and more. Where the remained percentage (29.2%) were accredited by (1 –less than 10) journal. This result indicates to the high diversity of the referees' experiential knowledge which they can gained through this diversity.

Also, the reviewers were also analyzed according to their academic ranks, and the results are shown in Table (5):

**Table 5: Reviewers' distribution according to their academic ranks**

Academic Rank	No. of reviewers	Percent %
Assistant professor	83	27.2
Associate professor	158	51.9
Full professor	64	20.9
Total	305	100

the data displayed in table (5) shows, that more than a half of the reviewers were Associate professors (51.9 %), and (20.9%) of them were full professors. The remained percentage of them was assistant professors.

## 7. Data Collection tools

The data required for this study were collected by two different methods: the self-instructed questionnaire which has been developed for this purpose and several structured in-depth interviews with staff members who were randomly selected from the departments of both, the Business Administration and Marketing at all the Arab universities which are active members of the Association of Arab Universities (AARU), and who have been involved in the role of academic research reviewer during the last two years.. Each questionnaire was consisted of two parts. The first was designed to collect basic demographic data about the reviewers. The second part consisted of the standardized list of 20 – evaluative criteria developed in the first part of the research project. The list represents the scale by which the quality of the Arab academic marketing research which was submitted to the Arab Refereed Journals was measured. The list of the evaluative criteria has been developed through the 8-stepwise procedure described in the previous study (Mualla, 2017), and which constitutes the first part of the project. The questionnaire was addressed to all staff members of the two departments at all the Arab universities which participated in the study through the e-mail. After six months a total of Three hundred and twenty five (325) questionnaires from one hundred twenty three (123) universities out of the total of two hundred and nine (209) universities located in (15) Arab countries have responded with a (58.9 %) rate of response. The returned questionnaires then have been revised and edited, and finally a total of three hundred and five (305) valid questionnaires were reached and have been considered for the purpose of data analysis.

### 7.1. The standardized form of evaluative criteria

Another aspect of the current problematic situation of the academic marketing research was the evaluation forms used by the editorial boards of the Arab refereed journals in assessing and evaluating the research submitted to them for publication. It was found from the results of the content analysis of the reviewers' reports that editorial boards of the Arab refereed journals do not use a unified (or standardized) list of evaluative criteria in assessing the quality of the research papers submitted to them for publication. This indeed, is expected to lead the peer-review process to assess the quality of academic marketing research differently. For all these considerations it was necessary to develop what can be considered as a unified and standardized list of evaluative criteria. The following 8 - steps procedure was developed by the researcher in developing that list:

1. Approaching the deanships of scientific research or research centers at all Arab universities which are active members of the Association of the Arab universities (AARU), and requesting them whether they are issuing any refereed journals. Accordingly, forty of these Universities have responded positively. Requesting the editorial boards of the refereed journals at the responding universities to provide the researcher with the evaluation forms they currently use by the editorial boards of in assessing the quality of the research papers submitted to them and determining their suitability for publication. A total of twenty five evaluation forms have been received through the e-mail.
3. Reviewing the received twenty five evaluation forms. It should be noted that these forms were varied regarding the number of evaluative criteria they include. The range was varied from (10) as a minimum, and (30) as a maximum.
4. Forming the reference evaluating panel. This panel was consisted of ten (10) members who were full professors of Marketing at ten (10) Large Arab universities located in ten Arab countries (Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algiers, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Lebanon), and have been acknowledged by the chief editors of the Arab refereed journals as academic authorities in Marketing specialization.
5. Ten copies of the list of the thirty evaluative criteria were sent to the panel members. The task of the panel members was to thoroughly read the evaluative criteria listed in the evaluation forms and assess how much each of the criteria is correlated to the construct of the quality of academic marketing research, and how much it is important in determining the suitability of that research for publication. Additional evaluative criteria to be suggested by the panel members were also requested. The panel members were given one month to accomplish this task and to send their responses.
6. After the panel members' responses were received, they were thoroughly read, analyzed and refined and a final list of twenty criteria was agreed upon by all the panel members as most important in assessing the quality of academic marketing research and its suitability for publication.
7. Validating the list: in order to be considered as a valid and measurement scale of the quality of the academic marketing research tests of reliability and validity were conducted, and the results of these tests were significant and assured the consistency and stability of the ratings generated by the scale on all items (i.e., the evaluative criteria) are likely to be, and it also measures the equivalency of internal consistency within the scale criteria the quality of the academic marketing research was conducting. The results of these tests were significant and assured the consistency of the ratings generated by the scale on all items (i.e., the evaluative criteria).
8. The twenty evaluative criteria then, were reformulated in an expressive statements, and been attached to a five – points likert scale. Where, score (5) refers to a strong agreement with the evaluative criterion, score (4) refers to agreement, score (3) refers to the neutrality of measurement, score (2) refers to the disagreement, and finally, score (1) refers to a strong disagreement with the criterion. Table (6) shows the final standardized form list of the evaluative criteria.

