Investigating the Possibility of Implementing an Online Marriage Halls Booking System in Saudi Arabia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Software Engineering

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April 2017
Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *Investigating the Possibility of Implement an Online Marriage Halls Booking System in Saudi Arabia* is entirely my own work, and it has never been submitted nor is it currently being submitted for any other degree.

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Abstract:

Keeping in consideration the growing demand of marriage halls in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the problems people, particularly women, face in booking a marriage hall after visiting each in person, the study was aimed to investigate the possibility of providing an online platform for marriage halls. The idea was to propose an E-commerce website for wedding hall companies that would enable Saudi citizens to compare the services and prices of different venues and then, make bookings at the comfort of their homes.

The review of literature revealed absence of any research on online presence of marriage halls in KSA, strengthening the need for conducting a research on this topic. Using quantitative research technique with interpretative philosophy, the study was conducted through cross-sectional survey of 40 Saudi citizens with at least one experience of online purchases.

The selected 40 respondents had basic knowledge of computer, were using Internet daily, and were familiar with online shopping system. Survey revealed some important areas in the IT sector of Saudi Arabia that needs improvement like laws regarding data security and privacy, and people’s trust over web sources for their personal information. Respondent agree that booking a marriage hall in KSA is an issue and supported the idea of developing online services for marriage hall booking. They also provided some important information about the payment features, customer support, return policy etc.

Based on research findings, it was concluded that the proposal of an E-commerce platform for booking marriage halls in KSA can be a success story, provided the web developer take care of customer preferences as well as cultural and religious constraints.
Acknowledgements

All praise is to Allah alone, who created me and gave me the ability to learn, resilience to keep working on this research, and the firm belief in me to finish it with success. I owe every achievement in my life to my God – the Allah Almighty – without whose will I could not have been able to write a single word in this dissertation. It is His teachings that have made it obligatory upon me to thank everyone in my life who contributed to this dissertation.

My deepest gratitude and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Imtiaz Khan who was a perfect mentor. He looked through all the drafts I sent to him with care and took time in making improvements in them. He, along with other faculty members in the departments, supported me throughout the research and writing process and encouraged me to complete it on time.

After my teacher, the main source of support and encouragement were my parents, Mohammed Alghamdi and Jawharah Alahmar. I can never thank you enough for the sacrifices you made in your life just to make me successful in every realm of life.

I also want to thank my friends, particularly Monir Shembesh and Ahmad Alamri, with whom I spent hours discussing my topic. I am really thankful for the critical comments you made to improve my work and your praise to keep me motivated.

Lastly, I must thank the king and the government of Saudi Arabia, who provided scholarship to support my study and my primary data collection expenses. Without the scholarship, I will not be able to conduct research on such an untouched topic.

Thank you all.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The E-commerce business in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) touched the mark of sales of 13 billion USD in the year 2015, an average of 43% increase from the previous year (2014). E-commerce has now became quite common in KSA with one out of every five Saudi citizens using the internet to make purchases. However, majority of the population of KSA still believes in physically purchasing the items from stores, as they do not trust the online sources (Makki and Chang, 2014). On the other hand, government also plays an important role in facilitating the e-commerce business in any country, with the help of proper regulations targeted on the utilization of technology and other intervention, which may also hinder the activities of e-commerce businesses at times. This can however be taken care of by a shared understanding of e-commerce businesses with the government.

As Saudi Arabia is a land of religious and cultural dominance, doing business in Saudi Arabia means the company needs to consider all the cultural and religious aspects, whether it is a physically operating store or an online business. E-commerce is a powerful tool for the companies of today, especially in countries with a huge population and a large target market to cover. A huge target population like this can be served easily with the help of providing online services, such as free cash on delivery, online hotel reservations, online airline ticket booking services, online wedding hall bookings and many more services (Makki and Chang, 2014). According to a survey conducted on the average number of website hits per month, it was found that there is an estimated websites hits of 70 million by the Saudi internet users. Therefore, it can be concluded that e-commerce business are growing rapidly within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Alotaibi and Bach, 2014). Keeping this in mind, this research focuses on the e-commerce solutions exclusively targeting the business of online marriage hall bookings in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
It may sound simple, but doing business online is rather quite complex. These web-based businesses have to face natural troubles in terms of rapid growth due to several laws and regulation implemented on the use of technology in many countries. The online consumers in KSA, as mentioned earlier, keep on favouring the method of payment of cash on delivery, still a very commonly used practice and most preferable.

KSA’s web based business sites would need to develop in new payment strategies by asking for the support of PayPal services and MasterCard payment methods with a specific end goal to altogether build up the market potential of web based businesses in Saudi Arabia (Makki and Chang, 2014). In order to address this issue at present, the companies are building payment gateways such as visa cards and master cards, both debit and credit cards. Half of all the internet users of KSA announced that they bought services and products by using mobile applications and e-commerce websites. The government of KSA has as of now passed various laws and rules for monitoring and controlling the transactions made online, that is implementing laws for preventing cybercrime and e-transaction scams (Makki and Chang, 2014).

With KSA being the second biggest market for email spamming, enhanced digital security would be able to enhance the lost trust of the customers with respect to the online transactions and payment methods. These issues are also the reason for people not opting for online purchasing options because of the fear of being robbed, or not trusting the party on the other side of the computer.

All these aspects are to be considered, both negative and positive, as they are important when looking into an online business and how to grow it rapidly. It is also important to consider the ways by which marriage hall booking services could be improved and enhanced for the online consumers of Saudi Arabia.
1.2 Problem Statement

At present, the problem lies in the fact that many marriage hall booking companies do not have online presence and therefore must consider establishing one (Al-Somali, Gholami, and Clegg, 2015). As Saudi Arab has a very conservative culture, many families with female heading the house, after death of her husband or being divorced, find difficulty in going out and looking for marriage halls for their children’s weddings. Therefore, it is important that a platform should be provided for consumers like these so that they can easily search for various marriage halls from the convenience of their homes. Keeping this in mind, all problems faced by other consumers would also be solved in this way, providing e-commerce solutions for marriage hall bookings is essential and must be considered by the companies that are into this business (Al-Somali, Gholami, and Clegg, 2015).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The focus of this study is to investigate the possibility of developing an e-commerce platform that would be able to connect the marriage halls services to their consumers online, and will help in maintaining an online relationship. The study aims at investigating the development and role of e-commerce platform to the business owners of hall management companies KSA and their Saudi consumers. Moreover, the study has also focused on employing the e-commerce frameworks that would be effective in rapid development of the IT infrastructure of Saudi Arabia.
1.4 Research Objectives

Following are the research objectives of this study:

- To highlight essential features to develop a Web based E-commerce platform for Businesses by client booking halls.
- To highlight essential features of fully mobile friendly web interface using cutting edge technologies.
- To understand and suggest solution of real world problem by mitigating the issues.
- To understand how customers with the help of an interface can compare between halls and its reviews.

