The Animation Industry in Jordan: Issues, Challenges, Historical Influences and Recommendations for Development

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The Animation Industry in Jordan: Issues, Challenges, Historical Influences and Recommendations for Development

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. It is original and is the result of my work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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Date: May, 2019
DEDICATION

To my family
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I thank Allah (SWT), for giving me the health and power to continue this work and making it possible to see the completion of my PhD program.

This thesis is the end of my journey in obtaining my Ph.D. This thesis has been successfully completed with the support and encouragement of numerous people including my well-wishers, my friends and colleagues. At the end of my thesis I would like to thank all those people who made this thesis possible and an unforgettable experience for me.

At this moment of accomplishment, I am extremely indebted to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Wan Jamarul Wan Abdullah Thani. This work would not have been possible without his guidance, support and encouragement. Under his guidance, I successfully overcame many difficulties and learned a lot. Despite his deanship responsibilities, he used to review my thesis progress, give his valuable suggestions and made corrections. His unflinching encouragement and conviction will always inspire me.

No words can express my thanks and gratitude to all the members of my family. All the thanks go to my merciful mother and beloved father, to whom I owe all the achievements in my life, for their continuous encouragement, support and patience. Great thanks also go to my sisters and brothers who always supporting me husband Saleem and my children (Yasmeen, Mohammad, Rahaf and Yousef) for the love and help they always give me.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to provide a clear description of the history and the development of animation scene in Jordan. The research aims to improve and get the better practices of animation industry to become along with the significant approaches in the development and growth of the sector in the country. It introduces the emergence and the history and the current situation of animation industry. It focuses on issues and challenges facing the sector. The research uses the qualitative research approach which was chosen as the most effective and appropriate approach to explore the situation of this industry. Methodology includes several methods such as historical enquiries, interviews, observations, and case studies. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The research has identified and addressed the challenges and issues that tackle the animation sector. It also reveals the importance of the internet and social media networks for the development of animation sector as a free platform for broadcasting and publishing the creative production of the artists. Internet and social media platforms such as YouTube also work as new medium to archive the animation shorts and clips. The findings and recommendations of this research will result in original knowledge to Jordanian animation makers and for the development of animation industry.

Keywords: Jordan, animation industry.
Industri Animasi di Jordan: Isu, Cabaran, Pengaruh Sejarah dan Cadangan untuk Pembangunan

ABSTRAK


Kata kunci: Jordan, industri animasi.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2D Two Dimensions
3D Three Dimensions
AMC Arab Multimedia Company
CEO Chief Executive Officer
CGI Computer Generated Image
DARPA Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
DW Deutsche Welle
GAM Greater Amman Municipality
IT Information Technology
KHBP King Hussein Business Park
MENA Middle East and North Africa
MGM Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc.
MMS Multimedia Messages
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
RFCJ Royal Film Commission Jordan
RGH Rubicon Group Holding
SIM Sketch in Motion
SME Small and Medium Enterprises
TRC Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID United States Agency for International Development
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore and to document the development and the circumstances of animation sector in Jordan. It focuses on associated issues and challenges facing the sector. The research mainly uses the qualitative research approach which includes several methods such as historical enquiries, primary interviews and observations.

This research is crucial because it provides, for the first time, the history of animation in Jordan. It is also give a description of the animation scene as well as the challenges and issues related to the field. Besides, it covered the history of Jordanian animation, where there is a scarcity in the existing literature about Jordanian and Arab animation industry.

1.2 Research Background

Since the establishment of Jordan television in 1968, there has been a demand for television cartoon content. However, the beginnings of animation in Jordan trace back to the 1980s. Early development of the Jordanian animation sector began before the establishment of animation programs in art and design departments. Its first initiatives started with Jordan TV in 1987 when they produced “Al Manahel” series. It is believed that the TV program “AL Manahel” had introduced the first animation series to the Jordan viewers and inspired the artists after twenty years. Thus, the establishment of modern animation practices in Jordan was influenced and inspired by “Al Manahel” which included many animation scenes.
The demand for cartoon content has increased since that time in Jordan and in the Arab countries. However, the animation industry is still reliant on imported animations especially from Japan. Subsequently, and as a response to this demand, a variety of animation studios were founded to produce Arabic content to Arab TV channels. In Jordan is the first Arab country to develop media free zone concept in the region to attract private satellite channels (Guaaybess, 2013). These channels that target children rely mainly on animation content.

However, these channels are dependent on imported and outsourced animation, some of which is not appropriate for the Arab audience because it may have inappropriate effect on Arab culture. The issue of reliance on imported programs has previously been addressed from a cultural perspective by a number of studies including (Al-Sharqawi, 2012; Belkhyr, 2013; Rishah, 2013; Tayie, 2008; Yanardağoğlu & Karam, 2013; Zakia, 2016)

Nevertheless, even with the consciousness and understanding that has learned from these studies, which have showed the impact of imported foreign programs including animation content on Arab culture. In this context, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge there is few of studies that focus on the Arab animation industry and absence of studies that focus on Jordanian animation industry that study the reliance on imported animation and the development of the sector in Jordan.

Relevant studies published in this subject have discussed Arab animation from historical perspective such as Bendazzi and Taraboletti-Segre (1994), Ghazala (2011) and Van de Peer (2017b) which published at the time of writing this thesis. Alrimawi (2014) addressed the practices and issues of human representation in Arab animation cinema in besides the history. Recently, Alharbi (2017) examines the Saudi animation industry and investigates
the barriers that are preventing the development of its life cycle. However, much has been
written about the animation industries in Asian countries, Europe and North America.

According to Statista (2018), statistics show that the global animation market is estimated
to be worth 259 billion U.S. dollars in 2018 and 270 billion U.S. dollars in 2020. In
response to this worthy environment, different countries have begun to develop their
animation industry sector to benefit from this huge market economically (O’Connor, 2009;
Potts, 2009). In this context, the animation industry has the potentials to be a significant
contributor to the creative economy and national economies in Jordan and in the Arab
world.

This increasing demand raised the awareness and encouraged many entrepreneurs about
the importance of developing their national animation industries. Thus, to cover this
demand and benefit from animation as an economic source, countries with strongly
developed animation industries such as Canada and France put more efforts into sustaining
their domestic industries, while countries with established but less developed industries
such as Korea and China succeeded in developing and upgrading their domestic industries.
Besides, there is also a rising body of literature that recognizes the importance of
developing domestic animation industries in Asian countries that started developing as
outsourcer hubs more recently, such as the Philippines, India, Malaysia, and Bangladesh
(Alharbi, 2017).

New media and entertainment industry is a new sector in Jordan. The numbers of
companies involved in this creative industry is increasing and decreasing other times,
mainly, with the political situations in the Arab countries. (Appendix F) shows the list of
animation studios in Jordan. In the context of the development and potentials of animation
industry in Jordan, many international and Arabic media networks commissioned companies in Jordan to work together or sign an agreement for co-production. For example in July 2007, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc., and Jordan's Rubicon animation company began co-production of the animated series Pink Panther and Pals portraying a teenaged panther and his friends. Other new companies are producing their own animation for Jordan and Arab market as well.

In the other hand, the expansion of digital technology in animation industry opened diverse perception among art and design institutions in Jordan. They start teaching students how to use the new technology in animation production in order to cover the demand for skillful animators in this field. It is obvious that creative art industry in Jordan and Arab countries has expanded. Numbers of artists and animators who engaged in this industry expanded as well.

However, there is a huge gap in terms of studies examining the development of the animation industry in Arab countries; to the best of this author’s knowledge, only three studies, in the first one, Alrimawi (2014) highlighted the issues facing the development of the Arab animation cinema in general. His study is mainly focused on the issue of human figure representation in Arab animation cinema. While the second study, Alharbi (2017), examines the Saudi animation industry and investigates the obstacles that are facing the development of its life cycle. In the third study, Elhersh (2018) studied the Arabic animation film industry from the point of view of its producers. In addition, he examines the reasons of weakness of the Arabic animation films and the possible causes of the absence of the Arabic animation films from the world stage.

Additionally, to the end of this research knowledge, there has been no research on the
issues and challenges facing animation industry development in Jordan in particular. Therefore, this thesis seeks to fill this gap by studying the Jordanian animation industry from historical influences and industrial development perspectives. It seeks to identify and discuss issues and challenges facing the development of the industry, thereby contributing to the limited body of literature on the Arab animation industry. In addition, this study will document the growth of the Jordanian animation industry, allowing it to be a ground study for further research of the animation industry in particular. In addition, it will be a contribution to research on the animation industry in the Arab world in general and to the growing body of literature focus on animation industry development in the global scale.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Recent studies on the development of animation industry identify the critical role played by the many different issues and challenges that affect and face the industry development. However, researchers have not examined these issues, challenges and factors in Jordanian scene, and no attempt has been made to identify the crucial issues and challenges facing the development of Jordanian animation industry. Hence, this study investigates these challenges and issues and brings them together to investigate their impact on the animation industry.

This research assumes that the developing animation industry in Jordan is a complex issue that is affected by all of involved factors; however, this study also argues that it is more effective and impactful to conclude which factors are most substantial in the case of Jordan, and thus, it attempts to identify how each of these factors contributes to the development of the animation industry by examining animation industry landscape.
1.4 Motivation

Several different rationales motivate this research. The first is the importance of the animation industry as a cultural device. Animation is considered to be a medium that can convey the cultural identity of a nation and thus it is worthwhile for Jordan to protect its culture for future generations and to convey its cultural identity to other nations through that medium. Although this cultural aspect is an important motivation for this study, the research does not focus on studying Jordanian animation from a cultural perspective. Instead, the research seeks to contribute more directly to the development of the Jordanian animation industry, in the hope that the outcomes of this research will enhance the growth of Jordanian animation, which can then be utilized to reduce the unemployment rate in Jordan reaching an all-time high of 18.70% in the second quarter of 2018 (Statistics, 2018). Based on this employment turn, it is worth considering investment in the animation industry as another source of economic development.

1.5 Objectives of the Research

This study hopes to open an extensive understanding of the development and the associated issues of the animation industry in Jordan. The aim of this research is to investigate the Jordanian animation industry in order to explore the issues and challenges that facing sustaining and developing the Jordanian animation industry. It is also aims to determine the significant factors that influence the development of the industry and then develop recommendations for sustaining and developing this vital industry.

To achieve the aim of this study, this thesis intentionally dedicated to three objectives. They are:
i. To provide a clear description of the development of animation industry scene in Jordan.

ii. To determine the significant issues and challenges those face and influence the development animation industry in Jordan.

iii. To draw recommendations for empowering and developing the animation industry in Jordan.

The first objective depicts and describes in detail the historical situation of the development and the growth of animation industry in Jordan as well as the character designers’ practices. It describes the early emergence of the animation practices and the chronological context of founding the animation companies. It also provides a detailed description of issues and factors influencing the existence and development of the animation sector. This is to build up the historical context of the animation industry.

The second objective is to determine the significant issues and challenges those face and influence the development animation industry in Jordan. Achieving this objective will contribute a major outcome of this research is that it determined which issues and challenges have the most significant impact on the animation industry in Jordan and identified the strategies the multiple case study countries adopted for these factors to develop their local animation industry. This will be achieved by the analysis of interviews conducting with industry experts, observations, and secondary source analysis.

The third objective is to draw recommendations for empowering and developing the animation industry in Jordan. These recommendations are based on describing and analyzing the overall situation and determining the issues and challenges facing the development of the sector. However, these recommendations are specifically for the
Jordanian animation industry situations taking in consideration the ability of these recommendations to be implemented on the ground. All these objectives will help to enhance sustainability and development of animation industry in Jordan.

1.6 Limitations of the Research

The research faced many limitations. The first one is that the very small number of companies which are involved in animation field. They are only about six companies who really involved in animation industry. This small number of company’s results from Jordanian artists and character designers involved in this sector are slightly low too. Most of them are based and work in different countries. In this context, the researcher faced difficulty in access to number of interviewees primarily intended because not all the respondents who were contacted replied.

Secondly, there are insufficient references or published materials on the Arabic creative arts industries. Furthermore, there is only one animation festival organized in Amman, Jordan and run for only two editions. It is the “Jordan Animation Festival 2012,” organized under the Royal Patronage of HRH Princess Sumaya El Hassan for only two years. Unfortunately, almost nothing was documented regarding this festival. Few of its events and photos are archived on many websites.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for those involved in animation industry. It studied the overall animation industry landscape as it covered the different phases of the animation evolution in Jordan. Moreover, this study investigated the issues and challenges that facing the development of the Jordanian animation industry that has not been studied before.
It is also significant for the creative art and entertainment industry. It is a resource and reference to help the stakeholders in their practices with a greater awareness and understanding of the history and the current situation of the animation sector in Jordan which provide the investors with required data they need to encourage their investment. Besides, it covered the history of Jordanian animation, where there is a scarcity in the existing literature about Jordanian and Arab animation industry.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the literature review and is consist of seven sections. The first section provides a historical overview of the Arab animation history. The second section presents the development factors of Arab animation industry. The third section presents the characteristics of Arab animation industry. The fourth section introduces the history and emergence of animation institutions in Jordan. The fifth section deals with the animation history in Jordan. The seventh section presents the digital painting in Jordan through the painting of Jordanian artists. And the last section shows the efforts of the main players of animation industry in Jordan.

2.1 Arab Animation History

The beginning of showings of animations was in early 20th century especially in France and the United States. While Bray served to promote the careers of the animators that created characters, it is believed that Egypt, initiated the establishment of Arabic animation (Bassiouney, 2015).