**Table 6: The proposed standardized evaluation form used in the current study**

No	Evaluative criterion	Strongly (1)	Disagree	2	3	4	Strongly Agree (5)
1	The research problem is clearly define						
2	The research topic is logically analyzed						
3	The research design is appropriate and suits the researched topic						
4	The basic concepts and ideas are presented conveniently						
5	The theoretical framework of the research is consolidated						
6	The scales of measurement are valid and reliable						
7	The researchable variables are operationally well defined						
8	The literature review is relevant and comprehensive						
9	The research hypotheses are testable and contextual						
10	The sample is sufficient and representative						
11	The data collection tools suite the nature of the research						
12	The statistical techniques are suitable to the analysis						
13	The method of presentation and discussion of findings is convenient						
14	The research findings are consistent with the research objectives & hypotheses&						
15	The practical implications of the findings are significant						
16	The citation process is appropriate						
17	The references and bibliography are sufficient and up to date						
18	Trustworthiness of author's own position is clear						
19	The style of presenting concepts and theories are suitable and objective						
20	The inferential approach is logically valid						

### **8. Characteristics and criteria of good academic Research**

Academic marketing research refers to the research performance of the staff members at universities and research institutes. In this study the researcher proposes what can be considered as a systematic approach to assess the quality of academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals. In this part of the study an attempt to present the major characteristics and criteria of the good academic research will be made.

#### **8.1. Clear definition of problem**

This element of the scientific research paper is a key of reader by which he/she can know what the research is about. Some researchers think that the length of the paper title is the issue. What is important actually is that title must refer to the scope and the problematic aspect of the research. It should emphasized that the title must simply and precisely summarize the research question which should address the specific problem that the researcher is interesting to search. A more clarified definition of the research problem can provide a rational for the research and justify it (Gill & Johnson, 2010).

#### **8.2. Research is a systematic process**

Saunders et al. (2012) identified the following three characteristics of a good research:

1. Data are collected systematically.
2. Data are interpreted systematically.
3. There is a clear purpose: to find things out.

Accordingly, research can be defined as something that researchers undertake in order to reach results in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge.

#### **8.3. The valid methodology**

Scientific methodology has been viewed as a core of academic research. The term usually refers to the organized way of thinking that includes series of standardized procedures to be followed by researchers in searching problems or phenomena in order to lead them to logical solutions. As stated by Malhotra (2010) those procedures are summarized as follows:

1. Problem definition

2. Formation of testable hypotheses
3. Measurement of the variables.
4. Testing hypotheses.
5. Reporting the findings.
6. Analysis and discussion of the findings.
7. Drawing conclusions.