1.5 Research Questions

Following are the research questions formulated with the help of the objectives of the study:

- What are essential features to develop a Web based E-commerce platform for Businesses by client booking halls?
- What are essential features of fully mobile friendly web interface using cutting edge technologies?
- What can be the solution of real world problem by mitigating the issues?
- How through an interface customer can compare between halls and its reviews?
2 Literature Review

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a well-known Muslim state of Asia, holding the most sacred monuments of Islam – House of Allah (Khana-e-Kaaba) and Mosque of Prophet (Masjid-e-Nabvi). The majority of Muslims in Saudi Arabia follow a very strict religious school, aimed at reverting the Islamic practices to original Islamic practices of Prophet’s time (Alsaif, 2013). These religious laws, which are part of the constitutions of the KSA, pose difficulty in resolving problems faced by current youth (Vietor and White, 2014). Prohibition of women drivers is just one example of how laws in the KSA are reluctant to accept the women’s need of transportation in the contemporary fast-paced society.

Saudi Society has a strong influence of Arabic culture that has far deeper historic roots than the rise of Islam. Archaeologists believe the region to be 20-25 million years old, and the first human habitation in this area was established around 15000-20000 years ago (Wynbaradt, 2010). The region enjoyed a strategic position close to the grand civilizations of Persia, Rome, and India and was an important landmark in the trade route. Although it was not part of any grand civilization in history, it enjoys a rich and strong cultural identity (Harper, 2007).

Before Islam, the socio-political unit of the region, where the KSA is located, was tribal. Islamic teachings were against this tribal divide, and a government system, based on consensus of spiritual leadership, was established soon after the demise of Prophet. This, however, did not last long, and tribal clashes over access to government began only after four governments based on the old system – known in Islamic history as Caliphate. Tribes were transformed into a monarchy system of, which is still there, yet tribal cohesion is still an important element of Saudi society (Commins, 2015).

This combination of outmoded, strict religious laws, Arabian cultural roots and tribal socio-political history played its defining role in developing the society.
Despite the modern architecture and wealth, the society is traditional. Because of the tribal past, the families in the region are strongly knitted (Al-Gharni, 2000). As Alford put it, “The individual belongs to the family, which belongs to the tribe, which belongs to the community.”

The Arabian society is mainly divided among nomads, called Bedouin, and the people living in town and cities (Harper, 2007). While the two differ significantly in their ways of life, both are described in literature as strongly conservative. Since Saudi Arabia has remained unoccupied by Western empires, it has a unique Arabian culture, different from other Arab countries, concentrated on Islam and family. With family at the centre of Saudi society, marriage holds special significance, and wedding ceremonies are celebrated to signify the importance of collectivism. However, booking a marriage hall poses a serious problem because of high demand and other cultural constraints. The literature has been reviewed to highlight the problem and look at the online booking system as one of the solutions to this problem.

2.1 Problems of Booking Marriage Halls in KSA

Wedding ceremonies in the KSA reflect the important elements of KSA society. With a highly-segregated environment, family takes an important part in organizing the marriage ceremony. Weddings are a grand festive event in KSA, where the guest list is usually between 200 to 800 guests. Besides the families of the bride and groom, friends, neighbours, and acquaintances are invited (Pulsifer, 2003). The venue needed to accommodate the large public must be spacious. Dancing and singing are essential parts of most Saudi weddings, so a separate space for such celebrations are a pre-requisite. In addition, since the venue must respect the gender segregation, it must have separate large spaces for both males and females.

One defining feature of the Arabian culture that has a special relevance to the wedding event is hospitality and generosity. Arabs are proud of their generous and hospitable character, and unhospitable behaviour influences the reputation
of a person in society, even to social boycott (Sobh and Belk, 2012). Therefore, Arabs take pride in arranging a grand wedding event to keep this tradition of hospitality.

Traditionally, when families lived together in large houses, finding a venue for a wedding ceremony was not a major issue. Even now, in Bedouin weddings, the ceremony is usually held at houses, with more realistic and simple rituals than ones in urban centres (Loslebon, 2003). However, in contemporary society, the shift from extended family structure to nuclear family structure has transformed housing spaces (Saleh, 1998). Especially in the urban centre, the architecture has adopted modern characteristics with small-spaced apartments and one-unit bungalows in high demand. Families need to find a large space for a venue and must book marriage halls for this purpose.

The demand of marriage halls is not just linked to the need of wider spaces. The wedding ceremonies in KSA are highly festive and full of celebrations and rituals. Rowell (2016) described the ceremony as “theatrical” and “a combination of a fashion show and a bachelorette party.” The venue must be extensively decorated with flowers and lights, with separate stages for the bride and groom in their respective ballrooms. Brides usually walk down the aisle to reach the stage to allow all attendees to look at her (Rowell, 2016), so the venue ought to have a fashion runway sort of arrangement to allow this. Making all these arrangements at home poses a problem, so people often prefer their marriage ceremony in specifically designed halls.

Finding an appropriate hall for a wedding usually takes more time than expected. To the knowledge of the researcher, there is not a single study highlighting this problem of wedding halls in KSA. Researchers have considered this tradition of conducting marriage ceremonies in halls in Japan (Shida, 1999; Fisch, 2001), but most of these studies are focused on the social and religious transitions caused by conducting the commercialized weddings these halls offer. There is a dearth of research on wedding halls as a commercial commodity, like hotels and restaurants, and looking at means for improving their access.
In Saudi Arabia, the problem is not just the high demand of wedding halls. The Saudi society is highly segregated and unwelcoming to women moving alone, without a male family member (Le Renard, 2015). Women in the families cannot take part in the booking process and must depend on a male family member for the task. A male member must move from one hall to another to find out the details and to book the place selected for the wedding. Hence, as stated above, it takes more time and effort than expected. Utilising an online booking system can resolve many of these problems.

2.2 Online Booking Systems

Information technology has transformed the service industry into a simpler and more profitable business by making the internet one of the main domain of sales and service provision. Online booking is a relatively recent phenomenon that involves the use of web portals for offering reservation services, like airline tickets, hotel rooms, and restaurant tables. It facilitates personal relations between a service firm and client by allowing clients to receive services 24-7 (Chirchu et al., 2001). The online booking system is also expanding the potential of services, allowing companies to have a global reach and add more services and products in their tour packages (Law et al. 2004).