The animation market in the region has been divided into three sections that include advertisements, series and films, and games. It is worth noting that most of them are in the introduction stage. However, they are active since a low budget is required in the advertisement sector. However, the process of production in all sectors is simple. Imported animation mainly dominates the films and series sector (Elhersh, 2018).

Few scholars focus on the history and the development of the animation industry in the Arab World. Mohamed Ghazala was the first artist-educator to address the gaps that have
been left in the discourses on world animation. Mohammed Gazala’s Animation in the Arab World: A glance on the Arabian animated films since 1936 published in 2011 was the first and only work dedicated to animated films from the Arab world until 2017 when the book release by Stephanie van de Peer titled Animation in the Middle East: Practice and aesthetics from Baghdad to Casablanca. Stephanie van de Peer engages with much of this rich past and present, but low-budget animation often moves at a step that academic book publication cycles can be hard-pressed to match.

Historically, as cinema flourished earlier and more confidently than other countries in the region, animation also first started in Egypt. Frenkel brothers in the 1930s and 1940s and Moheeb Brothers in 1950s; the parallel development and increasing popularity of television animation in the 1970s in Lebanon; the countless experimental Moroccan short animations of the 1990s; as well as the application of animation as a stand-in for the lost archive in Palestinian cinema in the 2010s and the animated response to the Arab Revolution- animation has a much longer and complicated history than imagined (Van de Peer, 2017). Given this long heritage and dynamic present, the lack of film grant on Middle Eastern animation is surprising.

In this context, Ghazala explains the reasons behind the small selection of Arab animation in his booklet; he collected those Arab animated films individually by himself. The main problem was that he could not find any official archive or library for Arab animation (Alrimawi, 2014).

According to Van de Peer (2017) in 1934, three immigrant brothers from Soviet Belarus settled in Egypt, Solomon David and Frankel Herschel, introduced the children’s character, Mish-Mish Effendi in their film 'Nothing’ to Do (1934). Later shorts starring the character
include National defense (1940) and "Bilhana Oushefa" which means in English enjoy your Food in 1947. Figure 2.1 shows the character Mish-Mish Afandi.

Figure 2.1: The Character of Mish-Mish Afandi

Source: http://mideastmation.blogspot.com/search/label/Egypt

Another pioneer in the Arab scene is Antoine Selim Ibrahim, Ibrahim was born in 1911. Aziza and Younes are two characters were introduced by Ibrahim in El Shiek Barakat's Book. It was the first animation to have an Arabic soundtrack. He made three more films in the following decade, including 1940's Dokdok (Bendazzi & Taraboletti-Segre, 1994).

Animation continued to flourish in Egypt in the 1960s. Leading a group of fellow illustrators and filmmakers Ali and Husam Muhib, arts graduates, began airing animated programs on the Egyptian national television channel. Ali Muhib went on to produce The White Line in 1902, the first film that mixed live action with animation, as well as the first Arabic-language animation series, the thirty-episode Mishgias Sawah in 1979. Egyptian
animation was already concerned with politics and society at the time: Noshi Iskandar’s One and Five trilogy of films addressed the Six-Day War, and his later work Excellent in 1975, Corruption (Bendazzi, Ippolito, & Burnett, 2006).

After a long period of interruption, some of the shy attempts and individual attempts lasted until the early 1990s when the Ala Studio for Artistic Production in Jeddah was founded by Osama Khalifa. Alaa Studio has produced a number of distinctive works, starting with the 1995 film "Mohamed El Fateh", which was popular in the Arab world. Ala studio, although modest in quality, has a good team of painters and painters, with a coloring team of about 45 people. Ala's studio produced 15 films and some other series, mostly using traditional hand painting and painting techniques. However, according to the founder Osama Khalifa, the studio has a strong 3D graphics team and their works will be launched in time. Figure 2.2 shows screen shot from Lion of Ain Jalut, 1998.

![Lion of Ain Jalut, 1998](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQHil9ovuDc)

**Figure 2.2:** Lion of Ain Jalut, 1998

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQHil9ovuDc

There is also Star Studio for Art Production, which was founded in 1997 by Tahseen Al-Muzik in Syria. The studio produced "The Jar: A Tale of the East" in 2001. The film won
some international awards and was a success locally. I'm not sure about the current status of this studio but I do not think they're still active. These works generally do not match the global productions in the West or Japan in terms of quality, but they were Arab productions with Arab hands and Arab content, which distinguishes them and makes them a base to develop and improve in the future. Unfortunately most of the Arab productions are simple productions, short works, or long productions as big as those that I spoke about but do not continue or develop. Figure 2.3 shows the film poster of The Jar: A Tale of the East.

![Image of The Jar: A Tale of the East](https://www.mlb.com/title/tt0304230/mediaviewer/rm1952320256)

**Figure 2.3:** The Jar: A Tale of the East, 2001

Source: [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0304230/mediaviewer/rm1952320256](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0304230/mediaviewer/rm1952320256)

To this point, animations mentioned in this review are intended for children or a small age group. Recently, however, Arab work has begun to address the larger categories or age
groups. These businesses, however small, have enjoyed a somewhat high production level, some with tight budgets. Bilal is perhaps the most notable film, with a budget of 30 million dollars and amazing production and Torkaizer, and the most recent emirate.

Although this research respects these works, Bilal for example, but it is seen as a big weakness affected observers and the researcher not to be optimistic about the future of Arab industry, which is identity. The works this research has mentioned are devoid of Arab identity. It is hard to distinguish between Torkaizer and any other Japanese anime, not in terms of story, work, or even vocal performance, many of which were Japanese! "The first anime in the Middle East" is what Ego Punch (the producer's studio) describes as work, so the research see in Torkaizer (Figure 2.4) only an ordinary anime wrapped in an Arabic cover.

![Torkaizer](http://egonauts.com/main/alter-ego-projects/torkaizer/)

**Figure 2.4:** Torkaizer

This is in terms of identity, but if we talk about this subject in terms of technology or productivity, most of the people working on the work are not Arabs. Arab industry will not continue to grow and represent the Arab image and values unless the manufacturers themselves are Arabs.

With its young population of digital natives, the Middle East has animators who hold the entrepreneurial: animation infuses social media, gaming and commercial advertising, while also undermining barriers to communication through creativity, humor and open information. The animated transnational exchange is still fueled as much by the search for a common Arab identity as by the common profits of increased dialogue, morale and civic creativity (Jilani, 2017).

As Arab's animation facilities expanded and university courses were offered during the 1990s and 2000s, more significant animation work hits TV channels and social media networks in the region. Created by Dubai resident Mohammed Saeed Harib and running since 2006, Freej is a CGI television series about a quartet of elderly women. It has attracted quite a bit of attention in the English language media, with articles at Wikipedia, Think up News and The economist and many online magazines and blogs (Neil, 2014).

Another success animation is created by Kuwait's Dr. Naif Al Mutawa, the 99 is a comic book and animated series about a team of Islamic superheroes. An English language version of The 99 exists and has been shown certain countries, including Ireland and Australia. The series has managed to attract a good deal of controversy in certain quarters. Pundit Pamela Gellar claimed that it was part of an "ongoing onslaught of cultural jihad", while the Saudi Grand Mufti issued a fatwa against it. On the other hand, it won the
endorsement of Barack Obama (Neil, 2014). Figure 2.5 shows the 99 heroes.

![The 99 Heroes](http://mideastmation.blogspot.com)

**Figure 2.5:** The 99 Heroes

Source: http://mideastmation.blogspot.com

Al-Masageel, 2D animation series created by Sketch in Motion, is one of the best animation shows in the Arab World. Aired two seasons in Ramadan 2011 and 2012, season three aired in Ramadan 2013, with creative animation, variety of funny characters and surprising plots.

As well as Al-Masageel, the studio's projects include Ben7bek ya Baladna, a series of short clips intended for Palestinian audiences; Yahoo! Safety Oasis, a series of online games teaching children about safety on the Internet; and Iraq, a public information film about terrorism. Figure 2.6 shows Al-Masageel animation.
Due to the high costs of the necessary equipment for celluloid animation production, Arab animators generally operated within local television production institutions supervised by governmental institutions until the late 1980s. Early Arab animation shared many similarities with European artisan-style animation, such as a focus on artistic quality, but was characterized by high costs, high risks and lower budgets resulting in lower quality (Storper & Salais, 1997).

Middle Eastern animation’s quickness is necessary for its survival. Adapting to some remarkable circumstances, Hind Wakil and Eli Saliba of Lighthouse VFX, for instance, continue to work from Damascus, creating animation for TV and online platforms out of a war. Other innovative animation start-ups that operate under difficult conditions include David Habchy studios. A skillful illustrator and animator, Habchy is keeping the art of stop-motion alive in Lebanon (Jilani, 2017).
One major difference in the case of Arab producers was their exclusive association with national academic hierarchies and cultural industries, which often reduced the producers' personal risks to zero. Even so, early animators in Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia could only survive with great deal of persistence and a willingness to take jobs in local media industries and institutions by producing advertisements and animated parts for television programs (Sayfo, 2017).

The production of Arab feature-length Animations still considers low. Less than 0.05% of the broadcasted animations are produced in the Arab countries (Khaleifa, 2009). However, it is clearly noticed that Arab animated cartoon production made good progression in the explosion of television series and web cartoons. The presented animations by Television channels from Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan and the Gulf countries are revolving around national themes. These national themes were demonstrated by Al Fareej, United Arab Emirates, and Nahfat Eilitna, Jordan. In that way, they inspire similar productions in other Arab countries (Sayfo, 2017).

According to Sayfo (2017), many geo-linguistically relevant series animated series as well as educational material have been presented by Arab channels such as MBC3 and Al-Jazeera Children's Channel (JCC). In addition, some other productions with culturally relevant- such as the Egyptian-made series Stories in the Qur'an were presented and finding their way to the screens of non-Arab Muslim societies such as in Turkey.

Arab animation production grew with noticeable range in the early 2000s. The growth of the sector is including the levels of production and distribution as well as changing in nature.
The growth of Dubai, one of the United Arab Emirates, as an Arab hub for animation is a fact. This fact is achieved as a result of efforts to cultivate the animation industry in the city. In order to make Dubai as a regional media hub, the government provides "world-class infrastructure and good working environments including visa issues" to artists (Al-Abed, Vine, & Hellyer, 2006).

According to Elhersh (2018) the main challenge limiting the Arab animation sector is lack of appropriate technology to run the industry onward. The region pauses late "regarding the content as a result of the low adoption of technologies that would have spearheaded the animation boom". In this context, exploring issues and challenges theoretically to diagnose and address them holistically is required.

2.2 The Development Factors of Arab Animation Industry

The animation market in the Arab region is divided into three sections that include advertisements, series and films, and games. In most of Arab countries, animation industry is in the beginning phase. There is a considerable absence of established Arab production in animation for the domestic market. This is clear from the domination of importing foreign animated productions for the Arab audience (Alrimawi, 2014; Elhersh, 2018).

However, the late 1990s was an indication of a new dawn for Arab animation production. The Arab animation production dramatically increased in both quality and quantity. According to Sayfo (2017a), this growth was principally driven by three factors: the proliferation of Arab satellite channels, the liberalizing policies of a number of Arab governments regarding media ownership, and the introduction of new animation technologies.
2.2.1 The Proliferation of Arab Satellite Channels

Demand for local television productions in the Arab countries grew as a reason of the increased number of Arab satellite channels. The expansion of satellite technology and the transition of Arab satellites in the 1990s led to the erosion of government monopolies over television programs and the introduction of channels owned by private entrepreneurs, businessman, political and religious institutions and other actors (Sayfo, 2017a).

In the end, a number of Arab children's channels, run by profit-making companies such as MBC3, as well as governmental channels such as Al-Jazeera Children's Channel (JCC), and religious institutions, Taha TV, were created with a view to providing products of cultural relevance to children. These channels broadcast many old animations, but at the same time they catered the huge demand for both imported and domestic new productions. Accordingly, Local animation studios and production houses responded quickly to demand from broadcasters, but the gap between demand and supply remained a problem (Sayfo, 2017a).

2.2.2 The Liberalizing Policies of Arab Governments Regarding Media Ownership

Liberalizing policies of Egyptian governments regarding media ownership production and relatively liberal environment in some types of business, Egypt quickly rose to become the hub for producing animated animation series and films. From the early 1990s onward, other Arab governments also introduced economic reforms that paved the way for the creation of new production houses and animation studios. The new policies in Arab countries such as Syria, investment Law No 10 of 1991, Jordan a four-year national economic and social plan 1993, Establishing Dubai Media City in January 2001, and the shifting toward a knowledge-based economy in Saudi Arabia have encouraged establishing
animation studios in those countries (Alharbi & Baines, 2015; Sayfo, 2017a). As a result of liberalizing policies, the 2000s witnessed establishing a number of start-up animation studios in Lebanon (David Habchy), Jordan (Sketch in Motion, established in 2007), Saudi Arabia (Nejercom, established in 2011) and United Arab Emirates (Fanar Production, established in 2008).

2.2.3 The Introduction of New Animation Technologies

The third factor that has improved Arab animation production can be found in global technological and media trends. The great financial success of Disney's Toy Story in 1995 opened the gates to a new worldwide interest in animation. In less than ten years, new 3D techniques have replaced the old CGI animations, and large companies such as Disney and Fox have closed their traditional studios to focus on 3D animation (Sayfo, 2017b). Since 2000s, the majority of Western animations were already made by the computer. Compared to conventional CGI animation, 3D animations requires fewer workforces and less talented animators. Technological development has led to a boom in two-dimensional productions as well, with specialized computer software increasing artist productivity by six or more times (Tschang & Goldstein, 2004).