Ghuri and Gronhaug (2010) assured that systematic research must be based on logical relationship not just what researcher believe. Within this context, scientific research should explain the method(s) used to collect the data, and should discuss how and why the findings reached are meaningful. Kerlinger (2006) pointed out that the definition of the researched problem and the formation of testable hypotheses are important attributes of the academic scientific research. On the other hand, the accuracy of measurement of the variables has also been considered as a major determinant of the validity of the results and in turn, the possibility of generalizing those results. (Thorndike & Hagen, 2005)

#### **8.4. Valid measurement**

Green & Tull (2006) emphasized three major characteristics of the accurate measurement. 1) Mutual exclusivity, 2) inclusivity, and 3) validity. The importance of the scale validity criterion has been confirmed as a necessary condition for good research by Cook & Campbell (2008). The authors added that the scale validity refers to the power of the scale in measuring all aspects of the variability implied in the dependent variables (i.e., Internal validity) has crucial effect on the reliability of the final results. It also refers to the power of the scale in measuring all aspects of the variability implied in the dependent variables. (Campbell & Stanley, 2005).

#### **8.5. Appropriate Sampling**

A great attention has been paid for the sampling procedure applied by the researcher as an important determinant of the research external validity (the generalizability of the findings to the population from which the sample was selected. To that extent that the sample used is convenient and was randomly selected from the research population this will be positively contributes to the research external validity. In contrast, if the sample was improperly selected this indeed, will not just lead to poor inference, but it casts the doubt about the research quality as a whole (Lavrakas, 2007). In addition. Babbie (2004) emphasized the importance of the qualitative representation of the sample because it determines the external validity of the results (i.e., the generalizability of the results). Sudman & Blair (2008) and Burns & Bush (2010) indicated that the fitness of statistical techniques which used in testing the hypotheses of the study should be assured if the inferential process is to be reliable.

#### **8.6. Good writing style**

Good academic writing is also viewed as a main feature of the good research especially when the research paper is written in English language. Many Arab researchers – because they are non-native speakers of English - are still confused about how to write good academic papers of various different kinds in English. The main characteristics of “good academic writing” have been the focus of much debate in the general field of writing skills. Academic writing can be defined as the way that we express our ideas, knowledge and information clearly in terms of discussing an academic problem. It must address a topic or title clearly. It has some characteristics that must be addressed in the text such as accuracy, organization, argument, coherence, cohesion and referencing (Anderson and Poole, 2001).

#### **8.7. Organization**

Organization in academic writing, refers to the clear introduction, body and conclusion. This means the progression of ideas and paragraphing. Greetham (2001) pointed out that introduction, paragraphs and conclusion must be clear and coherent. He adds that the introduction is a key part in which the researcher must interpret the title or question and tell the readers the map that they are going to follow through the piece of writing The author (2001) added “The opinions expressed in the conclusion must reflect the strength and balance of the arguments that Organization in academic writing, refers to the clear introduction, body of the essay.



### **8.8. Relevance to title**

In academic writing, the text must be directly relevant to the title. The task must be approached in a direct and efficient manner way. The development of the argument must be relevant, accurate and appropriate. Davis (2008) indicated that good academic writing must address the topic clearly.

### **8.9. Accuracy**

One major factor which can effectively contribute to the quality of the academic marketing research is the accuracy. It is essential because it determines to a large extent the generalizability of the findings which can be reached through the research. Indeed, this can be ensured by maintaining the correct citation, logical inference and drawing conclusions and all aspect of the research. Once all these aspects have been precisely applied can be designed and conducted properly (Malhotra, 2010).

### **8.10. Proper statistical techniques**

One major features of the valid research is using the proper statistical analysis. This of course depends on type of collected data and the assumptions implied in the research hypotheses. Specifically, this part involves what the researcher wish to test (relationship between variables, Differences, trends, etc.). Statistical significance is the central issue in the data analysis. Statistical significance can be carried out by two main tests: non-parametric and parametric tests. Determining the proper tests is always the responsibility of the researcher.

### **8.11. Coherence and cohesion**

In his creative work, Carter (1999) states that “A text is perceived as coherent when it makes consistent sense, with or without the help of device of cohesion.” In an academic context, researchers should have a good use of linking words to join the ideas within and between sentences, paragraphs, and an excellent usage of ‘signposting words. Coherence, as it was defined by Carter (1999) as “the demonstrable pattern of the text’s integrity.” In other words, cohesion means that the text must be appropriately structured and interlinked by suitable signposts and linking words, and coherence implies that it must make sense.