Over the last two decades, the use of online booking systems has increased. According to Marcussen (2009), the online hospitality market in Europe has expanded from 20% in 1999 to 65.2% in 2009. Similarly, according to a 2002 survey, over 90% of airlines in the USA are offering airline ticketing and other services on their website (Buhalis 2004). Hotels, restaurants, airplanes, and travel agencies are the main services that use an online booking system. Past research can be found on how the online booking system works in these industries and how it has transformed business operations and customer experience (Marcussen 2009; Buhalis 2004).
Molchanova (2014) believes that in the travel and tourism industry, the online booking system has greatly expanded the business. It allows people across the world to pre-plan the entire tour, while sitting in front of their computer, using complete packages that cover transportation, accommodation, tourist tours, and meals. However, AlGhamdi, Drew and Alkhalaf, (2004) noted the online booking system has not yet flourished to its full extent. There are many industries where an online booking system can be useful, yet these industries are relying on traditional mode of service provision and commerce.

An online booking system offers several advantages over an offline booking system to service providers and clients. One major advantage of an online booking system for service providing firms is it is time saving and does not require hotel or restaurant management to guide the customers through the details of products and services. Everything is shown on the web, and the client can easily choose the product/services he or she is looking for (Molchanova 2014). As noted by Dyche (2002), it allows companies to get in touch with multiple clients at a time, increasing their satisfaction. Service providing firms can also benefit from “word of mouth” marketing, using social media platforms to get customers, without incurring the high costs of traditional advertising methods (Ye et al, 2011).

Another benefit, these online booking systems does not only provide services to the customers, but also allow them to rate and review the services online (Sparks and Browning 2011). This allows customers to make their purchase decision more confidently by looking at the experiences of past customers of the same service (Dickinger and Mazanec 2008). In addition, customers can compare cost and service quality of multiple services in the market before deciding (Chatterjee and Wang 2012). It is described as a more comfortable service option, for customers can book their tickets or hotel room while sitting in their houses.

However, the online booking system is not free of shortcomings, and it has several problems that must be considered before applying this system in any industry. Visualization or human interaction is one major concern regarding the online booking system. People prefer visiting the hotel or restaurant before booking, because direct visualization gives them more satisfaction about their
purchase decision (Bogdanovych et al. 2006). Introducing 3D imaging has the potential of resolving the problem of visualization, as people can now take an interactive tour of their destinations through the website. Daugherty et al. (2005) conducted a study comparing indirect experience (details of products in text and images), virtual experience (details of products through 3D imaging), and direct experience (direct product examination) and found the reaction of consumers to virtual and direct experiences was similar. However, 3D imaging on websites has higher costs, often inhibiting E-commerce websites from adding this feature (Bogdanovych, et al., 2006).

The online booking system has also been criticized for causing the phenomenon of disintermediation in any industry (Chircu and Kaufmann 2001, Law, et al., 2004). Introduction of the online booking system can bring an irreversible change in the business model of traditional offline firms, which will have to search strategies to compete with online firms or they will lose business. Drucker (2007) opined that a competitive advantage could be gained by focusing on the weak points of the competitors. The online booking system has many such weak points that can be exploited by the offline firms to take customers away from the web.

Since the web has recently become a source for marketing and selling services, several firms are not paying attention to customer reviews and surveys. They rarely ask for feedback from their customers, and when asked, they rarely bring changes in their booking services based on the feedback (Agheorghiesei and Ineson, 2011). According to Gianforte (2003), poor user experience of customers who use an online booking system can also be a major problem. Many online service providers have failed to develop a functional website with well-organized content, user-friendly and clean structure, and secured payment methods. Many online booking websites suffer from inadequate, outdated, or extraneous information, absence of synchronization between modes of communication with clients (web, e-mail, telephone etc.), absence of content translation options to cater to global and local audiences, or poor software implementation. These limitations adversely affect the customer attitude toward the online booking system and discourage them from using the website for booking (Law and Hsu, 2006).
Another important phenomenon that has received much attention in recent years is the problem of customer confusion in online platforms due to the bulk of information, products, and services.

2.3 Online Booking Systems in KSA

Although Saudi Ministry of Commerce (AlGhamdi, et al., 2011) claims, in the entire Middle East, KSA is the biggest market for information technology products, research has found less than adequate progress in the e-commerce industry in KSA (Al-Otaibi and Al-Zahrani 2003; Aladwani 2003; Agamdi 2008). However, airline ticketing and hotel booking are reported to be the top online purchases in KSA, showing their high potential in the country (AlGhamdi et al., 2011).

Their research aimed at understanding the factors influencing technology acceptance in KSA. Al-Gahtani et al. (2007) found people who intend to use technology are mostly those who believe IT can help them improve their job performance, and the perception of ease of use only influences novice IT users in KSA. Subjective norm was also found to influence intention to use IT, but the effect decreases for older Saudis and for those with more experience using IT. In comparison, Al-maghrabi and Dennis (2012) found perceived enjoyment to be the most important factor for online purchasing in Saudi customers, but his research took data from only those individuals who were already active users of e-commerce websites.

One potential benefit of an online booking system for females is to book a room in a hotel or in a restaurant or flight without visiting the office, which, as discussed above, are difficult tasks. In their research on online purchase behaviour among Saudi customers, Al-maghrabi and Dennis (2012) found females were almost twice as likely to use the internet for travel reservations, ticketing, and hotel room booking as males. In their sample of 234 Saudi residents actively engaged in online shopping, 35.5% of females used the internet for travel reservations and
ticketing, compared to 20.1% males. Similarly, while 24.4% females booked hotel rooms online, only 12% of males used an online portal for this purpose. Interestingly, females also had a higher level of trust in the online booking system than males, irrespective of whether the company is local or international. A similar benefit is expected with an online booking system for marriage halls.

However, the online booking system and E-commerce suffer from several challenges. Customers in KSA often face issues getting credit cards for online booking. The problem is twofold; first, banks have strict policies regarding issuance of credit cards, and second, Islam prohibits interest (riba'), which is an important part of credit card payment, and people in KSA prefer to use cash, instead of credit cards (AlGhamdi et al., 2011a). The infrastructural problems pose a challenge for Saudis, as low Internet speed and the high cost of internet connection make people avoid online portals for reservations (AlGhamdi, et al., 2011a).

Several factors were also identified to hinder firms from providing online booking services to their users, despite their benefits. Most importantly, poor CT infrastructure has been reported to stop retailers from opening their online shop in KSA (AlGhamdi, 2011b; Bredesee et al., 2011). The other important factors hindering hotels and airlines from using an online booking system, as found by Bredesee et al. (2011), include lack of financial support, ineffectiveness of local web developers, high cost of ICT providers, and problems receiving online payments. AlGhamdi (2011b) reported factors, such as lack of ICT knowledge/experience among retailers, low rates of online purchases, difficulty getting competitive advantage in the online global industry, lack of payment options, absence of clear ICT legislation, and cultural and religious resistance to change.