The decline in computer prices in the early 2000s, coupled with easy access to 3D animation programs, allowed a number of Arab individuals and companies to start catching up with Western and Asian companies that already had long traditions in the animation business field. In a short time, a large number of animation studios grew up, with few animators gained advantageous experience working abroad and entrepreneurs who gained some experience in the media business (Van de Peer, 2017a).
However, many of those animators have practice self-learning using free programs and, in some cases, because of the absence or weakness of intellectual property laws, unregistered copies of animation programs to train themselves before they start their work. The production process of 3D animated cartoons enabled production phases to disperse geographically: producers lacking their own capacity for animation production could outsource technology-intensive phases to experts beyond the geographical borders, as discussed below (Sayfo, 2017a).

2.3 Characteristics of Arab Animation Industry

According to Sayfo (2017a) in the Arab animation industry the numbers of potential authors and original ideas is large. And most directors have already earned a reputation through directing movies and television dramas. This situation with long experience in directing put the stages of conceptualization and pre-production in a relatively strong position in the chain of Arab animation production. But the scarcity of Arab screenwriters is problem in this stage. Therefore, sometimes it is said that the historical aspect and the preaching side is dominated by the Arab cartoon producers and thus limit themselves either in a historical framework or a framework of direct preaching or an interesting material that is boring, not interesting and has no artistic value (Khaleifa, 2009).

The lack of training opportunities remains a problem in Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, while it is improving in Jordan and the UAE. In training context, Rubicon Group Holding, Jordanian company, played significant role in training the animators who mastered the production techniques and gain good experience showed in the Arab world and in the global scale (Al-Ayoubi, 2012).
In contrast, the production stage still suffers from various weaknesses compared to international animation industry. For example, 3D animation is a trend in the global animation industry nowadays. But, there are relatively few institutions or courses teaching 3D in particular and 2D animation. A number of studios are forced to hire talented self-taught young animators and then train them. On the ground, this is what happened with RGH, SIM and Kharabeesh in Jordan for example (Al-Ayoubi, 2012), (Abo-Salem, 2016), (Moaiad, 2017) . The cultural factors of the Arab media also present challenges to producers. Watching television series in Ramadan become trend in the Arab world.

More than 200 million dollars cost of producing Arab drama during the month of Ramadan. This cost, the largest of its kind in the history of the Arab television channels has made many talk about what they call the economics of the production of Arab series in Ramadan, the main features of these economies in the organic link. The most important feature of this month is the logic of figures supported by the figures. The month of Ramadan alone accounts for about 60% of the total advertising revenue in the Arab region, which is worth about five billion dollars. The Arab advertising cake is the largest in this holy month (Fawi, 2018). Therefore, the majority of producers schedule their series to start broadcasting in Ramadan.

In the context of animation industry stages, while the stages of conceptualization and pre-production continue throughout the year, the high season for production starts three to four months before Ramadan, when producers hand over the scripts to the animators. Very few animation studios employ all their animators all year round; instead, to save money, they hire freelancers in what might be called the animation season (Moaiad, 2017). At that point competition for talented animators becomes serious, whereas these same people are hard
put to find jobs outside the season (Sayfo, 2017b). Meanwhile, the number of animators available poses no serious problems for producers from United Arab Emirates and Jordan. Producers with cash power have the ability to overcome these problems by signing up with animation studios outside the Arab world. Al-Farij, for example, although represent a national icon in Dubai, has been animated in India. Besides, Tesh Eyal, produced by Saudi-owned MBC, has been outsourced to India and represents a remarkably high quality in animation compared to most of the Gulf animation that has been attributed to Egypt (Sayfo, 2017b).

Among the few examples of Arab studios which signed for the animation production with international networks, the Tunisian Computer Graphic Studio, creator of the renowned sitcom animation Tunis 2050, which subcontracted to Dargaud Media for producing series of Garfield and Bali. It also collaborated with Planet Nemo Studio on productions aired on Disney Channel and with Cyber Group Studios for producing Mademoiselle Zazie, aired on France Televisions. Besides, Jordan's Rubicon Holding, which signed for a co-production with MGM Studios for Pink Panther and Pais aired on Cartoon Network. They also did animation work for the production of Postman Pat: The Movie and The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus (Sayfo, 2017b). The co-production contracts with MGM Studios indicate the potentials of Arab animation in producing high quality animation with fair cost for both side (Al-Ayoubi, 2012).

In the process of producing 3D animation, a distinction is made between execution work and creative work. Creative work such as character design, script and process control can be geographically separate from drawing, coloring and labor-intensive animating (Cole, 2008). With the creation of new structural boundaries, regional and local producers are
getting new resources to work on, both materially, such as financial and technical resources, as well as symbolism, such as ideas and models (Straubhaar, 2006).

Sayfo (2017b) summarizes the main actors of Arab animation industry saying:

"The main actors in modern Arabic animation production chain are television channels, production houses and animation studios that form vertically and geographically unconnected networks engaged in dedicated collaboration in specific projects. Despite the great growth of the past decade, the production of Arab animation is still not competitive in the global markets……Thus, although its presence in global markets is limited, Arab animations, as "local heroes", occupy an important position in national and geological markets, demonstrating the strength of forces against global media giants".

2.4 History and Emergence of Animation Institutions in Jordan

This section reviews the early history of art in Jordan until the foundation of fine art colleges which later embedded multimedia and animation programs. The establishment of those programs gives a new dimension to the art and design scene in Jordan. The emergence of animation is seen as expansion and in the art and design practices and as a development of TV programs in the eighties. The existence of the new technology associated with computer software has created a good and interesting entertainment and animation industry in Jordan. This situation has involved and embedded the awareness and the culture of animation industry in Jordan scene.

In the early nineteenth century, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was founded. This construction stage had a lot of difficulties and barriers, the most notable being the wars and
conflicts. This situation caused a delay of developing the life style and, as a result, the art scene which began to develop just in seventies of the century. According to Al-Zyoud (2010), globalization has affected Jordanian society in different ways. In the art context, the eighties of the last century art approaches focused on creating the group consciousness for the society. In the nineties, huge global changes, technology, media and communication revolution helped the artistic image to represent a new level of awareness. Globalization and the concept of post-modernism art styles, techniques and new materials, changed the philosophic and aesthetic values.

Contemporary Jordanian Art in the nineties faced some changes. The change in media technologies, globalization policies, and the development of science and technology make the world a small village. Promoting globalization thoughts in all parts of world and removing the cultural barriers and differences, led to the complexity and diversity of the global cultural scene. Jordan was in the middle of these complex changes and conflicts.

Therefore, the Jordanian art scene has been influenced by many factors such as the artistic and intellectual global contemporary art movements, conflicts and wars in the region as well. It is also influenced by the communication revolution, digital media, and computer culture. Globalization created new cultures, political, social and economic systems such as the concepts of freedom, democracy, human rights and capitalism and open markets culture.

Since the Jordanian art and design scene was a part of this scene, and the current situation of information exchange and diversity; the change feature and the artistic acculturation led to the influence by the universal and regional arts directly or indirectly. This influence made a sequence of changes in the intellectual approach of the Jordanian art structure
reflected as a change in its tools, techniques, mediums and in subject and in vision as well. Therefore, Jordanian Art has been affected by the international artist technology, methods and themes (Obeidat, 2014).

In the fifties and sixties number of art gatherings such as the Jordan Art forum and Jordan Art Symposium were founded in 1953. These two gatherings have contributed to the development of the art movement by creating an atmosphere of competition between artists (AboZraiq, 2011).

In the sixties and seventies, many international cultural centers were founded in Jordan such as the American culture center, the French Culture Centre, and Goethe Institute. They give the local artists a big chance to view, examine, and acquaint with the international artworks. During this phase many opportunities for the artists to study outside of Jordan became available. After few years later, the artists returned back to Jordan. They form the plastic art movement in Jordan (Ali, 2005).

In the seventies, new art institutions in Jordan were established. In 1978, the Department of fine Arts at Yarmouk University, which was a pioneer and important institution in the Jordanian plastic art scene, was founded. At the same time Jordanian Fine Artists Association was founded as well. In 1979, the formation of the Royal Society of Fine Arts took place. One of the most important achievements of the Royal Society of Fine Arts was founding the National Museum of Fine Arts. Activities offered by the National Museum of Fine Arts have had the greatest impact in the development of Jordan's Fine Art development (AboZraiq, 1990).

Since mid-nineties to the first ten years of the third millennium, the Jordanian art
movement has passed in a deep-seated variations and changes that reflected in the artistic image. One of these changes is the major transform in the media and in the informatics, as well as the changes in regional and universal political events. In addition, the effects of the globalization culture were accompanied with a set of technological and media such as satellite TV, Internet, stereotyping freedoms and behaviors. Throughout this time, the Jordanian art viewed strong changes in quantity and quality. These changes clearly viewed in the artistic styles, methods of performance, global artistic influences, visions, standards and technical controls (Obeidat, 2014).

Art as an academic field was established in Jordan in 1958 when Muhanna Al Durrah, painter, established the Jordan fine art institute (now Muhanna Durrah Institute). After 31 years later, Department of Fine Arts was founded in Yarmouk University at the beginning of the academic year 80/81; it was in the sections of the Faculty of Arts and remained in the Departments of Education and Arts, which was established in the academic year 88/89. In the year of 2000, the department became a College of Fine Arts.

Major change has occurred in this College during that period. Remarkable enhancement began in quantity and quality, in terms of teaching and administrative cadres and the number of students, facilities and equipment and the diversity of the main and sub-specialties. Fine Arts College began with 74 faculty members and four academic departments; Fine Arts, Design, Drama and Music. It has divided into four departments. The college has made, and continues to advance the quality of education in different areas of the arts in order to care personal development of students and graduate students with outstanding technical competence and broad vision. These aims are one visible presence in the market work internally and externally.
In 2002, the College of Art and Design at the University of Jordan opened as a governmental art institution. Within the same time, departments of Art and Design in seven of the private universities were founded too. They concentrate on graphic design and interior design as a response to the high demand on design programs and the need for transmission from traditional tools and methods to digital tools and techniques.

Animation is an important sub-sector in creative industries, the need for qualified graduates to work directly in the labor market is critical to the growth and development of the industry (Abdullah & Ishak, 2016). Therefore, Jordanian institutions established many programs including animation courses. Nowadays, three governmental faculties of fine arts and more than nine private university departments are teaching graphic design. Six of them have already started teaching animation; Princess Sumaya University, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Petra University and Al Balqa Applied University and School of Audio Engineering – Jordan institute. After graduation their students get the BA degree in animation while other students who graduate, after two years, get the technical Diploma in animation.

Table 2.1 summarizes information collected from different multimedia institutions and shows the details of programs offered by institutions teaching animation in Jordan. Programs in these universities and departments are trying to provide the local market with qualified students that the animation industry still need. The emergence of multimedia and animation programs gives a new dimension to art and design scene in Jordan. The emergence of animation is seen as expansion and extension in the art and design practices and as a development at TV programs in the 1980s. The existence of the new technology associated with computer software and animation has created an interesting entertainment
and animation industry. This industry has involved the culture of animation Jordan panorama.

Table 2.1: Institutions offer Animation & Multimedia Programs in Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Institute Type of Program</th>
<th>Type of University</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>B. Sc of Design and visual communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Jordanian University (GJU)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>BA in Design and Visual Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balqa Applied University (BAU)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>B. Sc in Computer Aided Design &amp; Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>B. Sc in Computer Graphics and Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Petra (UOP)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>BA in Animation &amp; Multimedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Audio Engineering. SAE Institute Jordan</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Diploma in visual Effects Animation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In providing a clear and detailed description, the previous events procure, relevant publications including books theses and documentation available from NGO's and government resources such as Royal Film commission Jordan, art and design institutions programs, events and also the publications of animation companies were studied. Archives of those entities on the social media networks were studied too. The social media networks archive was significant resource for this research in quality and in quantity. These
resources became essential reference to outline the history and the early emergence of animation in Jordan. Data is also obtained from primary sources interviews as well.

The review of all these resources provides a historical description including the efforts and first exploratory steps from individuals, entrepreneurs, companies, and art and design institutions. This detailed description provides the researcher with valued information about the early development of animation sector. Consequently, this review has provided and built a perceptive of the general point of views on the materialization and the development of animation in Jordan. This overall perspective is significant for the decision makers and all individuals interested in developing animation practices in specific and animation industry and character designers in Jordan in general.

2.5 Jordanian Animation History

Jordan, despite having a national cinema only a decade old (Amin Matalqa’s home-grown Captain Abu Raed, 2008, is considered the first film), continues to be a vital hub for animators in the region. Its relative political stability has allowed for greater freedom of expression, which crucially attracts Gulf funding for Syrian, Egyptian, Tunisian and Libyan animators based in Amman.

Jordan is central to the transnational pan-Arab cultural milieu, with companies and entrepreneurs with innumerable connections that branch out across other parts of the world. With all its internal diversity (British colonial history, influx of Palestinian refugees since 1948) the small country is managing to create a sustainable model for a film industry, based on being different from the rest of the region yet present and self-aware within it (Peer, 2015).
Jordan has many success stories in animation field. The success of this approach to animation in Jordan and the Middle East, as an industry and an art form specific to the region, needs to be acknowledged more readily. The success of Hindawi’s The Street Artist and Tariq Al Rimawi as well as Kharabeesh and many Jordanian animations are testament to one extremely talented artist and entrepreneur’s hard work to put Jordan on the animation map (Peer, 2015).