### **8.12. Citation**

In an academic context researchers have to cite all source texts and of direct and indirect quotations too. They also have to provide adequate references and/or bibliographies. Jordan (2009) emphasized the o importance of citation as a feature of a good academic writing. Actually, there are many referencing conventions in existence. The most common is the referencing conventions in existence. The most common is the system. Although there are many others, the most important thing is to maintain the same system through an individual work i.e., one must not change from one system to another in the same text.

## **9. Theoretical background & previous research**

The purpose of this study is to assess the quality of the academic marketing research submitted to the Arab refereed journals. To achieve this purpose, the required data were collected from the sample of the staff members of the departments of Business Administration and marketing at the Arab universities who were previously involved in the role of reviewing any marketing research papers. Those reviewers were asked to assess the quality of academic marketing research based on their previous cumulative experience and knowledge in reviewing any marketing research papers that have been channeled to them to be reviewed in the last two years. The task that the reviewers were requested to accomplish is to use the knowledge stored in their memory in the assessment. The basic assumption here, is that people tend to use their previous experience and knowledge in handling anticipated related subject matters in the future. Within this context, several theoretical frames: Bartlett theory and its related research, recall and the concepts of declarative procedural knowledge are to be discussed.

### **9.1. Bartlett Theory of memory**

Bartlett (1932) pointed out that information acquired by individuals in any learning setting is stored into their memory system and organized within the framework of their experience and knowledge. In fact, the basic notions of Bartlett theory were stemmed from his method of repeated reproduction which he used in his experimental work, where he asked the individuals who have been subjected to the experimental conditions to study a “complex prose passage or a drawing“, then they were latter asked to reproduce, at different periods of time, the material they had read or observed. The findings of Bartlett experimental study indicated that “only isolated details were correctly recalled from the test stimulus” used in the study.

Moreover, Bartlett speculated that these details can be recalled if they could be integrated in a preexisting schema. Bartlett (1932) called that kind of mental process “constructive remembering”, and differentiated it from the recollection process. In constructive remembering the description which the individuals from around the details is incorporated into a schema and therefore are recalled. In his early research. The author emphasized the role of memory in imagination and future thinking.

In the current study, the researcher discusses a number of key research points that have emerged during recent years, focusing in particular on the analyses of memory and imagination in a way that may broaden the concept of memory by highlighting the ways in which memory supports adaptive functioning.

During the past century, memory research has focused on a variety of key topics that can constitute the conceptual core of the field of the educational psychology. Several research papers (Addis et al., 2007; Szpunar et al., 2007) attempted to investigate the role of memory in imagination and future thinking. Two of these papers combined “functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) with novel behavioral methods to reveal striking overlap in the brain activity associated with remembering actual past experiences and imagining or simulating possible future experiences”

Indeed, these empirical studies emphasized the causal links among remembering the past, imagining the future, and engaging in related forms of mental simulation (Bar, 2007; Buckner and Carroll, 2007; Gilbert and Wilson, 2007). Moreover, in a comprehensive study, Okuda et al. (2003) asked participants to think about past and future events, and observed considerable overlap in the activated brain regions. Also, social psychologists had published studies concerning the role of mental simulations in predicting future experiences and the role of memory in guiding such simulations (e.g., Morewedge et al., 2005)

Kanfer et al. (1987) examined the role of “Opportunity for influential opinion expression” and “knowledge of evaluation criteria” on fairness attitudes and work performance. Undergraduates worked under a task evaluation procedure that either did or did not allow them to express their opinions to the evaluator. In addition, the students either were or were not provided with specific information about the criteria to be used in making the performance evaluation, and they received either a favorable or an unfavorable outcome. The findings of the study indicated that both knowledge of evaluation criteria and perceptions of evaluation fairness correlated with subsequent task performance. The implications of these findings can be generalized to understanding the influence of procedural knowledge on the research reviewers’ attitudinal evaluations of the quality of academic marketing research.