In another research on travel and tourism companies of KSA, Bredesse et al. (2012) reported the majority of companies are not planning to offer online booking services to their customers. They found the organizational culture of these firms is one important determinant of IT adoption among travel and tourism firms in KSA, with companies having a developmental culture most likely to adopt an
online system for service provision. In addition, the conservative attitude of Saudi executives is making them less trustful toward modern technology, hindering them from adopting an online booking system. Finally, they noted that, for firms “relying on Hajj or Umrah pilgrims”, there is even less chance of adopting online methods because of trade control mechanism.

Taken together, despite the clear benefits of an online booking system in KSA, there are numerous hurdles in adopting the method. These hurdles are the reason for low adoption of information technology among service providers in the KSA. Some of these hurdles, like mistrust and lack of knowledge or experience, are expected to lessen over time, but infrastructural issues, financing, and lack of support from banks and the government are issues that can only be resolved through governmental efforts.
3 Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

In general, there are two types of research philosophies, which are, interpretivism, and positivism (Tajvidi and Karami, 2015). Interpretivism philosophy’s involves the researcher to determine and interpret all essential elements of the study, hence making it integrate human interest in a research study. As indicated by Babones (2015) being a researcher is essential to acknowledge and appreciate the difference in perceptions, and opinion of the people. However, there are different meaning and perceptions on which this study focuses on and likewise, it may employ different methods for reflecting different aspects of the issue of the study (Tajvidi and Karami, 2015; Ritchie et al., 2013). Analysing the current research in hand and the area of focus is to determine the understanding and need of the people in having a web-based system to book their marriage halls, hence the interpretive research is employed.

The fundamental advantage of interpretative research focuses on interactions of social nature, including face to face interactions and interacting and understanding of the societal norms (Thorne, 2016). Additionally, this philosophy of research includes the interpretation of the components of research by the researchers (Babones, 2015). This philosophy helps researchers in having a deeper understanding of the subject area and determine the weaker part of the topic under the study. Likewise, it can be stated that the focus of interest of this philosophy is in specific, deviant and unique are of the study.

3.2 Research Design

There are two types of research design, including qualitative and quantitative. The research design followed in the research was a quantitative technique analysis. This method of analysis focuses on the numbers to assess and analyse the current subject matter of the research (Pierce and Sawyer, 2013). Whereas, the qualitative research is used for analysing of information, which does not
involve numeric or statistical data (Ritchie et al., 2013). The data under this form of research is gathered from primary method involving questionnaire or interviews directly from the respondents (Onwuegbuzie and Frels, 2015). The current research study in hand, aims to analyse the e-commerce in KSA and gaining the understanding of what are the aspects of e-commerce are needed to be improved in order to establish a smooth flow of transactions. Since this study needs to gather first hand data from the target population to understand their needs and demands related to the booking of marriage halls in KSA, hence the quantitative method of the research was employed.

3.3 Research Reasoning

Research reasoning is mainly of two types, deductive and inductive research (Hitchcock, 2012). The deductive approach focuses on testing and studying an already existing theory. On the contrary, inductive approach, the researcher focuses on constructing a new theory out of the collected data. To put it briefly, inductive approach is used when a researcher aims on findings new ways of solving an issue or studying the cause of a certain phenomenon (Hitchcock, 2012). Keeping this in mind, the approach taken in conducting the research was the inductive approach as the researcher deems to identify the problems related to the e-commerce currently prevailing in KSA and the needs of the consumers in booking marriage halls online. This form of research aims on inferring the meanings from the collected data from the respondents for identifying the relationships and patterns to build a theory (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Additionally, this approach does not restrict the researcher from using prevailing or existing theory.

Researcher intended on finding the best solutions for the customers who are looking for online marriage hall booking services. Although, deductive approach—generally used for analysing quantitative research, looking at our problem it is better to follow an inductive reasoning. Whereas, an inductive approach starts with a detailed analysis of the world and then gradually moves to ideas and generalizations identifying the preliminary relationships (Hitchcock, 2012). This
approach is known as bottom up approach since it helps researcher to build the current picture of the research study.

3.4 Time Horizon of the study

A research can be based on two kinds of time horizons, longitudinal and cross-sectional (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). Longitudinal studies comprise a collection of data collected more than once. The researcher collects data repeatedly, usually with equivalent intervals. This data collection method is mostly used in studies related to diseases and other medical studies (Rindfleisch et al., 2008), for instance, evaluating how a specific medicine is working on the patients by assessing the improvement before and after the utilization of the medicine.

Cross-sectional studies are the opposite of longitudinal studies, as the data is collected only once. Cross-sectional time horizon is mostly used in evaluating social and business related issues (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). Therefore, for this research, the researcher utilized cross-sectional time horizon because the collection of data was only required once, not repeatedly. Both methods have their own advantages and disadvantages. The cross-sectional approach is beneficial when the researcher has little time, and the research is to be completed as soon as possible. But in the case of longitudinal, more time is required. As longitudinal studies require collection of data repeatedly, the research becomes expensive compared to the cross-sectional approach of collecting data (Rindfleisch et al., 2008).

The study has a limited number of participants involved in the survey. Only 40 people participated in the survey. Because of the lack of time, the questionnaire was completed by a limited number of people. With more time to conduct the survey, the sample size could be increased. With a bigger sample size, data collected would have been more reliable and valid. The greater the sample size, the more generalizable is the data. Hence, time was the constraint in our survey.
3.5 Target Population

The target population of the research are the set of individuals on whom the researcher intends to generalize the findings (Zhao et al., 2013). Since it is not possible to make the entire population part of the study, a smaller size of the group is made of the target population which then it is easier to be made part of the research for gathering data (Pierce and Sawyer, 2013; Creswell, 2013). While defining the target population it is imperative to set the geographical and temporal characteristics of the population that the researcher intend to make the part of the research (Bryman and Bell, 2015). With the definition into consideration, the target population of the study was the consumers of Saudi Arabia, especially the ones who have access to the internet either on their cell phone, tablets or computers. The target population comprised of both the genders, Saudi men and women. As Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country, except for fewer numbers of foreigners employed there, the target population also comprised of Muslim consumers.

This target population comprises of individuals belonging between the age range of 18 and 65, since today the majority of people have access to the internet and use web-based solution to make purchases. Additionally, the target population age group is majorly involved in booking marriage halls, either for their marriages of marriages of their children. The reason for choosing this target population depended on the requirement of the research and the issue in hand. Selecting the target population is much easier than selecting the sample for the study, as the selected sample would have to be the representative of the entire population on which the findings of the study are to be applied (Zhao et al., 2013; Creswell, 2013).