Kharabeesh (“doodles”) the well-known studio based in Amman, often published its videos to YouTube, has racked up millions of views with their mixture of hand-drawn animation and photo collage. Within the Arab Spring period, they have produced satirical shorts about Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak and Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. These shorts touch the highest views in that period (Jilani, 2017).

RGH, founded in 1994, was one of the first animation companies in Jordan and now produces entertainment, education animation and animated games and apps from offices in Amman, Dubai, Manila and Los Angeles. RGH Entertainment’s CG-animated children’s series Ben and Izzy was launched on Kidobi.com. The action-adventure comedy series follows the adventures of two eleven-year-old boys, Ben, an American, and Izzy, a Jordanian, who embark on historical quests to ancient times and places in the Middle East and Africa region. The property has been popular on Cartoon Network Arabia, and in its featured window on Emirates and Qatar Airlines flights (Zahed, 2012).

According to Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), It was difficult to fine an animator in Jordan in the end of 1990s and the beginning of 2000s. But, conditions are better today, because now, universities and colleges such as the Princess Sumaya University for Technology, Petra University, Jordan University for Science and
Technology, German Jordanian University and Balqa Applied University offer courses in animation as well as Al Quds college which offers diploma in animation.

Besides the role played by higher education institution The Royal Film Commission - Jordan (RFC) was established with a vision to develop an internationally competitive Jordanian film industry. About us webpage in their official website said:

Founded in accordance with the Royal Film Commission Law No. 27 for the year 2003, approved by Law No. 22 issued by the Parliament in 2008, the RFC is a financially and administratively autonomous Jordanian public organization led by a Board of Commissioners, chaired by HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein. The RFC is a member of the Association for Film Commissioners International (AFCI). The (AFCI) is the official professional and educational organization for film commissions. AFCI Members assist feature, television, commercial, industrial and stills production throughout the world.

The mission of RFC as mentioned in their website including: First, encouraging Jordanians and people from the Middle East to tell their stories, thus contributing to cross-cultural understanding and enhancing freedom of expression. Second, creating educational programs for Jordanians working or aspiring to work in the film industry. Third, promoting film culture throughout Jordan, thus contributing to educating and fostering a critical mind. Fourth, positioning Jordan as a location for international audio-visual productions, offering great locations, creative resources, as well as technical assistance and financial incentives. Fifth, offering management and support services to local and foreign productions. And finally, providing work opportunities at world-class standards in all areas of cinematic art.
Rubicon Group Holding (RGH), a pioneer animation studio in Jordan, trains most of its animators in their studios, many of whom have a background in drawing and art but little experience with animation, and we are proud to say that (Ayoubi, 2012). This issue is also asserted by Peri A. Bikmerza, the head of 2D and 3D productions at (RGH) said training young talents is vital for Jordan’s animation industry (Gioiafoster, 2013).

In conclusion, several challenges facing Jordanian animation industry prevent it from achieving good progression. Firstly, animation industry in Jordan is lacking adequate skilled and trained artists. Whenever experienced and specialized labor is available, an industry can enhance quality and improve the products they produce (Donmez-Colin, 2004). To drive a successful animation industry sufficient skilled animators are needed in Jordan.

Secondly, the industry is considerably controlled by cost advantage that arises as a result of insufficient knowledge to address the technological worries. Cost advantage entails the capacity of animators to produce their merchandises and provide service at a comparatively low cost (Elhersh, 2018). The cost advantage challenge has obliged the Arab including Jordan region to import animation films (Alharbi & Baines, 2015). There is also limited access to the biggest distribution channels that would enable the Jordanian animation industry to distribute its content to other world parts Karadsheh (Personal Communication, August 15, 2016).
2.6 Digital Painting in Jordan

Digital painting is an emerging art form in which traditional painting techniques such as watercolor, oils, impasto, etc. are applied using digital tools by means of a computer, a digitizing tablet and stylus, and software (Wikipedia, 2018).

Many artists in Jordan start to paint using digital techniques after shifting from traditional techniques. This research contacts two well-known artists and explores their art. They are Raed Qatanani and Imad Abu Shtayyah. Besides, short Biography of the researcher written by Clara Kim provided as well as her digital painting.

2.6.1 Raed Qatanani

Many digital paintings presented in Jordan today. Raed Qatanani painter, character designer and educator was born in Syria 1973 where he studied all aspects of his academic and professional career. He graduated from the Department of Advertising Design / Visual Communication at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus University in 1995, Qatanani has been working in the fields of graphic design 1996. He worked for several years as a teacher at the Damascus Training Institute of the UN Relief Agency for Syria in the Graphic Design Department. Qatanani holds a set of first prizes and certificates of appreciation for his contributions in the competitions of artistic designs for greeting cards, jewelry and others. - He held six solo exhibitions in Amman, Zarqa and Istanbul and participated in dozens of group exhibitions in Jordan, Ukraine, London and Turkey. Qatanani is a member of the Association of Jordanian Fine Artists and a co-founder of Alwan Association for Artistic Creativity.

Qatanani Has shifted from using the traditional painting to digital techniques strongly.
According to Qatanani (Personal communication, 2018) digital painting is growing fast in Jordan in spite of many artists who suspect on the ability of this kind of art to express the art and emotional feelings. Figure 2.7 and figure 2.8 show the samples of his digital paintings.

![Image of digital painting](image_url)

**Figure 2.7**: Roots, 2017, Photoshop cs6

*Source: Courtesy from Artist*
2.6.2 Imad Abu Shtayyeh

Imad Abu Ashtayeh is a Jordanian-Palestinian artist of origin who came from Ramle district in Palestine. He started drawing and painting at early age. Abu Ashtayeh began with the hobby of drawing animals as well as all children in his age, then landscapes and portraits. Abu Ashtayeh recalls that he specialized in painting the eyes specifically, for the intensity of the impact of an article on one page entitled: "the eyes mirror the soul."

According to Abu Ashtayeh (personal communication 2018) as for his first passion for drawing, he bought one of his friends for about 20 paintings on paper at 20 Jordanian
piasters at the age of thirteen. This was a great achievement for him at the beginning of his career.

Abu Ashtayeh believes that the brush of the artist is full of water and air, which is the beating heart that provides him with his life needs. For him as a part-time artist, "the brush is a breather trying to translate what is happening around us into painted colors or to transfer a dark image to a bright picture". The most beautiful thing that paints is an integral part of his feelings and personal emotions (Abu Ashtayeh, Personal communication 2018). Figure 2.9, figure 2.10 and figure 2.11 illustrate examples of his digital painting.

**Figure 2.9:** Feast Cookies, 2018, Photoshop CS6

Source: Courtesy from Artist
Figure 2.10: The Roots, 2018, Photoshop CS6
Source: Courtesy from Artist

Figure 2.11: Wondering, 2018, Photoshop CS6
Source: Courtesy from Artist
2.6.3 Manal Barqawi

Clara Kim from United States wrote about Manal saying:

"Growing up with a passion for art, Manal Hassan Jamil Barqawi has dedicated her life to pursuing a prestigious education and career as a painter. With a unique eye for color, Manal regularly creates fascinating paintings that embodies the culmination of texture, movement and the mosaic use of colors that bring her paintings to life. Manal has amazing watercolor techniques that manifest most in her still life and landscape paintings. Her inspiration comes from the beautiful landscapes in Jordan and the mixture of colors that surround the horizon. Her scope on nature is gracefully produced on canvas through her artistic imagination and creative ability to play with colors.

Since 1996, Manal has had several exhibitions displaying her artwork both in Jordan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. She has also devoted her life to students as an art lecturer and is currently teaching at the Applied Science University in Jordan as a part of the Graphic Design Department".

Figure 2.12 and figure 2.13 show two of the researcher digital painting.
Figure 2.12: Landscape from Ajloun, 2016, Photoshop CS6.

Figure 2.13: Landscape from Irbid, 2016, Photoshop CS6.
2.7 Efforts of the Main Players of Animation Industry in Jordan

Early animation experiments were usually made in laboratories of universities, such as MIT’s Lincoln Lab, the University of Utah, and the New York Institute of Technology, many funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Bendazzi (1994) cited in Yoon (2008). In Jordan, it is not deniable that the individual entrepreneurs such as Randa Ayoubi and Emad Hajjaj have played a significant role in the early evolution of animation industry in Jordan. The idea of creating animation as new media for the local and regional market was started by individuals. They preceded the art institutions to establish the animation in Jordan. It is something typical that the animation industry started in the world by experimental steps in the universities.

The entrepreneurship ideas in Jordan which later supported by the government companies and investors considered the seeds for animation development and growth. These ideas vastly recognized and acknowledged by the governmental companies and commissions that involved in developing the creative industry and start-up companies.

Support efforts of King Hussein Business Park (KHBP) were considered very important for the animation industry. KHBP offers a mixed use first class office space that’s prepared to steward local, regional, international companies and startups. This environment is integrated with a convention center, disaster recovery center, commercial and retail outlets. In addition, companies operating in KHBP enjoy working in a modern and safe workplace, supported by state-of-the-art data and communications network and infrastructure, and an aggressive business atmosphere and tax incentives as a development zone. It is worth noting that there are three animation companies, Rubicon, Curl Stone, Kharabeesh, and the studio of cartoonist and animator Omar Al Abdallat are hosted by KHBP.
Other supportive efforts for animation start-ups also came from Oasis500. It is the leading seed investment company and business accelerator in the Tech and Creative Industry spaces based in Amman, Jordan. They facilitate entrepreneurs to transform their ideas or creative talents into businesses. Their caring efforts include finding those entrepreneurs, investing in their startups, bridging their know-how gap, and eventually helping them get follow-on funding. For years, Oasis500 has become one of the most influential players in advancing the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem in Jordan. The role of Oasis500 in supporting the animation startups in Jordan is emphasized by Fadi Barghouti, co-Founder of Curl Stone studio (Bargouthi, TV interview, October 8, 2011).

Besides, Wamda Capital is a vehicle in supporting animation companies in Jordan. It is a venture capital firm investing in both growth and seed stage startups in the MENA. It is a platform of incorporated programs that try to accelerate entrepreneurship ecosystems throughout the MENA countries. Its core focus includes media, community development, research, and corporate and government advisory services. During the past years, Wamda has become the leading workers community and knowledge platform for entrepreneurs and supporting stakeholders ("About Wamda," 2017). In this context, in November 2016 Wamda Capital announced leading a $5 million investment round in Kharabeesh, alongside Endeavor Catalyst Fund and Dash Ventures. For Kharabeesh this is the startup’s third round after a previous two in 2011 and 2013. On the word of Mohammed Asfour, CEO of Kharabeesh, "This investment will help us strengthen our expansion in Dubai, Jeddah and Riyadh, focusing more on enhancing the monetization of our inventory, backed up with strong ongoing technology development" (Rahal, 2016).

In another direction, universities in Jordan started to introduce animation programs in
2006. At Princess Sumaya University for Technology, King Hussein Faculty of Computing Sciences offers a Bachelor of Computer Science and Animation. The program is a four-year undergraduate program to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in computer graphics science and animation. This program is the first of its kind in Jordan and the region. It aims to provide students with excellent education in the field of 2D and 3D graphics for the production of animation and the development of electronic games.

This program has been fully approved by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The study plan, designed to meet the requirements of the labor market, focuses on the practical aspect through the use of modern and advanced laboratories as well as field training for students in specialized companies. This ensures the productions of specialists are able to use modern technology in an optimal way to serve the labor market in this area, which is constantly evolving all over the world. This plan includes a number of courses from the Department of Computer Science, which in turn establishes a solid foundation for computer science, such as structuring and processing data.

These courses provide a scientific basis for better understanding of the objectives of computer drawing and animation. Computer graphics and animation courses consist of multimedia programming, drawing, image processing, computer game design, animation, and many other courses. These courses are designed to give students the opportunity to apply theoretical background in practice.

The role of Princess Sumaya University for Technology on the development of the animation industry in Jordan is acknowledged and recognized. Their efforts are notable for the observers. One of their efforts to encourage their students and the artists in Jordan is to create and show their animation is “JoAnimate” Festival. It is the MENA region’s leading
animation and creative arts & designs event held in Jordan, previously organized with huge success in 2012 as “Jordan Animation Festival” under the Royal Patronage of HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan.

As mentioned in their website, JoAnimate.com, the purposes of JoAnimate festival are to:

“Showcase emerging and competitive regional businesses. Showcase & recognize talented individuals through the competition and awards scheme. Attract big international players to meet regional talents and capabilities. Eliminate boundaries; explore creative identities and cultures through enabling communication among participants, and design informal setup for networking and joint activities. Support in building a solid creative ecosystem regionally that attracts talents and allows global exposure”.

It is worth to mention that the festival covers various events and activities. It includes hands-on training and workshops for talented individuals and young professionals, to interact and learn from international industry experts on new trends and technologies in animation, designs and production. The Festival also gives the chance for exceptional beginners to stand out and show their skills and qualifications through a Competition for “Short Animated Movies”, including a Screening Night for the best selected videos, and an Awards Ceremony for the top three winners’ videos.

In 2014 the Festival featured Regional Talents & Business Platform & Forum that will showcase talented and leading regional companies in the areas of animation, gaming, digital media, creative designs and production. The festival events allow them to interact with regional and international speakers and participants, to support growing the regional animation ecosystem and industry, and enable potential business opportunities creation.
("About JoAnimate," 2014). Unfortunately, JoAnimate festival has not been held since 2014.