## **9.2. Declarative & Procedural Knowledge**

As defined by Akin (1986), Declarative knowledge is the factual information stored in memory and it is also called descriptive knowledge. It is the part of knowledge which describes what things, events and processes are. Their attributes, and the relations between them define the domain of that kind of knowledge. On the other hand, Procedural knowledge is the knowledge of how to perform, or how to operate. It also described as the know-how. It is said that one becomes more skilled in problem solving when he relies more on procedural knowledge than declarative knowledge. In a survey conducted by Uluoğlu (2006) the findings indicated that design knowledge is conveyed to the student in units, and the names and attributes employed in building those units, were pertinent to the object and the subject. This conveyed knowledge can be classified as a declarative knowledge. However, when procedural knowledge is in use, the structure becomes directional and has behavioral effects which lead to actions in differing degrees.

## **9.3. Remembering**

Remembering have been thought of as the individual’s ability to recall certain items and events and this is what referred to as explicit memory. As described by Monroe and Lee (1999), it involves “the conscious recollection of an exposure event.” In contrast to this, is the implicit memory which is characterized by the unconscious retrieval of previously encountered stimuli? The authors added that it is a set of “beliefs about an item without conscious awareness of when and how they were acquired.” Recent research (Addis et al., 2007; Szpunar et al., (2007) emphasized the role of memory in imagination and future thinking. The findings of this research provided strong evidence that there are strong similarities between remembering the past and imagining or stimulating the future. Although research concerning the role of memory in imagination and future thinking seemed to burst on the scientific scene in 2007, a variety of earlier articles had in fact already laid some of the conceptual and empirical foundations for this work (Addis et al., 2007).

It is assumed that a critical function of a constructive memory system is to make information available in a flexible manner for simulation of future events. Specifically, this assumption implies that past and future events draw on similar information and rely on similar underlying processes, and that the episodic memory system supports the construction of future events by extracting and recombining stored information into a simulation of a novel event (Szpunar et al., 2007).

Building on the conclusions drawn from the previous literature review, the researcher will use these basic notions to theoretically augment the research method used by the respondents (reviewers) in assessing the quality of academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals. It was assumed that reviewers are to remember (recall) the stored knowledge and past evaluative experience they previously acquired from their continuous involvement in assessing, evaluating and revising the research. This stored knowledge is expected to augment their cognitive base which enhances the process of transforming this declarative knowledge into a procedural knowledge (ex., the methodological judgment of research, remembering and retrieval). This transformation will in turn feed the judgment maturation process, and reinforce the methodological rationality of the reviewer's frame of reference which is used in the assessment of latter research.

### **10. The Hypotheses of study**

For the purpose of this study the following hypotheses were tested:

**Ho1:** The research authors have the impression that peer-review through which their research papers were reviewed was based on the reviewers' subjective judgments.

**Ho2:** Reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals is negative.

**Ho3:** There are no significance differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to their academic ranks.

**Ho4:** There are no significance differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to the number of journals with which they are in contact as reviewers.

**Ho5:** There are no significance differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to their past academic experience.

**Ho6:** There are no significance differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to the number of research papers they previously have reviewed.

**Ho7:** There are no significance differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to the countries of graduation.

### **11. Testing hypotheses and discussing the results**

**Ho1:** The research authors have the impression that peer-review through which their research papers were reviewed was based on the reviewers' subjective judgments.

In order to verify the research authors' impressions about the reviewers' way in assessing their research papers and which have been revealed from the acquired data collected from the e-mail discussions carried out with a considerable number of those authors who randomly were selected from several Arab universities, the researcher has analyzed the content of ten of the reviewers' reports about a sample of five research papers which have requested from a number of editorial boards. The content analysis of these reports provided evidence that the research authors' impressions were really existed. It has been found that the same evaluative criteria upon which the research papers were assessed have been viewed differently by the two reviewers who have reviewed these papers. The same criterion was found to require minor modifications by one reviewer, but it required major modifications by the other reviewer. Table (7) shows the results of the content analysis:

**Table 7: The variance in the reviewer's assessments regarding the same evaluative criterion**

Criterion	1 <sup>st</sup> paper		2 <sup>nd</sup> paper		3 <sup>rd</sup> paper		4 <sup>th</sup> paper		5 <sup>th</sup> paper		Total	
	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2	MI	MA
1	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	MA	MI	MI	MA	MI	6	4
2	MI	MI	MI	MA	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	MA	6	4
3	MA	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	MA	MA	MA	MI	4	6
4	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	MA	MI	MI	MI	MI	7	3
5	MI	MA	MI	MI	MA	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	8	2
6	MA	MI	MA	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	9	1
7	MI	MI	MI	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MI	MI	5	5
8	MI	MA	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	MA	MA	MA	4	6
9	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MA	MI	MI	9	1
10	MA	MI	MA	MA	MA	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	4	6
11	MA	MA	MI	MA	MI	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	5	5
12	MI	MA	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	9	1
13	MI	MI	MA	MI	MA	MA	MI	MA	MI	MA	5	5
14	MA	MA	MI	MA	MA	MA	MA	MI	MA	MA	2	8
15	MA	MI	MI	MA	MA	MA	MI	MI	MI	MI	6	4
16	MI	MA	MA	MA	MI	MA	MI	MA	MI	MI	5	5
17	MI	MA	MA	MA	MI	MI	MI	MA	MI	MI	6	4
18	MA	MA	MI	MA	MI	MA	MI	MI	MI	MA	5	5
19	MI	MI	MI	MA	MI	MA	MI	MA	MI	MA	6	4
20	MA	MI	MA	MI	MI	MI	MA	MI	MA	MI	6	4
<b>Total</b>	MI	MA	MA	MI	MI	MI	MA	MI	MA	MI	6	4

Keys: MI = Minor changes      MA = Major changes

R1 = First Reviewer      R2 = second reviewer

**Ho2:** Reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals is negative.

**Table 8: The results of one-Sample test of the quality of academic marketing research**

This hypothesis was tested by two statistical measures: 1) the arithmetic mean, and 2) one sample t-test. The first test was conducted by computing the mean scores of the (305) referees' responses on the (20) evaluative criteria which represent the construct of quality of academic marketing research. The grand mean computed from all these was

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Mean</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>3.7180</b>	<b>.18151</b>	<b>.01039</b>

(3.72). When this mean compared with the five –points Likert scale, it was greater than the midpoint of the scale (3) which represents the neutrality level of the measurement, and less than the agreement level (4 and 5). This indicates the positive direction of the measurement. Because this result doesn't provide any significant statistical evidence about the quality, one sample t-test was conducted and the results of this test are shown in tables (8), (9):

**Table 9: Grand mean of the reviewers' scores ratings of the quality of academic research**

	Test Value = 3					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
<b>Mean</b>	<b>69.086</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.71803</b>	<b>.6976</b>	<b>.7385</b>

The data displayed in table (9) indicated that the grand mean score of the reviewers' ratings on the quality of the academic marketing research (3.72) is statistically significant, and therefore, the first null hypothesis that the quality is negative was rejected. which provide a sufficient indicator that the reviewers' assessment of quality was positive. For the purpose of improving that quality of academic marketing research, the researcher has developed a rational by which the level of quality has been classified to four levels as follows:

1. If the mean score is 4 or more, the quality then is considered as high.
2. If the mean score is 3, 5 – less than 4, the quality is considered as acceptable.

3. If the mean score is greater than 3 but less than 3.5, then the quality is weak and - in turn – needs to be improved.
4. If the mean score is 3 or less, the quality then needs to be improved.