3.6 Sample Size

As defined by Acharya et al. (2013), a sample is the subset of the chosen target population for any research. This sample has to be carefully selected by the researcher keeping in mind the end goal of the study (Pierce and Sawyer, 2013;
Creswell, 2013). The sample chosen must be the true representative of the targeted population for the study or else the findings of the research cannot be generalized (Acharya et al. 2013). For this specific study, the sample size chosen from the target population was 40 respondents. The reason for choosing small sample size was to make the research easier for the researcher. Due to the lack of time, it was not possible to collect data from the larger number of the population. Moreover, the lack of expertise and experience is additionally another factor contributing to choosing a smaller sample size. Due to lack of experience it would have been difficult to analyse and manage the data gathered from the respondents.

The respondents made of the research were those who were willing to be the part of the research. Those respondents who showed reluctance towards participating in the study were excluded from the sample, and replaced with the ones who gave their free consent. Keeping in mind the ethical considerations of the study, none of the respondents were forced to participate in the study but rather participated at their free will.

### 3.7 Sampling Technique

For selecting the respondents, a sampling technique is required. Sampling technique refers to the approach used in choosing the right sample for the study (Acharya et al. 2013). The sampling technique depends on the type of research and the predicted findings. Sampling techniques fall into two broad categories, probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Emerson, 2015). Probability sampling means that every individual from within the target population has the equal chances of being selected for the study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). On the other hand, non-probability sampling refers to the probability that not every population element will or can be chosen, nor there is any surety that each element of the population had a non-zero chance of being selected (Emerson, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Bryman and Bell, 2015).
There are two types of non-probability sampling namely voluntary sampling and convenience sampling. For choosing respondents for the current research study, convenience sampling was used. According to Emerson (2015), a convenience sampling technique falls under the category of non-probability sampling. As stated by Emerson (2015) convenience sampling is most used forms of non-probability sampling it gives the researcher the leverage of machining people who are easy to approach and reach. This approach is specifically used when there is a lack of time and budget.

Under the current situation there was lack of experience and time as well, due to which convenience sampling was used to approach the sample size to be part of the research. The researcher used convenience sampling in light of the fact that it is less expensive and easy to execute.

### 3.8 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument refers to the tool used for collecting the data from the chosen sample (Creswell, 2013). The tools that can be used for collecting data include focus groups, interviews, case studies, observation, and questionnaires. For quantitative analysis, the most common tool used for collecting data is a self-administered questionnaire (Pierce and Sawyer, 2013).

Focus groups, interviews, case studies, and observation are mostly used in mixed approach or qualitative analysis. The data collected from these tools is qualitative and therefore cannot be tested statistically. Such content can only be tested statistically with the help of quantitative content analysis software (Creswell, 2013). Hence, for this study, the instrument used for collecting data from the respondent was a self-administered questionnaire.

This instrument was selected for the convenience of the researcher and the participants. This self-administered questionnaire comprised various scales, such as dichotomous scale, category scale, Likert scale, and nominal scale. All the questions used in the questionnaire were close-ended, except for a question
at the end of the questionnaire, which required reasoning from the participants for choosing ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The scales used in the questionnaire helped the researcher to understand the views of the consumers from various perspectives.

### 3.9 Data Collection Methods

According to Pierce and Sawyer (2013), the collected data is of two types, secondary data and primary data. The primary data refers to the information, which is collected directly from the respondents at the time of the study (Pierce and Sawyer, 2013; Creswell, 2013). While on the other hand, secondary data is the information, which is already existent and retrieved by the researcher for further analysis. For the current research study, both forms of data collection methods are employed, primary and secondary. For collecting primary data, self-administered questionnaires were distributed amongst the respondents, who were chosen using the convenience sampling technique. On the other hand, secondary data were collected using peer-ed review journals, scholarly articles, databases, libraries, magazines, articles, newspaper, books and governmental websites. For collecting the secondary data, it was ensured that the information gathered for the research was collected from the credible and reliable sources to ensure the genuineness and authenticity of the information.

In general, the methods that can be used for collecting data include focus groups, interviews, case studies, observation and lastly questionnaires. For quantitative analysis method, the most common tool used for collecting data is a self-administered questionnaire (Pierce and Sawyer, 2013). The other methods that are focus groups, interviews, case studies and observation, are mostly used in mixed approach or qualitative technique analysis.

The reason for using questionnaire as the part of primary research in quantitative analysis is as it helps to quantify the result and infer a meaning out of the collected data (Creswell, 2013). However, for this specific study, the instrument used for collecting data from the respondent was a self-administered questionnaire. This instrument was selected for the convenience of both the
researcher as well as the participants. This self-administered questionnaire comprised of various scales such as dichotomous scale, category scale, Likert scale and nominal scale. However, in the current research questionnaire, all the questions were closed ended with having yes or no as the answer or using 5 Likert scale.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most important part of the research methodology. Here, the collected data is analysed by the researcher. Data analysis is also the most complex part of the research, as the conclusion of the entire research depends on this part of the methodology. For analysing quantitative data, the most commonly used software is Ms Excel. This software helps analyse the data through various statistical tests. Keeping this in mind, the data collected from the respondents was tested and analysed using this software. The collected data was input into the software. Once the data collected from the 40 respondents was input, various tests were run by the researcher.

The researcher used regression analysis and correlation for analysing the collected data. Regression analysis was helpful in finding the significance of the relationships between the variables of this study. T-test and reliability tests were also run on the data to check for validity and reliability of the collected data. Without these tests, there was no surety the data collected from the respondents was valid. These reliability tests proved the data could be further used in conclusion.
4 Finding and Analysis

To get the people’s opinions regarding online wedding halls booking, an online survey was conducted. A questionnaire was filled by participants via self-administrated questionnaires. The data collected through this research was analysed, discussed, and interpreted in this chapter. This survey strictly focused on the nationals of KSA whereas this meets the research criteria. The survey does not target a specific gender or religion. However, it targets a certain age of participants who may utilise the system. It was a general survey, comprising questions regarding online ordering trends in KSA and the need of an online marriage halls booking system. The responses met the requirements set out in the methodology. The opinions of 40 people were collected. Total questionnaires answered were 41, but 1 was not completed. Hence, 40 questionnaires were considered useful. With 40 out of 41 questionnaires in usable condition, the response rate of the survey is 97.5%.

4.1 Participants Information

4.1.1 Gender

Out of the 40 participants, 23 (or 57.5%) were male and 17 (or 42.5%) were female. It turned out to be somewhat a balanced survey, including fair participation of both genders. The minor difference represents the cultural difference.