Besides PSUT, Faculty of Architecture and Design at Jordan University of Science and Technology established The Department of Design and Visual Communication (DVC) in 2012. The department offers a Bachelor degree in Design and Visual Communication in two tracks; Multimedia Design and Animation. Design and Visual Communication degree program doesn't just cover the fundamentals of design, it delves into product packaging, entrepreneurship, mobile technology, interface design, user experience, 3-D and 2-D animation, stop motion, digital modeling, rigging, and lighting (Design, 2017).

In 2016 Petra University established Animation and Multimedia department. According to Dr. Tareq Al Rimawi ("Animation & Multimedia program at Petra University," 2016), students at this program learn how to produce two and three dimensional animation films. They also know how to design different characters and backgrounds in creative and distinctive ways. The program also includes the design of digital games, the creation of visual effects and graphics animation, as well as the inclusion of many different technologies in the design of digital media. It is expected that students of program will benefit from a variety of forms and methods of animation and digital media design. And fill the lack of animators in the animation field in Jordan. During the time of conducting this research, started on the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017 new student can join the “Computer Graphics and Animation” program.

This program will provide students with an opportunity to learn about the practical and theoretical aspects of computer graphics and the traditional animation techniques to digital 3D animation techniques. The program plan is designed to meet the requirements of the
labor market, focuses on the practical aspect through the use of up to date and advanced laboratories. It is also offers training for students in animation companies. After graduation the students will be able to use cutting-edge technology in a best way to serve the animation market in this area, which is constantly evolving all over the world ("Introducing a Bachelor's Program in Computer Graphics and Animation," 2017). The aim of Animation and Multimedia program is to provide students with quality programs and to encourage them to develop their creativity in contemporary animation and digital media design to enhance their chances of competing in the local and regional animation market.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains in detail the research methodology that is employed to conduct this study. All research techniques have their weaknesses and strength and no one technique or mix of methods is fitting for all research. What is essential is that there should be a logical connection between the research questions and the methods the researcher use to deliver the evidence to answer these questions (Lewis & Munn, 1987).

Visual art studies often adopting methods of inquiry from the social sciences (Sullivan, 2010). This study mainly uses the qualitative research approach which includes several methods such as historical enquiry, primary interviews, and observation. Qualitative research methods are valuable in exploring, investigating current or potential situation and providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena (Sofaer, 1999). The findings of this study is drawn from the data which is collected from primary sources, interviews, which is the main source of data for this research, while the secondary data is gathered through documentation and literature review.

3.1 Approaches to Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methods usually try to understand the events, experiences, attitudes of a phenomenon. Therefore, qualitative researchers go to and focus on the experience of the individuals as a whole, not as separate variables. These methods aim to answer questions about the ‘What’, ‘How’ or ‘Why’ of a situation. Creswell (2013) advises qualitative methods to explore problem or issue, understanding an issue in detail and empower participants to share their perspectives. Qualitative methods are appropriate to researchers
seek for those who are studied to talk for themselves, to provide their perspectives about issues or situations in words and in other actions. In qualitative research the contexts of investigation are not artificial; they are natural. Nothing is pre-defined or taken for granted. In this context Hoepfl (1997) emphasizes that qualitative research, uses a naturalistic approach that request to understand observable facts in context-specific situations.

Qualitative research is by definition exploratory, and it is used when we don’t know what to expect, to define the problem or develop an approach to the problem. It’s also used to go deeper into issues of interest and explore the shade and investigate the dark areas related to the problem at hand.

Because of the close-researcher participation and involvement, the researcher gets an insider's view of the location and the phenomenon. Qualitative methods permit the researcher to find matters that are frequently overlooked. This insider's view permits the researcher to study selected issues situations in depth and in detail, and penetrate vertically the surface of studied cases. But, this method can take a long time to plan and to implement (Given, 2015).

In this study, qualitative research is considered suitable to answer the research questions. Three phases of this research are purposely carried out to understand the issues and challenges related to animation industry in Jordan panorama. They deal with the history and the current state which build on factors that caused various features or reactions. This include, to inquire, to explore issues and challenges, and then to answer the related questions. These circumstances create a variety of reactions from the respondents. In addition, throughout qualitative data collection process an opportunity to evaluate the respondents’ intensity of awareness, thought and experiences has given to the researcher.
Emergence of this situation which is full of data and interpretation became, indirectly, the main source of data which considered the primary data of this study. So, qualitative method is identified as an appropriate method to interpret and evaluate the history, current situation and the issues and challenges that facing the development and the sustainability of animation industry in Jordan.

3.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Choosing data collection methods flow from the research questions, but they may also be subjective by the context, structure and timing of research. The most basic consideration in deciding which is appropriate for a particular study is whether the required data exist: are there documents, interactions or settings where the phenomenon is displayed? (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

Data collection approaches for qualitative research usually involves direct interaction with individuals on a man to man basis, interviews, or direct interaction with individuals in a group setting, Focus groups, observations and documents. Qualitative research data collection methods are time consuming. Therefore, this makes qualitative data collection is generally time consuming and expensive (Mays & Pope, 1995). For that reason, data is usually collected from a smaller sample than would be the case for quantitative approaches which is implemented in this research.

Collecting data for this research is mainly obtained from interviews which considered the primary data. In-depth interview provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of the behavior. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meanings people make of their
experience affect the way they carry out that experience (Seidman, 2013). In-depth interview also allowed the respondents to describe and explain their visions in their own words (Dumitrica, 2013). This opportunity is mainly used to obtain valuable perceptions and perspectives from respondents. Meanwhile, a documentation material, which is limited in this research, has provided support for cross-references in interviews. It is an approach to deal with documents that depends on textual analysis.

Gathering secondary materials and conducting interviews will be described later in chapter 4. Data collected from primary and secondary resources is handled according to Richards (2005), framework, which relates to the process of collection, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the data. In this direction, it is helpful to discuss the specific types of data to be collected. It is also important to identify the sampling strategies and the approaches used to establish validity of the data (Creswell, 2013).

An approach on handling data adopted from Lyn Richards contains four steps. The first step is data collection from interviews and documentation. The second is data analysis through reviewing and purposive reading. The third step is interpretation in which significant themes key points were identified. The last step is the evaluation. In this step the researcher will be able to draw reflections and make recommendations after evaluation of the practice and challenges of the current situation and progress of animation and character design artwork in the modern Jordanian art scene. This approach is seen in Figure 3.1.
Figure 3.1: Approach on Handling Data

Source: Richards, 2005 Cited by Thani (2012)
In order to investigate the current practices of character design in the Jordan art scene and to understand their perspectives and experiences, data gathering focused on the status of animation and character design practices were done in the middle of 2016 at some stage of the fieldwork research.

The most common form of qualitative data used in analysis is text; this can either be transcription from interviews (Appendix D) or field notes from ethnographic work or other kind of documents. In these cases most of audio and video data are transformed into text to be analyzed. The reason for this is that the text is an easy form of recording that can deal with using the office techniques mentioned above.

3.3 Gathering Secondary Materials

In sociology it is a common practice to differentiate between primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources are those data which are unpublished and which the researcher has collected directly from the respondents. Secondary sources refers to any materials (books, articles, websites etc.) which have been previously published (Myers, 1997).

It is well known that available materials and references concerning to animation particularly in Jordan are very rare. In addition, discussions about issues and challenges facing the animation industry in Jordanian scene are also not available. In this context, the festival brochures, printed documentation on the film posters, websites of the animation studios, social media networks personal pages of the animators were considered as valid evidence for analysis. Websites and social media networks pages of The Royal Film Commission Jordan are one of the most important resource centers for gathering the
documentation data, it is notable that they did not use papers while broadcasting their events, they only use the electronic pages. King Hussein Business Park documentation was considered as valid evidence for analysis, as well as the animators' collections.

Due to lacking of secondary published materials related to the topic, reviewing the approaches and the practices of animation production and supply chain in Jordan is considered as an exhaustive mission. This is why most of the information for this research should depend on interviews. Therefore, interviews are considered the appropriate technique to get the empirical data in this research.

3.4 Interviewing

Talking with people is an excellent way of gathering information. Sometimes in our everyday lives, however, we tend to talk too quickly, not listen carefully enough and interrupt each other. Informal, conversation or “soft” interviews or Semi-structured interviews and focus groups (sometimes referred to as focus group interviews) are about talking with people but in ways that are self-conscious, orderly and partially structured (Clifford, French, & Valentine, 2010).

Interviewing is widely used in qualitative research. It takes many different types (King & Horrocks, 2010). Interviews are useful to investigate the story beyond a participant’s experiences. In interview researcher can track in-depth information around the subject and the field of study. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses (McNamara, 1999). Qualitative interviews should be rather informal and interviewees feel they are participating in a conversation rather than in official restrict question and answer position (Appendix A, b).
Successful Qualitative interviews required good skills and careful consideration and planning. According to Valenzuela and Shrivastava (2008), there are five types of interviews: informal, conversational interview, general interview guide approach, standardized, open-ended interview, closed, fixed-response interview and telephone interview. In informal, conversational interview (well-known as Semi-structured interviews (Clifford et al., 2010) ) no programmed questions are asked, in order to stay as open and flexible as possible to the interviewee’s environment and main concerns; during the interview the interviewer “goes with the flow”. In general interview guide approach, the guide approach is intended to make sure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of less restrictions and flexibility in getting the data from the interviewee. For Standardized, open-ended interview the same open-ended questions are asked; this technique facilitates faster interviews that can be easier to analyze. The other type of interviews, Closed, fixed-response interview all interviewees are asked the same questions and asked to choose answers from among the scheduled choices. This format is useful for those not practiced in interviewing. So, If the interview choices too tightly structured this may not facilitate the under investigation phenomena to be discovered in terms of either width or depth.

Regarding telephone interviews Ritchie et al. (2013) consider it as not suitable in qualitative researches. Furthermore, methodological text book have traditionally advised that the telephone interview type is not well fitting to the task of qualitative interviewing (e.g. Gillham, 2005; Rubin and Rubin, 1995) cited in Irvine, Drew, and Sainsbury (2013).
3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interview (sometimes referred to as focused interviews) is a series of open ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover. In this type of interview, a sequence of broad questions to ask and may have some prompts to help the respondent. The open ended nature of the question defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail. In another advantage, Semi-structured interviews give the ability and freedom to researcher to prompt or encourage the interviewees if they are looking for more information or find what they are saying interesting ("Module 9 : Introduction to Research,").

In this research, a semi-structured and open-ended question, is implemented as a tool of collecting data. Geer (1988) emphasis that open-ended questions allows respondents to respond to the query in their own words and it is better able to measure their most important concerns than the close-ended format that forces people to choose among a set of answers.

Semi-structured interview with open-ended questions is considered appropriate to answer the research questions. The interviews provided detailed information and allowed the researcher to discover, in depth, the issues and challenges facing the development of animation industry as well as the history and the emergence of animation scene in Jordan. This information was described by the founders of the animation studios and the animators in their own words which allowed the researcher to search out unexpected essential and significant data as seen by them and uncover more layers of meaning and greater richness of data (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).
The primary aim of conducting interviews was to understand the respondents’ perception, awareness and their vision about the challenges facing animation sector in Jordan. Therefore, the interviews in this phase took place with a group of professionals, owners and founders of the animation companies to have a discussion about the history and emergence of animation in Jordan and their opinion on the overall situation and the development of the current Jordan animation industry. Respondent list consisted of Jordanian professional, experts and founders, who were selected from a list of founders identified earlier from the investigation on the existence of animation industry.

There are two major topics guided the researcher in obtaining the responses. The first topic is early emergence of animation in Jordan. The question of this topic was: How do you describe the early emergence of the animation industry in Jordan? The second topic is their opinion on the situation of animation industry, and the question forwarded to them is: What are the challenges that facing the development of animation industry in Jordan?

The topics discussed with the respondents are important in understanding the situation and identifying the current issues and challenges facing the development of the Jordanian animation industry. The topics and asked questions are shown in Figure 3.2.
The approach of open-ended questions interview has generated an open ended response. But the questions outlined those responses and controlled them. In this context the researcher, sometimes, find himself involved in encouraging and examining the responses by asking additional and further questions in order to illuminate their beliefs and perspectives which require frank opinion instead of only factual answers (Thani, 2012).

Transcription of the interviews is important. Therefore, the interviews were recorded and transcribed and then translated to English. Transcription is defined as “the graphic

**Figure 3.2:** Topics and Questions Forwarded to Respondents during Interviews
representation of selected aspects of the behavior of individuals engaged in a conversation”. The purpose of producing a transcript is to represent on paper as exactly as possible the strings of words expressed (verbal features), but frequently also their aural form (Jenner, Flick, von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2004). Appendix D shows samples of Arabic transcriptions and English translations of interviews.

However, many challenges faced the researcher due to the difficulties of finding Jordan animation artists and experts and founders of the companies and arranging interviews with them, because many of them move to live and work and travel to other countries managing their business. Besides, most of the interviews were in Arabic, to give the respondents more freedom to express their opinion and experiences in their own words. So, it is time consuming to translate them to English and then transcribe them.

The perception and awareness of the respondents considered as a description to the overall situation of the animation sector in Jordan as well. Indirectly, their perception and awareness was able to address the current status of the field. In addition, it drew attention to many issues and challenges facing the sector. From responses of experts and founders the researcher was capable to portray the existing challenges of animation industry. The responses, in addition, allowed the researcher to discover the issues and challenges aroused by the responses.

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis process is aiming to uncover and understand the whole circumstances and issues by using the empirical data to describe the situation. In this research data analysis started with a focused reading for the transcription of the
respondents’ answers and responses. In this way the researcher could identify the key points to the progress of describing the situation of animation and in Jordan (Appendix E).