According to this rational the quality of the academic marketing research on the twenty evaluative criteria were grouped as they are shown in tables (10, 11,12, and 13):

**Table 10: The evaluative criteria with a high quality**

No	The evaluative criterion	Mean
1.	The research problem is clearly defined	4.48
2.	The research topic is logically analyzed	4.27
3.	The sample is sufficient and representative	4.15
4.	The theoretical framework of the research is consolidated	4.14
5.	The research findings are consistent with the research objectives and hypotheses	4.01

**Table 11: The evaluative criteria with an acceptable quality**

No	The evaluative criterion	Mean
1.	The research hypotheses are testable and contextual.	3.95
2.	The method of presentation and discussion of findings is Convenient.	3.91
3.	The data collection tools suit the nature of the research	3.91
4.	The basic cOncepts and ideas are presented conveniently	3.89
5.	The research trustworthiness author’s own position is clear	3.61
6.	The scales measurement are valid and reliable	3.61
7.	The research design is appropriate and suits the researched topic	3.58
8.	The citation process is appropriate	3.51
9.	The inferential approach is logically valid	3.51

**Table 12: The evaluative criteria with a weak quality**

No	The evaluative criterion	Mean
1.	The references and bibliography are sufficient & up to date.	3.44
2.	The researched variables are operationally well defined.	3.41
3.	The style of presenting the e concepts & theories are suitable.	3.39
4.	The practical implications of the findings are significant.	3.36
5.	The literature review is relevant & comprehensive.	3.32

**Table 13: The evaluative criteria with low quality**

No	The evaluative criterion	Mean
1.	The statistical techniques are suitable for the analysis	2.94

**Ho3:** There are no significant differences between the reviewers’ assessment of the academic marketing research according to their academic ranks.

This hypothesis was tested by using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this test are shown in table (14):

**Table 14: The effect of the reviewers’ academic ranks on their assessment of the quality of academic marketing research**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>2.110</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.055</b>	<b>40.013</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>7.961</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>.026</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.070</b>	<b>304</b>			

The results displayed in table (14) show that the calculated F-value is (40.013) at (0, 99) level of significance and (2,304) degrees of freedom. This value is greater than the critical F-value which was (3) at the same level of significance and degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and accordingly it could be concluded that the reviewers’ academic ranks has a significant effect on their assessments of the quality of academic marketing research.

Thus, the reviewer f academic rank is regarded as an important factor to be considered in choosing the reviewer to assess the quality of academic marketing research submitted to Arab refereed journals for publication. Thus, the reviewer' academic rank was regarded as an important factor in choosing the reviewer to assess the quality of academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals for publication.

**Ho4:** There are no significant differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to the number of journals with which they are in contact as reviewers.

This hypothesis was tested by using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this test are shown in table (15):

**Table 15: The effect of the number of journals with which reviewers were in contact on their assessment of the quality of academic marketing research**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>2.161</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>.540</b>	<b>20.493</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>7.909</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>.026</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.070</b>	<b>304</b>			

The results displayed in table (15) show that the calculated F-value is (**20.493**) at (0, 99) level of significance and (4,300) degrees of freedom. This value is greater than the critical F-value which was (3) at the same level of significance and degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and accordingly it could be concluded that reviewers has a significant effect on their assessment of the quality of the academic marketing research. Thus, the number of journals with reviewers is regarded as an important factor to be considered in choosing the referee to assess the quality of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals.

**Ho5:** There are no significant differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to their past academic experience.

This hypothesis was tested by using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this test are shown in table (16):

**Table 16: The effect of the reviewers' academic experience on their assessment of the quality of academic marketing research**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>1.070</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>.267</b>	<b>8.915</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>9.000</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>.030</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.070</b>	<b>304</b>			

The results displayed in table (16) show that the calculated F-value is

(**8.915**) at (0, 99) level of significance and (4,300) degrees of freedom. This value is greater than the critical F-value which was (3) at the same level of significance and degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and accordingly it could be concluded that reviewers 'academic experiences have a significant effect on their assessment of the quality of academic marketing research. Thus, the academic experience is regarded as an important factor to be considered in choosing the reviewer to assess the quality of academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals.

**Ho6:** There are no significant differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to the number of research papers they have reviewed.