![Figure 4.1: Male to Female](image-url)
4.1.2 Age

The participants age who participated in the survey were across the age range from 18 to 25, from 26 to 30, from 31 to 35, and 36+. The Survey shows 14 (or 35%) participants belong to the age range of 18 to 25, 17 (or 42.5%) participants belong to the age range 26 to 30, 6 (or 15%) participants belong to the age range 31 to 35 and only 3 (or 7.5%) participants were of the age 36+. The maximum representation of the young group shows that youth are more active in online activities.

![Figure 4.2: Age](image)

4.1.3 Marital Status

The marital status of the participants in the survey were 21 (or 52.5%) participants were single, 11 (or 27.5%) participants were married, and 8 (or 20%) participants were divorced. The greatest number of participants are single. Expectedly, single and younger participants were highly interested in this system, whereas, singles may be interested in marriage and youth may be interested in the future implementation of the online system itself.

![Figure 4.3: Marital Status](image)
4.2 Emphasising on Internet Usage

4.2.1 Basic Knowledge of Computers

This is another valuable addition to our goal. When participants were asked if they have basic knowledge of computer and internet, almost 29 (or 72.5%) participants replied positively and 11 (or 27.5%) participants answered “No”.

Figure 4.4: Basic Knowledge of Computers

4.2.2 Involving Internet usage in Their Daily Routine

Another important question for the study was to determine whether the Internet is part of their daily routine or not. To our surprise, 37 (or 92.5%) participants responded “Yes”, and 3 (or 7.5%) responded “No”. The data shows people who claimed they do not have basic computer knowledge still use the internet on a daily basis, possibly through other gadgets, like mobile or tablets. According to the study by Al-Gahtani, Hubona and Wang (2007), after the evolution of smartphones, consumers are more inclined to use mobile phones and the internet over their phones, rather than using it on their personal computers or laptops. Research by Alotaibi and Bach (2014) stated, today even consumers who are not aware of using a computer, can easily use smart phones, iPad, and tablets due to their easy use and simple functions.

Figure 4.5: Involving Internet usage in Their Daily Routine
4.2.3 Browsing Websites Providing Online Services

The response to another question, “Do you browse online websites that offer online services?” was also positive; 35 (or 87.5%) participants said “Yes”, while 5 (or 12.5%) participants said “No.” This is clearly a good indication for starting an online marriage hall booking website. The increase of internet usage and web browsing for online services indicates the general positive trend of society towards online business (Al-Mudimigh, 2015).

![Figure 4.6: Browsing Websites Providing Online Services](image)

4.2.4 Familiarity with Online Systems

34 (or 85%) participants Chose “Yes”, and 6 (or 15%) participants Chose “No” when they were questioned “Do you have good knowledge when it comes to using online systems. These responses show most participants have decent knowledge about internet and actively browse the websites. This data will prove valuable in the final deduction of the survey and achievement of the goal.

![Figure 4.7: Familiarity with Online Systems](image)
4.3 Understanding the Current State of IT Infrastructure in Saudi Arabia

This section is relevant regarding our goal. It caters to the issue of IT development in Saudi Arabia upon which online business are based. Hence, it will provide information which may help in developing the system itself.

4.3.1 Quality of the IT Infrastructure

The response to the question, “Does Saudi have good IT infrastructure?” was positive. The majority, 27 (or 67.5%) participants, agreed to this statement, 11 (or 27.5%) participants were neutral, while only 2 (or 5%) participants disagreed. This response show the average satisfaction with the overall conditions of the IT Infrastructure in KSA.

4.3.2 IT and E-commerce Laws in Saudi Arabia

Results were positive in response to the inquiry about whether Saudi Arabia approves proper laws for IT and E-commerce transactions. None of the participants disagreed. 25 (or 62.5 %) participants responded neutral, 7 (or 17.5%) participants agreed, and 8 (or 20%) participants strongly agreed. This shows the society satisfaction with the state law implementation and regulations.
4.3.3 Government support to IT facilities

In response to another question, regarding government encouragement of IT facilities in KSA, 15 (or 37.5%) participants gave neutral response to government encouragement of IT facility. 18 (or 45%) participants agreed, and 7 (or 17.5%) participants strongly agreed. These are good indicators, whereas, when the public trusts government laws and regulations in the IT field, then online services, shopping, and businesses have more potential to grow and flourish.

4.3.4 Convenience of Online Shopping and Services in Saudi Arabia

Another valuable data addition to this research was response to the inquiry of whether online shopping and services are easy to use and convenient in Saudi Arabia. The response was positive and supportive to our goal. 14 (or 35%) participants responded neutrally, 23 (or 57.5%) participants agreed, and 3 (or 7.5%) participants strongly agreed. These responses show a general trend of society towards online shopping, and ordering is optimistic, which supports the aim of the survey.
4.3.5 Security of Online Payment in Saudi Arabia

Responses regarding safety of online payment transactions also followed the same trend, as no one disagreed. 11 (or 27.5%) participants were neutral, 27 (or 67.5%) participants agreed, and 2 (or 5%) participants strongly agreed. People showing agreement and strong agreement are usually those who have experienced online shopping or someone in their family or friends did. Their successful experience led to strong agreements.

4.3.6 Sharing Personal Information for Online Transactions

The response to the question, “Do you feel comfortable sharing your information online?” had predictable results. 24 (or 60%) participants were neutral, and 16 (or 40%) participants disagreed. No participant agreed to share personal information online. Saudi Arabia is conservative and a religiously dominant country, where people hesitate to share their information too quickly. Also, Molla et al. (2014) stated it is the second highest email spamming country, so the response is understandable.
4.4 Online Booking Trend

This section holds an important place in the survey, as it directly caters to online booking trends in Saudi Arabia.

4.4.1 Online Booking Systems

The online booking trend is still uncommon in KSA, and mostly, people prefer to book things by physically visiting the venue. The response to the question, “Are you familiar with the online booking system?” was encouraging. 31 (or 77.5%) participants said “Yes”, and 9 (or 22.5%) participants said “No.” Our survey data shows the online booking trend might not be common, but social awareness about online booking is increasing, which is a positive sign.

![Figure 4.14: Online Booking Systems](image)

4.4.2 Trusted Online Services

In response to the question of which trusted site they refer for online services, 9 (or 22.5%) participants shared they refer to Maroof.sa for online services. 27 (or 67.5%) participants refer to Google.sa and 4 (or 10%) to social networking sites. This trend is predictable, as Google is a well-trusted name around the globe, and people refer to Google for any type of search. Maroof.sa is second priority for online services, as it is a Saudi Arabian local, well-trusted site. The least preference was shown towards social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc., as you cannot guarantee if the sellers on social networking sites
are running genuine or fraudulent businesses. So, the data shows people of KSA are least interested in ordering online services through social networking sites.