It is understandable from the interviews that the researcher has obtained notable opinions perspectives from various levels and backgrounds of respondents. Which consist of experts, character designers and founders involved in the animation sector in Jordan? They had, for the experts and founders, described frankly and straightforward their opinions and perspectives of the animation sector. In the other direction, character designers talk about their individual experiences on character design practices and the process of designing characters.

After studying the respondents’ point of views, the researcher identified the key points that involve and consist of the Jordan animation context. Then the researcher is allowed to describe, in-detail, the context of animation industry and issues and challenges facing the sector in Jordan.

3.7 Research Plan

The bases of this research have built from the primary and secondary data. Basically three distinct stages strategy carried out to achieve the research objectives. This plan is shown in Figure 3.3.
The first phase is to review the early emergence of animation studios in the Jordanian scene. The second phase is mapping and describing the current situation of animation industry and defining the issues and challenges facing the sector. The third phase is developing recommendations for Jordanian animation industry. Implementation of this plan considered a suitable method to penetrate the context of animation industry, understand the history of animation and explore the issues and challenges facing the animation industry and then draw recommendations to sustain and develop this industry.

3.7.1 Phase I - Reviewing the Early Emergence of Animation in Jordan.

This phase is a historical review of the early traditional and digital techniques and methods used by Jordanian artists and the original stories that have been adapted to come out with
the first animation studios in Jordan. Wells (2011) suggests that ‘there is no theory without practice; no practice without theory; no progress without history’. So, it is important to know the origin of these techniques, methods and practices. Historical resources are frequently best tools for beginning the research. It will help to develop a description of the historical context of animation landscape and understanding of animation industry issues in detail. The bibliography related to animation in Jordan is very limited or scarcity and it is hard to find published materials related directly or indirectly to the subject. Moreover, it is also hard to find official archives and dedicated to the history of animation in Jordan. To make an overview of the history of artists, practices and the early emergence of this field, it is important to conduct interviews with the company founders and animators who early involved in animation practices. To the most of the researcher knowledge this is the first time that the history of Jordan animation is studied and documented. This contribution gives more significance to this research.

From the reviews and interviews, there are six important entities that are identified which became significant to the development of the animation industry in Jordan. The six entities are: Art and Design institutions, Festivals Events, Animation studios, Investment, Government support and encouragement and Artists/Animators involvement. The six significant factors for the progression and development of animation sector in Jordan are shown in Figure 3.4.
Figure 3.4: Six Significant Factors for the Progress of Animation Sector in Jordan.

Every factor has its own role in ensuring the emergence, existence, development and progress of animation sector in Jordan. It is hard for any startup companies or individual animator involved and has the passion of animation to sustain if there are no qualified human resources with proper skills. Government support and encouragement can offer the infrastructure for the industry and the protection as well. As demonstrated by the interviewees the investment factor is vital for the industry. The studios are the main body of the animation industry. They became the main trainer for the graduate students to practice and enhance their skills and awareness. Festivals patronage is essential for the studios and for the film makers as individuals. Festivals and events are important for the producers to meet the potential customers as well as skillful workforce. It is also a promising means for sharing experiences and knowledge. In addition, it is the platform
where the producers can attract the investors. Definitely, the relationship between these entities is integrative and collaborative. Each one completes the other.

3.7.2 Phase II - Mapping the Current Situation of Animation and Defining the Issues and Challenges Facing the Sector

This phase takes the form of systematic investigation of the situation and exploring the issues and challenges facing the industry. It is a direct approach with the related experts, founders and animators who are involved in the field. Therefore, the approach will provide a clear and in depth understanding of the current situation and phenomena surrounding the animation sector in Jordan.

This phase of the research began with a deep investigation of the emergence and development of animation industry in Jordan. In identifying this situation, the appropriate approach taken was to study the appearance of Jordanian animation in television, MMS, Web, mobile applications, YouTube and social media. It is one of the most important resource centers for gathering the documentation data, King Hussein Business Park, as well as the animators and founders’ collection. These materials are essential for investigating the situation. From those resources, it is possible to identify several issues and challenges in the Jordanian animation landscape.

The investigation of the available resources indirectly provides a list of studios, artists, festivals, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) who encourage this sector as well as art institutions involved in animation programs. This list assists in interviewing process. Besides documented materials, interviewing is also considered a powerful tool to obtain information for this stage. Interviewing is vital and significant approach for collecting data
because the qualitative nature of this research and due to limited and insufficient published materials.

Observation is used in qualitative researches in two types – structured and unstructured observation. The usage of observation technique depends on the research questions and defined principally by the model underlying each research. Unstructured observation is used to understand and interpret cultural behavior. It is based within the interpreters /constructivist paradigm that acknowledges the importance of context and the co-construction of knowledge between researcher and ‘researched’ (Mulhall, 2003). Visiting the studios and observing production process and having discussion with the animators themselves is also an important method. In this technique the researcher himself works as a tool of collecting data.

The respondents’ feedback on this greatly revolved around issues and challenges in the current situation of animation. There are several variables which contribute to these issues and challenges such as the encouragement and efforts from government, Academic skills and awareness, reference: society cultural, identity, technology challenges and techniques, demand on animation and financial profit. The current situation of animation industry in Jordan is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

The purpose of this stage is to identify the current situation in the practice of animation in Jordan as well as to investigate the issues and challenges facing the sector. So, the variables will further address the appropriate approaches and practices undertaken by the artists to produce animations. The reference that associated to society cultural identity is very important to the development of animation in Jordan which emphasized by this research.
Sampling and selection are vitally important elements of qualitative research which enables the researcher to select respondents and cases (Thani, 2012). In this research purposive sampling technique is used to choose the respondents. Nine experts, founders, film makers and animators were selected in this study. They were approached for an in-depth interview at this stage of fieldwork activities. The chosen experts are:

1. Emad Hajjaj
2. Fadi Barghouti
3. Mahmoud Hindawi
4. Moaiad Zaidan
5. Omar Al Abdallat
6. Randa Al Ayoubi
7. Tareq Al Rimawi
8. Wael Attili
9. Zaidoun Karadsheh

The selecting of those experts is based on choosing criteria which depend on their experience and contribution to the field, and how much of their production are famous in Jordan. All of those experts have displayed an interesting approach to the animation industry in Jordan.

From this research approach, the researcher discovers that the identity, in spite of the influence by the globalization international culture, is well presented in their productions. This representation is obvious through the shapes and ornaments which is inspired from the Jordan traditional culture and historical heritage as well as from the stories of their films or series.

In animation sector, the researcher notices that the field of animation relies on entrepreneurs who came from another field such as information technology (IT) and sometimes from architecture not from the design field. In addition, the research also find that the art and design institutions did not pay attention to the meaning and identity issues nor to quality of its outcomes which affected by the strong influence of the globalization and international culture and new technologies.
3.7.3 Phase III – Developing Recommendations for Jordanian Animation Industry.

Based on studying the current state of the Jordanian animation industry, recommendations for empowerment and development of the animation industry that should allow it to move from its Introduction stage to a more advanced level are presented in this phase. The recommendations should be accepted for implementation and are applicable to the ground.
CHAPTER 4
DATA COLLECTION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter dealt with collecting data and discussing the early emergence and current situation of animation in Jordan through analyzing experts’ point of view on Jordan animation sector. It is focused on the issues and challenges facing the animation industry. All of the experts interviewed in this research believe that computer technology is a vital tool for this sector to produce high quality animation in term of aesthetic value, personal and cultural expressions. Animation studios and individuals have realized the importance of technology and its essential relationship to the sector. However, more exploration was made to identify the issues and challenges facing animation studios.

4.1 Early Developments and the Current Status of Animation Industry in Jordan

The objective of this section is to give a comprehensive and detailed description of the early emergence of animation in Jordan. Jordan production of animation considered as an expanded and extended role of Jordanian drama as a leader in the Arab world in the 80’s.

To provide a detailed description to the early emergence and developments and then the current situation of the animation sector in Jordan, interviews with founders of the first established studios took place with those experts such as Emad Hajjaj and Randa Al-Ayoubi. In addition, early artists and academic staff were included in the list. Interviews were analyzed and studied to achieve the deep description and details.

Nine experts, founders, film makers and animators were selected in this study. They were approached for an in-depth interview at this stage of fieldwork activities. The experts are:
Emad Hajjaj, Fadi Barghouti, Mahmoud Hindawi, Moaiad Zaidan, Omar Al Abdallat, Randa Al Ayoubi, Tareq Al Rimawi, Wael Attili, and Zaidoun Karadsheh.

4.1.1 Emad Hajjaj/Abu Mahjoub

Emad Hajjaj is a Jordanian cartoonist known in Jordan and in the Middle East as Abu Mahjoob for twenty years. According to Arabian Business Magazine, he is considered one of the most five hundred influential figures in the Arabic world. So far, using his cartoon character Abu Mahjoob, he adopted the Arab spring values as a main theme and portrayed it in his cartoons. He won the Dubai press Award twice for best Arab cartoons and worked for Alaraby Al Jadeed newspaper, London. In 2008, an exhibition of his work, featuring one hundred drawings was held at the city hall of Ra's Al-'Ayn. He was a contributor to the Lighting Lamps exhibition which was sponsored by the British Council.

Emad Hajjaj is famous for his cartoon sarcastic character “Abu Mahjoob”. He introduced many innovations in the political cartoonist and innovation satirical content. As one of the pioneer producers of animated series in Jordan, he created many animated characters for various technical and commercial purposes, and worked as an illustrator for most important newspapers and websites such as Al Quds Al Arabi newspaper in London and the Al Ghad and Al Rai newspapers in Jordan and the website of Sky News Arabia. He has also worked as a technical director in several Jordanian advertising agencies and set up over the artistic biography, numerous exhibitions including: Gallery of city Hall - the city of Amman in 2000, and participated in numerous exhibitions, festivals, Arab and international conferences in the field of caricature and satirical writing and animation including: Annecy city Festival, France in 2006, the festival city of Meknes, Morocco in 2007, the exhibition illuminating lamps, London 2009.
According to Arabian Business Magazine, he is considered one of the most 500 influential figures in the Arab world, won king Hussein Journalist Creativity Award in 2001 and the Dubai Award for Press twice in 2010 and 2006. He also won the award Forum Montpellier Universal Comics in France in 2012, and many of local, Arab and international honors.

Emad Hajjaj was born in 1967. He graduates from Yarmouk University with a bachelor's degree in graphic art in 1991, and has numerous publications in the field of caricature the most important book: the governor, issued in 2000, and in 2008. The head of the cartoonists Jordanian Association, and a member of the Jordan Press Association, he is married and has three sons. He currently he lives in Amman and directs his own company.

According to Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), he started to get interested in drawing when he was a child. After finishing the high school, he got a full scholarship to study physics at Yarmouk University. After two years he discovered that there was a department of fine art at the same university. He decided to leave physics, in spite of the wish of his father, and follow his passion to join the fine art department in graphic design major. While studying he started to send some caricatures to the weekly newspaper. They published it for free. After graduation he got his first job as first up character designer at Alrai newspaper. It was the lowest level job at the newspaper. In 1992 he got another job at Al Dostour newspaper where his caricatures started to be known and developed. In 1993 he got the first full time job. His father felt satisfied for the first time about the new situation of his son. In this time Abo Mahjoob was born. His technique of drawing was a traditional one, using black “Rottring” ink pen on paper with personal hatching style.

Simultaneously, he worked for a new small advertising office which was well equipped
with the first Macintosh Hajjaj had ever seen. It was something like magic. His inquisitive personality guided him to explore the computer as a faster tool to produce his drawings. But he faced some difficulties in the beginning. He quickly bypassed them by practicing and training himself after all the employees and the owner left the office. He also worked for another advertising office as a graphic designer where he got closer to computer technology and start designing with Adobe Illustrator for the first time. When Hajjaj explored the potentials of this computer technology he decided to ask the newspaper to provide him with a computer which happened after one year.

According to Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), it was a very big shifting development in 1994 when I got a computer with WACOM digital pad and started to make all my caricatures with digital techniques. My freehand skills in drawing integrated with computer technology were fascinating the audiences when the first digital caricatures published on Al Rai newspaper. Hajjaj was the first artist to use the computer to draw and paint his art in mass media. Audiences felt the big difference. I was using fracture design program, then adding the other effects using Adobe Photoshop.

In 2000, another big development happened when he found his own company. New technology like CINTIQ screens emerged where the artist can draw directly and digitally on screen instead of traditional paper. Software for artists and designers were also developed. He started to use Corel Painter and the contemporary sensitive digital pen developed by WACOM at that time.

Fascinated with computer since the first time he saw it, Hajjaj started to get interested in animation. When computer technology started on integrating to the new technology, he started feeling and exploring the characteristics and potentials of computer technology in
drawing and painting his products. For Hajjaj, "the new technology is very important to
develop the animation industry but it is expensive. There is a need to invest in this sector to
import the new technology".

For Hajjaj who know that there are famous Arab characters like “Abu Al-Abed” in
Lebanon and “Al Saedi “in Egypt, he starts thinking to create a character to represent the
simple Jordanian man. He intended to create a Jordanian character, simple, spontaneous,
and really represent the Jordan society in slang, costume and everyday behaviors. It was
1993 when the second parliament elections took place. On the word of Hajjaj at that time
he had many ideas to make his character. He said that he started asking himself questions
like: is it man or woman? How old is it? And how it will behave?

After this stage he started to make sketches for the character. He found himself drawing a
retired man staying at home. Complaining all the time about the social and political
situation, and also criticizing his wife’s and children’s behaviors, and neighbors as well.
He found himself drawing his father. Hajjaj describes his father as sarcastic and funny but
in his own style and his own local expressions. According to Hajjaj, he directly evolved his
character in the elections issues which, was the most trend issues for Jordanians at the
time.