This hypothesis was tested by using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this test are shown in table (17):

**Table 17: The effect of the number of research papers that reviewers have reviewed on their assessments of the quality of academic marketing research**

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	<b>1.306</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>.326</b>	<b>11.176</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Within Groups</b>	<b>8.764</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>.029</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.070</b>	<b>304</b>			

The results displayed in table (17) show that the calculated F-value is (**11.176**) at (0, 99) level of significance and (4,300) degrees of freedom. This value is greater than the critical F-value which was (3) at the same level of significance and degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and accordingly it could be concluded that the number reviewers has a significant effect on their assessment of the quality of academic marketing research. Thus, the number referees is regarded as an important factor to be considered in choosing the reviewer to assess and evaluate the quality of academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals.

**Ho7:** There are no significant differences between the reviewers' assessment of the academic marketing research according to the countries of graduation i

This hypothesis was tested by using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this test are shown in table (18):

**Table 18: The effect of the reviewers' countries of graduation on their assessments of the quality of academic marketing research**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.514	5	.103	3.215	.008
Within Groups	9.557	299	.032		
Total	10.070	304			

The results displayed in table (18) show that the calculated F-value is (**3.215**) at (0, 99) level of significance and (5, 299) degrees of freedom. This value is greater than the critical F-value which was (3) at the same level of significance and degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and accordingly it could be concluded that the reviewers' countries has a significant effect on their assessments of the quality of academic marketing research. Thus, the viewers' countries is regarded as an important factor to be considered in choosing the reviewer to assess and evaluate the quality of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals.

## 12. Conclusion and recommendations.

This study is considered as the first serious attempt to assess the quality of academic marketing submitted for publication in the Arab Refereed Journals in an explicit way. The findings of the study indicated that the quality of that research was in general positive, despite that there were some research drawbacks which are to be considered by the Arab marketing researchers to improve the quality of their future research and enhance its suitability for publication. With respect to authors' impression regarding the reviewers' subjectivity in assessing the research papers. The findings of the study also confirmed the assumption that the reviewers' assessment of the quality of academic marketing research is influenced by a set of factors such as their academic rank, the number of article they have reviewed, and the countries from which they graduated. Indeed, these factors constitute the reviewers' cumulative knowledge and experience. Such these factors should be considered by the editorial boards of the Arab refereed journals when they select the reviewer for the purpose of assessing the submitted research for publication. Within the context of this conclusion the following two recommendations:

- 1) Arab universities must organize workshops which aim at qualifying their staff members especially those who are early –stage researchers with what can be considered as structural framework which serve as a guideline for scientific research submitted for publication. Those researchers are mostly Ph.D. holders whose the policies of their universities require them to have certain valid academic published record. In most cases, the following-up of their job contracts or augmenting the opportunities of their academic promotion depends on the publication record.

With all appreciation of these reasons, they should also acknowledge that writing a scientific research paper to satisfy the requirements of a certain academic course or to get a scientific thesis, is not just as writing for publication. Thus, the workshops or training programs must focus on those skills which are required for publication .and which augment the suitability of the research for publication. Such these skills can also be acquired by practice and experience, Davis (1997) emphasized this fact by stating “writing in a scientific style may be hard in the beginning for novices, but clear communication and concise writing for a scientific audience can be trained.”

Many research papers have been rejected not because their methodological reasons, but because some common drawbacks such as, not complying with the journal's editorial instructions regarding the format and layout, line spacing, the maximum paper length, or the topic is not being within the scope of the journal's subject area. If these basic aspects are not met the research paper is immediately rejected regardless of its scientific contribution and quality.

- 2) The findings of study revealed several drawbacks of the academic marketing research submitted for publication in the Arab refereed journals. Those should be merged in the contents of the training programs aiming at improving the quality of that research.
- 3) Editorial boards of Arab refereed journals are recommended to consider the proposed standardized evaluation form for the purpose of assessing the research papers submitted to them for publication because it may help reviewers to reach what can be considered as a standardized measurement of quality of academic research in the field of marketing in specific and other fields in general. This is also expected to lead to a fair and more objective judgment about the research
- 4) More research is recommended to be conducted in other areas of specializations in order to support the findings of this study and enhance their generalizability.

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