Figure 4.15: Trusted Online Services
4.5 Online Facilities Regarding Marriage Hall Booking

This section holds the most important position in our survey, as it directly links with the purpose of the research.

4.5.1 Marriage Hall booking Issue

The response of the sample was mixed. 22 (or 55%) participants believed booking a marriage hall is not an issue in Saudi Arabia, while 18 (or 45%) believed it is an issue to book a marriage hall. Considering that Saudi Arabia is a male dominant society, females find it difficult to visit halls and book them. Also, it is difficult for Saudi Arabia nationals living abroad, who visit the country for a wedding ceremony only. Due to many reasons, at times, it is not possible to visit and book the hall.

4.5.2 Online Services Help in Solving Marriage Hall Booking Issue

The majority of participants, 31 (or 77.5%), agreed that an online marriage hall booking facility may solve the issue, while 9 (or 32.5%) participants disagreed with an online booking option. Since our sample data represents the society’s opinion, we can conclude the majority of society considers online booking as option to solve the marriage halls booking issue.
4.5.3 Lack of Online Booking Platforms in KSA

Most participants, 27 (or 67.5%), also agreed with the statement that the availability of such platforms is lacking in Saudi Arabia. 13 (or 32.5%) participants disagreed. Al-Malkawi, Mansumitrchai and Al-Habib (2016) stated, in Saudi Arabia, only limited number of companies are offering facilities to book wedding halls online. Mostly, bookings are made by visiting the offices.
4.6 Payments and Additional Services

Methods of making online payment is another valuable question. It is necessary to keep in account the customers’ priority payment channels before starting an online business.

4.6.1 Preferred Methods of Payment

Customers feel more comfortable ordering online when they have security that their payment is delivered safely. There are different channels available to make online payments. Everyone trusts the one they have already tried and tested or have a higher general trust level. Therefore, 14 (or 35%) participants chose Credit Cards. 19 (or 47.5%) preferred PayPal, and only 7 (or 17.5%) participants voted Sadad –Sadad is a local PayPal like system established by the government. PayPal and credit cards are internationally trusted, secured methods of making online payments, whereas Sadad is popular in the KSA.

![Preferred Methods of Payment](image_url)
4.6.2 Customer Support via Phone Calls

The majority of participants, 37 (or 92.5%), in the survey supported that customer services must be available through phone call services. Only 3 (or 7.5%) participants were not in favour of phone call services. It is an impression that, if one talks to someone while making an online order, one develops a higher trust level. Also, if there is a need to inquire about something or get information about anything before making an order, phone call services will help in those scenarios (Alotaibi, Houghton and Sandhu 2016).

![Figure 4.20: Customer Support via Phone Calls](image)

4.6.3 Service Policy

Saudi Arabia is a family-oriented country, where marriage has a significant place in society (Abdullah et al., 2006). Marriages are big family events in which family and friends participate enthusiastically. Therefore, many reasons can cause delay, shift, or even cancelation of the marriage event. 40 (or 100%) of the participants responded in favour to the question, “Should a website provide cancelation and return of services in case of any issue?”.  

![Figure 4.21: Service Policy](image)
4.6.4 Additional Services

Another valuable addition to the data was the inquiry about any other additional facilities required, apart from hall booking. The result was significant, knowing people’s priorities and demands. 34 (or 85%) participants said they want additional services when the booking is confirmed, and 6 (or 15%) participants said they don’t want them. In Saudi Arabia, marriage is a grand event, with an extensive list of arrangements. Offering additional services online would save people time and effort visiting each vendor separately and booking them. 14 (or 35%) participants said they want photography service. 6 (or 15%) asked for waiters’ service. 17 (or 42.5%) asked for food services. 3 (or 7.5%) asked for valet services. This represents the cultural and social trend of Saudi weddings. Food is the major focus in Saudi Arabian ceremonies and parties. In typical Saudi culture, males and females sit segregated in the wedding ceremony (Law and Hsu, 2006). To avoid female interaction with male waiters, the demand for male waiters might be low (Paris et al., 2016).

Figure 4.22: Additional Services
5 Conclusion

With technological advancement, every business is trying to increase profits by establishing their business over the internet to attract more consumers. Likewise, one of the most running businesses in every part of the world is marriage halls. Establishing E-commerce for marriage halls will help them generate more profits, facilitate consumers by booking their halls online on specified dates and save time. This research has examined the current situation of E-commerce in Saudi Arabia. The surveys have shown that online shopping and booking is uncommon in Saudi Arabia, but the rapidly increasing trend predicts the age of online services in KSA is coming soon. The government is putting high efforts in IT and E-commerce. The aim of this paper is to investigate the possibility of establishing an e-commerce platform, where consumers can connect to marriage halls online. This research helped identify what consumers want, what they are getting, and what they would like to see in a website, where clients can book halls, compare wedding hall rooms, make online payments through secure and trusted methods, and get additional services like food, waiters, valet etc. This is a real-life solution, mitigating all the issues. A survey was conducted to get people’s opinions, regarding booking wedding halls online and e-commerce solution.

Quantitative research was used to carry out the survey. A self-administrated questionnaire was prepared as a tool for collecting the data. Primary and secondary data was used in this research. The data collected through filling out the questionnaire online was very helpful. Sample of 40 participants, belonging to a certain age limit, answered the questionnaire. Their responses showed positive attitudes towards online services and purchases. The majority of people trust the IT laws in KSA. People are satisfied with the government’s increasing efforts in the E-commerce sector. Many people believe developing a platform for online wedding hall booking would serve the issue of marriage hall booking. Data also helped find people’s choice for making online payments. This data proved helpful in developing a client friendly website, where customers can connect to
wedding halls online. Since Saudi Arabia is a big country, introducing online services would help cater to people’s wide demands.

Below are the suggested platform looks and contents that may be introduced in the near future to the platform.

**Contents:** The website’s main contents comprise of the wedding hall pictures and a detailed video tour of each wedding halls. The website should have updated information 24 hours a day for the availability of halls and an option to pay fees and book the hall instantly.

There are numerous websites offering similar features. The existing website that matches our research objective is Zafaf.net. It is a site working as a platform, where clients connect to wedding halls. They have a photo gallery showing a detailed view of halls in all main cities of KSA. As we can see in figure 5.1, the difference between the website which may be established after this research and Zafaf.net is the website should provide online booking of the halls with payment facilities, unlike Zafaf.net, which only connects the consumer and service provider through phone numbers.

**Figure 5.1: Zafaf.net, Photo Gallery of Wedding Halls**
**Features:** Data collected through the survey has helped identify different features a website should have. The customer should have an option to search the wedding halls by city, price limitation, or capacity. This will make the search process easy for the viewer, as unnecessary halls will automatically be removed from the searched list. The website should show a calendar displaying the free slots and days for booking around the year. These features are not available on other Saudi websites. Zafaf.net has wedding halls available by cities only, as we can see figure 5.2.