“Abu Mahjoob” grew in this environment very fast and took the first position in the Jordan
caricature scene. This great success continued after the elections ended, when the chief
editors in the newspaper asked Hajjaj to produce more characters. As said by Hajjaj, it took
him about one year to complete the secondary characters of Abu Mahjoob family and his
neighbors. This family became the first in Jordan media and even in many Arab countries.
For Hajjaj the feedback he gets from the people in the street was very important to him. He feels that he really represents honestly the Jordanian man. This made Hajjaj feel satisfaction and happiness. In this context, Hajjaj emphasize that “being honest” is the most significant factor in creating characters. Figure 4.1 shows the main characters of Hajjaj cartoons; Abo Mahjoob and Abo Mohammad.

Figure 4.1: Main Characters of Hajjaj Cartoons; Abo Mahjoob and Abo Mohammad

Source: Courtesy from Artist

Hajjaj also stressed on “innovation and developing” process for the development of creative industry. He said that he tried to create a “human character that never had been created before” (2017). In this environment Hajjaj called for developing new symbol characters to represent Jordan in fields such as tourism and culture and other fields. Hajjaj
considers simplicity in representing and designing the characters as very important. Simplicity is one of the secret of design success. Inspiration from “local environment is the legal reference to represent the identity and the culture of the characters and animation.” Figure 4.2 represents the Jordanian context.

As stated by Hajjaj, the artist should take care at the functional role of the character and the environment and the target audience especially when working for advertising commercials animations. He stressed on conducting good research before starting the ideation and conceptualization. Searching, contemplating, and immersion are the recipe of good characters and in turn good animation. This recipe can help artists to avoid imitating or even copying inspiration from western culture. Inspiration from western culture is a shame on Arab animators. For example, they use the western or Japanese face attributes to represent Arabic character. “Globalization is one of the main challenges in innovation and development of Arab animators and all character designer should be aware about this issue” (Hajjaj, Personal Communication, August 21, 2016). In addition to inspire the local environment which should be represented in the backgrounds, Hajjaj asserted on the drawing and painting skills especially quality of line. Those skills are needed to express the style and personality of artist himself.

According to Hajjaj, using computer software to produce animations may sometimes reduce the value of line and other art elements if it use by novice artist. In this situation computer software dyes the all styles with the same color and same value and gives them all the same style preventing the excellence which in turn gathers most of artists in the same style.
Figure 4.2: Hajjaj Representation of the Local Context Issues

Source: Courtesy from Artist

Regarding the research and references, in the past; his references were obtained from the life models observed in the street and the local context (Figure 4.2). But nowadays he feels that he blushed to use Google to search references. For Hajjaj, he feels that the internet’s images became the main source of references for the animators. He sadly added that the internet is omitting the reality, the live, and the street, the beautiful source of references. He considered that the public are the big loser in the globalization era.

Abu Mahjoob, is national icon in Jordan, and many of Hajjaj's designs used by many official authorities' publications to represent Jordan in different events. Unfortunately," they did not care about the intellectual property rights" (IPRs) Hajjaj said. The creation of cultural and creative industry and its adaptation to intellectual property rights are increasingly essential for commercial competitiveness and economic growth in Jordan. The enforcement of the regulations and laws regarding intellectual property rights is essential for the creative industry including animation, Hajjaj added.
According to Hajjaj, it was difficult to hire animator when he establishes his studio in 2000. At that time, he conducts extended survey to hire animator. After months he could reach the first animation graduate in Jordan who comes back to Jordan from Canada with B.A. in animation. The graduate was very good animator and make good efforts in the studio to develop the production process in the studio. At that time it was rare to find one animator. It takes many years until the higher education institutions start to graduate animators who support the industry with workforce.

4.1.2 Fadi Barghouti/Curl Stone Entertainment

Curl Stone Entertainment was established in 2009. It is an innovative and modern studio with extensive knowledge of know-how, talents, and creative spirit that goes beyond the global market in regards to originality and creativity by producing genuine superheroes from the region and distributed to international markets. In 2010, Curl Stone won the Deutsche Welle (DW) best short film Award.

Curl Stone’s animation production is described and narrated logically and purposely through multiplatform storytelling by way of integrated digital platforms. Curl stone dedicates itself heavily in the creative process with its unique brand of animation that entertains children of all ages and young adults. On top of forward-looking digital technology and artistic quality it connects the audience along with the captivating scenarios of Curl Stone superheroes.

Fadi Barghouti was trained and worked at Rubicon Animation Studios from 2004 till 2007 as a Visual Effects Director and was part of the production team of Star Fish Short Film and Ben & Izzy TV Series. The Co-founder of Curl Stone Entertainment; chief executive
officer Mr. Fadi Barghouti, was a graduate from the Applied Science University in Amman – Jordan, where he pursued his B.S degree of Computer Science in 2002.

His attention and craze about Animation was one of the main motivations that have pushed him to grow up earlier & do extremely well in this field. In 2007, Barghouti was assigned as the Head of the Animation Department at SAE –Amman Institute, where he built the animation team and played a major role in developing the institute's Animation program and core curriculum. In 2009, he decided to get back to the production industry and founded Curl Stone Studios with his partner Majdy Abu Mathkoor. He directed their first 3D animated film award winning short film; "Once upon a Star", in addition to their first 2D animated series.

Curl stone’s spacious, fully equipped studio is led by a team of professionals that have excellent expertise in the domain of 2D & 3D production. Realizing the importance of maintaining high quality standards, the technical team, in order to ensure delivering the finest caliber of products, manages and supports the production team throughout the production process (Curlstone, 2017).

One of the most difficult situations of the company was in March, 2013. During that period, Curl Stone company had a branch in Jordan and a branch in the Philippines and the number of employees working in both branches were more than forty-three employees; in that period things began to collapse due to a difficult market which caused a reduction in the number of employees from forty-three to only two, the two partners. So, Curl Stone went back to scratch.

In 2010, Curl Stone won the Deutsche Welle (DW) best short film Award. Once Upon a
Star (Figure 4.3) is an adventure/Science Fiction series, which takes the audience through Al’s journey, transformation, and struggle to win his fights against the villains and defend Mother Nature ("Curl Stone/Projects & Titles," 2017).

Figure 4.3: Once Upon a Star, Short film, 2010.

Source: http://www.curlstone.com
Curl Stone Studios, a Jordanian company incubated by “Oasis500”, made conversation with “Wamda” at the World Economic Forum about their goals to address the lack of Arabic content and create narratives that come from inside the Arab region as opposite of being imported. In this interview (Bargouthi, TV interview, October 8, 2011); Bargouthi discusses why he's primarily developing content for television, and what the challenges are for a small studio when trying to advertise animated content to TV channels. He asks the large media networks and companies to give startups a chance, and talk about “Oasis500” and how they helped him learn” how-to" “visualize his ideas and skills.

Answering question, when you started Curl Stone Studios what is the gap do you find in the market? He answered: Generally speaking, there is lack of Arabic content out there on TV, Web, and mobile. Most of the content that we see those days is basically imported,
and Coral Stone came as an answer for one question why we don't have a cartoon series or an idea that is actually relevant to our culture? And why don't we have superheroes of our own within always watching Superman Spider-Man and the other heroes from United States and from Japan. We don't have superheroes to relate to. So, Curl Stone came as an answer for this situation.

For Curl Stone they started with a short movie called “Once upon a Star” -it is on their official website. The short movie won an award in 2010 from Germany as the best 3D environment movie. “And then we created to IP's for the local Jordan and Market they were distributed on mobiles. Now our aim basically to go for TV so we can create now to new ideas that we are trying to produce” (Bargouthi, TV interview, October 8, 2011).

According to Bargouthi, Web and Mobile are still rich platforms but TV also still the most popular medium for animations. Basically they went back to TV because they are producing animations for many platforms. Therefore, they don't target just TV but all the new mediums and platforms as well as Comics, merchandise; that's why they come back to TV again.

Coral Stone look forward to get a co-production deal. Basically, signing up with one of the Distributors or major TV channels like MBC, Cartoon Network, and Nickelodeon because without those channels actually “we have limited number of children channels in the Middle East. You can count them within your fingers. So my biggest challenge is to get my IPs through one of the TV channels” (Bargouthi, TV interview, October 8, 2011).

In his answer to how mentorship has helped Curl Stone with this issue, Bargouthi said that mentorship helped us very well, but we still cannot break some barriers from the biggest
challenge that we trying to solve with our mentors how to make the coral stone a credible studio for TV channels to trust. Because most of the TV channels they sign a strategic partnership agreement with major animation studios that are really credible and have some references out there such as very popular TV series and fan base but coral stone so far have and should produce everything. That what created the challenges of making Curl Stone credible for TV networks. So, this is what we are working on today.

For Bargouthi, they are trying to crack into the market and get them to look to the smaller studios. He added, actually, and maybe this is one of the biggest challenges that any startups might face. It is basically being credible because even in the ICT sector they are trying to breakthrough and play with the big players; but they cannot get through because there are other “Sharks”- or they have to face. Therefore, they have to have credibility in front of big organizations and, also in the other side, the organizations have to recognize the startups and give them some chance to breakthrough not necessarily with big projects; but even trying the startups bit by bit they can breakthrough and to be a big organization themselves.

Regarding receiving a mentorship from” OISIS500” he explains the benefits of this support when the mentors taught the entrepreneurs how to talk to the potential customers because they have it in our mind but not in perspective. So, “they teach us how to communicate our ideas and what we need actually from the person that we are talking to rather than just throwing ideas and in the end of the meeting the client not knowing actually how they can help you. So, the mentor of “OAISIS500” just they put all of your ideas and skills in perspective so you know how to talk to potential investor and even to your employees and team members. So, they make you more focus”.

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According to Bargouthi (TV interview, October 8, 2011), small companies need more than finances. First of all, they need finances to start to move on with the plans. They also need networking rather than mentorship. Mentorship is a very important factor in this context. They need networking and some connections for people again to go back to credibility when people have some access to big companies. So, they need those introductions that can happen in help of OISIS 500. They are not only doing mentorship or investment; they introduce us to our target clients or may be investors they see, and they make the introductions. And then it is really up to entrepreneurs to convince the clients or investors.

4.1.3 Moaiad Zaidan/Sketch In Motion

Team Leader, Characters Creator and Animator/Director of Sketch in Motion, Moaiad brings a diverse background to Sketch in Motion, being an animator, cartoonist and project manager. His twenty years of experience has resulted in an ability to effectively direct and manage creative projects in a wide range of styles from classic animation to modern innovative animation. Moaiad has worked with numerous regionally and internationally acclaimed companies throughout his career. He directs all the creative processes and storyboarding and is the energy behind stories and concepts becoming digital reality and try to “bringing still to life”.

With his wife, Moaiad Zaidan started his company in 2007. The first project for him was the series of " Shofit Ainak " which means " see it with your own eye ‘‘. The series were distinguished by the use of acting technique which was something new in Jordan and give high quality animation at that time. For Moaiad Zaidan, he joined the interior design department at Yarmouk University when he finished the school. After only one year he left the university because he could not feel involve in the courses of the program.
It was the first time for him when he got a job in 1994 for "Lona" magazine. He said “I worked as an artist to draw a series of stories which target the children. After months of drawing and searching I taught myself how to draw everything, even the characters which was hard for me in the first period”.

For Moaiad it was the first time to work in animation when he got a job with "Bats" company. It was the first game company in the Arab world. At the company we used Deluxe Paint program to represent the characters and the environment. Everything was drawn thorough Pixels, even the shadows of the figures. “It was my beginning in animation world” he said (Moaiad, Personal Communication, August 2, 2017).

After two years of experience he got a new job with Arab Multimedia Company (AMC) Company in 1996. His mission was to establish animation section to develop games and e-learning contents. It is interesting to say that he was only 21 years old when he established the animation section at AMC. He interviewed many talented persons, hired and trained them at the company. “Nowadays, many of those animators are working in the important animation companies ” he emphasized. The company made a good reputation and the games spread throughout Jordan. Unfortunately, this success did not sustain. Hacking the copyrights of our CDs by copying caused the collapse of the company in 2001.

Moaiad Zaidan maximizes the Jordanian experience in animation sector. For him, it is proud to say that Jordan has made a unique progress within few years of animation industry and this situation is acknowledged in the Arab world. Especially in the Arab Gulf region when we produce " Al Masageel" series for MBC.

Then Moaiad Zaidan worked for "e-menhaj" company which designs and produces e-
learning curriculums for the Jordanian government. He did not feel satisfied with the company. So he suggested establishing an animation department but they refused because it was risk for the owners. As a result, he decided to quit. In that period, he worked as freelance with UNICEF and then he got to know to Media Plus Company which was owned by his partners now.

Encouraged by his wife, he decided to establish his company. The company was established by Moaiad Zaidan and his partner Mr. Zaidoun Karadsheh who then owned Media Plus. The company started with two employees, Moaiad and his wife. They used to make everything in the first project including writing, drawing, designing characters and animating them.

The company started to produce animation for communication companies in Jordan distributing mobile content using MMS technology. Then they produced “Som3a” program which broadcasted on Jordan official TV. The series was successful as T.V program. The content was focused on social issues as entertainment content. Other project that also makes success is "Al Mahabeesh" and "Nahat3eletna". Some episodes have more than three million views on YouTube. The idea of Al Mahabeesh was inspired by the desert. Al Mahabeesh is a hand tool in which the Arabs grind the coffee beans. So the idea was to tie to all Arabs countries in the series (Moaiad, Personal Communication, August 2, 2017).