![Private Wedding Venues In Riyadh](image)

**Figure 5.2: Venues by Cities**

In addition, the website should offer extra services for the wedding day, for example, food, waiters, valet, photography, wedding gowns, wedding planning etc.

**Payment Methods:** Participants shared their preferred and trusted online payment methods during the survey. The website should rely on the collected data and offer multiple methods to make online payments.
5.1 Recommendations

The recommendations are made to increase the quality of the platform. The biggest threat people feel in online services is financial threats. To increase the customers’ trust, it is necessary to increase digital security. This would help to regain the lost trust in online payment and transactions.

A strategy must be made for online and media marketing of the website. Initially, to get the clients’ attention, the publicity of the website is a helpful step. Website marketing can be done online on different social networking sites. Many website advertisements are seen on Television commercials. Advertising the website on TV, newspapers, and magazines is another quick way of making a place in the market.

Concerning the Refund Policy, the data shows 100 percent of participants voted for 100 percent refund of money in case of cancellation of hall booking. The loss of cancellation of hall booking must be shared by both parties. When the wedding hall books the venue for clients, they reject other offers to book the hall during that slot. In case of cancellation, the wedding hall loses the money they could have earned by accepting another booking order. Hence, some percentage must be deducted before the refund takes place, ideally, a 20% deduction from the principal amount.
7 References


Sparks, B.A. and Browning, V., 2011. The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. Tourism Management, 32(6), pp.1310-1323.


Appendix 1

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Ali Alghamdi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Dr. Imtiaz Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Cardiff Metropolitan School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>ST2005523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>BSc (Hons) Software Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Investigating the Possibility of Implementing an Online Marriage Halls Booking System in Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
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| Expected start date of data collection: | 20/12/2016 |
| Approximate duration of data collection: | Two Months |
| Funding Body (if applicable): | Not Applicable |
| Other researcher(s) working on the project: | No one else |

| Will the study involve NHS patients or staff? | No |
| Will the study involve human samples and/or human cell lines? | No |

| Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories: |
| Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain | No |
| Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human samples | No |
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
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| Practice based not involving human participants (e.g. curatorial, practice audit) | No |
| Compulsory projects in professional practice (e.g. Initial Teacher Education) | No |
| A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS) | No |

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.

If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project:

The project is related to solution of a real time problem in Saudi Arabia. In season, there is very difficult situation to book a marriage hall in Saudi Arabia due to multiple factors and there is no such online ecommerce present which serves the purpose of online booking for hall. In this research, we will conduct a questionnaire based survey for availability, requirements of ecommerce based solution for online booking of marriage hall. Moreover, on the basis of survey and research, we will identify the factors causing in adaptation of such online ecommerce platform in Saudi Arabia in general and marriage halls in particular.

DEclaration:
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework.

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

Signature of the applicant: Ali Alghamdi
Date: 06-12-2016

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY

Name of supervisor: Dr. Imtiaz Khan
Date: 06-12-2016

Signature of supervisor:

Research Ethics Committee use only

| Decision reached: | Project approved | Project approved in principle | Decision deferred | Project not approved | Project rejected |

Project reference number: 2016D0264

Application for ethics approval v6 October 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**A RESEARCH DESIGN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used¹</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project.</td>
<td>This will be a primary research based on the survey of people’s perception about online ecommerce platform for marriage hall booking. An interpretative research philosophy will be adopted involving an inductive research strategy for gathering quantitative data as we will use close ended questionnaire to take participant feedback. In this research, we will take Quota sampling of 15 participants who are going to marry or planning to marry and belong to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Selection of participant will be based on convenience and their consent to participate and will be covering diverse locality in KSA, age, gender and level of education. After conducting the survey, descriptive cross-sectional study will be done using quantitative techniques with statistical models will be used. We will do factor analysis and correlation among the factors and come up with the most influential set of factors that are effect in acceptance of online ecommerce platform for booking of marriage hall in KSA. All data will remain confidential and will be stored securely in a password protected computer system. Moreover, all participants will remain anonymous; any data provided will not be traceable back to specific person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2 Student project only</td>
<td>What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have? Dr. Imtiaz Khan has 13 years of research experience involving human participants at undergraduate and postgraduate level. He has worked with patient data and fully aware of data confidentiality, anonymity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website.
and data security.

None

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C POTENTIAL RISKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 What potential risks do you foresee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of awareness of online platforms can lead to lower level of people response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provision of unrelated answers by participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. By providing basic information about the research and choosing the participant with some experience with internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Only close ended questions will be given in survey to be well directed and grouped according to factors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When submitting your application you MUST attach a copy of the following:
- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE

Investigating the Possibility of Implementing an Online Marriage Halls Booking System in Saudi Arabia

This questionnaire is part of degree program to fulfill the requirements of project. Personal data received here will not be shared to anyone. All information is only meant for research purpose. This survey is targeted for every adult citizen of Saudi Arabia.

Please tick the box if you agree to participate in this questionnaire.

I Agree ☐ I Do Not Agree ☐

• Gender:
  Male ☐ Female ☐

• Marital Status
  Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐

• Age:

Q1. Please choose the appropriate answer:

Do you have any adequate knowledge of computers?
  Yes ☐ No ☐

Is Internet a part of your daily routine?
  Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you browse online websites which provide online services?
  Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have good knowledge when it comes to using online systems?
  Yes ☐ No ☐

Q2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement

1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Saudi Arabia has a good IT infrastructure.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Saudi Arabia has approved proper laws for IT and E-commerce transaction.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
Government encourages IT facilities.
1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □

Online shopping and online services are easy to use and convenient Saudi Arabia.
1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □

Online payment transactions is secure in Saudi Arabia.
1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □

You feel comfortable in providing your personal information for online transaction.
1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □

Q3. Please choose the appropriate answer:

Are you familiar with online booking systems?
Yes □ No □

Where do you look for trusted online services?
Maroof.sa □ Google.sa □ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) □

Is booking a marriage hall in Saudi Arabia an issue?
Yes □ No □

Do you agree that online service will help in solving this booking issue?
Yes □ No □ Maybe □

Is there a lack of such platform available in Saudi Arabia?
Yes □ No □

Which payment methods you prefer to use online?
Credit Card □ Paypal.com □ Sadad.com □

Would you encourage the system to have customer support via phone services?
Yes □ No □

Should the website provide cancelation and return of services in case of any issues?
Yes □ No □

Do you require any additional services after your booking is confirmed? (for example, photographers, waiters, etc.) If yes, please state below.
Yes □ No □