“I always try to use contrast in my drawing when I want to represent any character or elements of the film. This is my way to attract the viewers” he said. For Moaiad, it is important to attract the viewers by the production quality. It is interesting to note that Moaiad also use contrast even when he writes the series; he believes that the contrast between characters such as, tall, short or big and small is an amazing approach to attract
viewers. This is the approach that Moaiad use when he represents the characters and the settings in Al Mahabeesh and Al Masageel (Figure 4.5).

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 4.5:** Al Masageel Series by Sketch in Motion, 2016

Source: Courtesy from SIM

As a pioneer in animation sector in Jordan, the researcher asks Moaiad about the development and progression of animation in Jordan. He stated that the animation in Jordan starts in the beginning of the third millennium. In 2006/2007, the market started to broaden from local to the Arab region especially to Arab Gulf country markets. The development continues to grow and the Jordanian animation makes good progress in 2010. Much investment is involved in the market, and new companies established in Jordan with big investment. For our company (SIM) 2010 was the best year regarding revenue.

In 2011, during the Arab spring revolutions, the market witnessed a decrease in animation industry as a whole. But, for the animation that mange the political issue, there was increase and growth in the clips that shows the political issues using the internet and social media networks as a platform for broadcasting the animations. Since that time, as over all, there has been a decrease in the industry for the broadcasting through TV channels. The
investment is decreased too. The current situation is unstable. Many companies finished the contracts of the employees. The current situation is waiting for stability in the political situation. Nowadays, Ramadan 2017, Sketch in Motion produce a series of awareness campaign against drugs. We use the classic style in this series. Today, the public tend to prefer the dramatic series and we try to meet their wishes.

4.1.4 Omar AL Abdallat

Omar is a Jordanian artist, and cartoonist, born in 1978. His passion for drawing and painting began at a young age. For, Abdallat, he discovered his talent for drawing caricature at early age during the first the Gulf war in 1990 when he started to show his cartoons to the people who encouraged him to continue. Latter, he participated in a global competition and won the first prize for his drawings. His passion for drawing convoys took him to the Applied Science University where he studied graphic design. But his craze with creating characters grew more than his passion towards graphic design. As a result, he began to publish his cartoon drawings on the Internet, and then moved to work for local daily newspapers.

After the sudden increase of internet usage in Jordan he started to think about starting his own online publication. A year after, in 2007, he founded ‘3ala Rasi’ which is an entertainment platform where he published his caricature and cartoon series ‘3ala Rasi’. It became one of the most fashionable entertainment sites in Jordan. In 2011 ‘3ala Rasi’ merged together with Kharabeesh and Omar Al Abdallat became the Art Director at Kharabeesh. Until now he did not leave ‘3ala Rasi’ and he continues being the voice of
‘Awad Abu Sheffēh’, most popular character, and director of the show but Kharabeesh and ‘3ala Rasi’ split into two entities again. ‘Awad Abu Sheffēh’ and ‘Abu Samrah’, the cat, is shown in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: Awad Abu Sheffēh” and “Abu Samrah”, 2006, by Omar Al Abdallat

Source: Courtesy from Artist

Now, Al Abdallat had more than twenty million hits on YouTube, and forty thousand subscribers and about 2,000 published caricatures. Omar stated he was inspired by the Egyptian artist, Bahjat Othman. Al Abdallat describes his style as simple drawings with deep meaning animation (Abdallat, 2011). “I thought to myself, ‘why aren’t there enough cartoonists in the Arab World?’ So I decided to get into the world of caricatures and animation,” says Omar. He had some concerns about being compared to other great artists in the region and in Jordan, where he already had a huge fan base. But after winning
his first award out of 1,500 participants, his motivation and confidence grew. Omar says he realized how powerful caricatures can be and how quickly they can spread a message to the world (Derderian, 2015). In 2006, Omar and a few other partners started up an animation entertainment series for telecommunication companies. It is worth to mention here that the spread of mobiles in Jordan in that time made it easy for advertising through MMS. Many artists in Jordan use this technology to produce and broadcast their animations. Internet and social media networks considered the first techniques which encourage and provoke the animation sector in Jordan.

‗3ala Rasi‘ was a funny, purely Jordanian series on issues from real life situations on community behavior and interactions. People loved them and the hard work of Omar and his team made it the success it is. “I believe that animation have to be a group effort,” he says. “There are so many great talents - when everyone gives his inside, it creates a successful product.” Omar left his position at Abu Mahjoob and opened up the ‘3ala Rasi’ studio. Soon after, 3ala Rasi partnered with the famous ‘Kharabeesh’, one of Jordan’s most inspiring startups, which produces Arabic-language animated cartoons, music videos and talk shows. “The more people got involved, the stronger the product became,” says Omar (AlAbdallat, Personal Communication, August 2, 2017).

His animation ‘3ala Rasi’ rose to number eighth in the Middle East for online traffic and clicks. “Every day I browse cartoons and caricatures from around the world,” says Omar. “I read and get a glimpse of what’s being said, and what words are used, what issues are out there, what language is spoken and what people’s reactions are. This is how I get inspired for all the sketches I do.” Omar uses social media networks to spread the word about his work; Twitter, Facebook as well as “Rusoom.com”, which is a website Omar
manages and which posts the work of 20 different artists from around the world. “There are so many great talents in the Arab world,” he says. “Sadly, there’s barely financial assistance to sustain these talents in Jordan.”

AlAbdallat (Personal Communication, May 25, 2017) strongly believes that comedy, cartoons and caricatures should be used in the development and education of our society. He says: “Every country has its amazing talents that draw and create content to spread awareness and make people laugh. "The aim of what I do is to make people happy, smile and at the end of the day benefit from the message, to better understand issues around us.” Omar’s example of the importance of this is Majed magazine. He says: “This magazine changed how UAE youth view their country; they grew prouder and learnt to respect their home and society. We are seeing young teens let go of these talents because it’s a tough market without solid support – but these teenagers need to fight it, give their passion a chance and follow their dreams.” He adds: “Support comes from sharing, giving feedback, feeding us ideas, appreciating our artists, understanding value, attending events, respecting the talent and encouraging community support (Derderian, 2015).

4.1.5 Randa Al Ayoubi/Rubicon Group Holding

Rubicon Group Holding (RGH) is a diversified global entertainment company devoted to the creation of outstanding innovative entertainment experiences and educational content across all media platforms. Combining award-winning creative expertise and cutting-edge technologies, RGH has an established reputation for innovation in four distinct business segments: a) Productions: including animated series and full feature movies. b) Themed Entertainment: design and implementation of themed-entertainment attractions in tourist destinations and real estate projects. c) Education: design and implementation of new
digital instruments of thought in line with a unity of education messages in educational products and services, including K to 12, professional development, virtual vocational training courses, and simulations for various industries. d) Games: ambitious array of games and apps designed by award winning, multi-talented game character designers in both serious and casual games.

RGH has a team of over 300 employees in four locations: Amman (Jordan), Los Angeles (United States), Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and Manila (Philippines). RGH’s world-class team collaborates to provide a unique perspective into the realization of captivating digital content and immersive entertainment. RGH has signed a number of strategic partnership deals with global and regional leaders in the media and communication industries, such as Turner Broadcasting System and Etisalat.

In 2010, RGH and Turner Broadcasting System entered into a strategic partnership covering a range of development, production, broadcasting, and merchandising initiatives. Headlining the strategic partnerships was an agreement to broadcast RGH’s Tareq wa Shireen (Figure 4.7) and Ben & Izzy (Figure 4.8) animated series on Cartoon Network Arabic. Through this agreement, RGH and Cartoon Network will also collaborate on the development of MENA merchandising programs, supporting the launch of the two series ("Rubicon Group / Jordan Co.,” 2017).
**Figure 4.7:** Tareq and Shireen, Animation series, 2011.

Source: https://i.ytimg.com

**Figure 4.8:** Ben & Izzy, Animation Series, 2010.

Source: http://www.amebatv.com

In her interview Al-Ayoubi (TV interview, October 8, 2011), Founder and Chief Executer
Officer (CEO) of Rubicon, talk about the establishment and the beginnings of Rubicon and
the challenges that faces the animation industry in Jordan.

According to Al-Ayoubi (TV interview, October 8, 2011), Rubicon was founded in 1994
with U$ 150,000. In 2004 we consider it the official establishment when it was the first
time I can get a big investment. In 1994 it was the early stage of establishment; we were
working in multimedia field. The goal was to produce a multimedia for education. In 90s
there was no internet in Jordan. So, the idea was very strange for the people. We continued
working in the multimedia for education until 2004. But we moved from basic education to
train the big establishments who can pay for training within multimedia. In 2004, when we
could attract the first investment, we were hiring twenty seven employees. In this period,
we move to produce 2D, 3D animation because the early years was a preparing stage for
the core staff that will develop the company to the next stage where is it now. We started
firstly to produce a co-production series with MGM studios. Pink Panther is a re-
production of Pink Panther of the 60s to the 21 century Pink Panther. It is a co-production
project which means that we did not work for hire, but we shared the whole property with
MGM. The first deal in this level with MGM and the success that Rubicon achieves in the
output, made us win five international awards. One of them is the best animation series in
the world and the best TV production and the best music. What happened that the position
of the company is reaching the international level? The quality is the same as in the best
companies in the world, and they started to trust us as a good company who can meet the
deadlines and keep the limitations of the budget while giving high quality production.

Answering question about the international competition in the sector, Randa Al Ayoubi
stated that the small companies, like those in Jordan, can compete in the international
market by depending on the value given and offered to the user. The value could be the low price, high quality or great profit. Or if you want to go further success is a combination of the three.

Regarding challenges and obstacles that she faces in the first stages, she said laughing “we didn’t have money”; the second challenge is that the new industry was not understood by the society. In 1994 there was no one using neither internet in Jordan nor email. So, starting an educational project which depended on multimedia and web was very difficult. So, it took us many years to teach the people what is edutainment and education by multimedia technology. The third challenge that we faced in the beginning was that there were neither human resources involved in learning digital technology in the universities nor any other institute. Rubicon is the first company who introduced the animation as a program at Princess Sumaya University for Technology and University of Jordan are the schools and we are very proud of this. We are very happy to see many of the animation industry in Jordan were started up in Rubicon.

About the current situation and opportunities for entrepreneurs, Randa sees that there are a lot of opportunities for Arabs in general to invest in. We know that the percentage of Arabic digital content is only about 1% of the international content. If we want to go for about 15%, we need hundreds of companies and individuals who may upload their Arabic digital content on the World Wide Web. Digital intellectual property should be considered, evaluated and protected in the whole Arab region. This is one of the challenges confronting the industry, the under estimated digital intellectual property.

To avoid this problem Randa said that solving this problem lies on a combination of many factors; now this situation is better than the situation ten years ago. When number of
successful companies is increased, the culture will be changed and then those companies will push the government to respect the intellectual property and enforce the regulations.

In the side of investment, the investors always have concerns about investment in this sector. But when they see many success stories they will be more motivated and encouraged to invest more in start-ups companies and in ideas they never heard of before (Al-Ayoubi, 2012).

4.1.6 Tareq Alrimawi

Dr. Tariq Rimawi is a Jordanian academic staff, director and filmmaker. His first degree in Graphic Design was obtained in 2006 from the Petra University, Jordan. In 2010, he graduated with a Master’s Degree in Animation from Newport Film School in the United Kingdom. His graduation stop-motion film entitled MISSING (Figure 4.9) was screened at more than 100 international film festivals including the Academy Award Qualifying Festivals, the Tokyo Short Shorts International Film Festival and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival. “MISSING” also received 12 awards domestically and internationally. In 2014, Tariq completed his studies about Arab Animation Cinema at The Animation Academy, Loughborough University in the United Kingdom and got his PhD degree. Currently, Tariq is Head of Animation and Multimedia Department at Petra University, Amman, Jordan.

According to Alrimawi (Personal Communication, December 10, 2016), his early interest in animation began when he was a child watching TV. After he joined the graphic design program at Petra University in 2002, he started to explore the capabilities of computer animation in art and design field.
The wide possibilities of animation as an expressive art attracted him for more involvement and immersion in this art. When he graduated, Petra University granted him a full scholarship to pursue his study to MA and also got his PhD from UK in animation. However, according to Alrimawi it was something interesting and in another side it was a challenge to be the first student in Jordan who obtained the PhD in animation.

It is interesting to mention that he produced his first animation short film titled MISSING as a graduation project for the master degree. The stop-motion film had been screened at more than 100 international film festivals including the Academy Award Qualifying Festivals, the Tokyo Short International Film Festival and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival. The most interesting and remarkable is that the film has received
twelve awards domestically and internationally. In 2013, he made his second short animated film titled ‘GROWING’ in cooperation with Al Ma3mal 612. Then in 2016, he also made a short animated film titled ‘SURPRISE’ (Figure 4.10). The film has been selected to screen in Dresden International Film Festival 2017 in Germany and ten International Film Festivals so far ("Tariq Alrimawi Films," 2017).

![Figure 4.10: Surprise, Short film directed by Tariq Alrimawi, 2016](image)

Source: Courtesy from Artist

According to Alrimawi (Personal Communication, December 10, 2016) the world started to see animation of Jordan since 2006 or 2007. In 2010 it was my first participation in animation festivals. At that time the international participants asked me many times about the Jordan animation production and why is Jordan animation is not screened in the international festivals. The reason why the world did not see any animation films from Jordan is because we only made film for local consumption not targeting the international market.
Speaking about the history of animation, Bendazzi is one of the most important authors who wrote about the animation in the world. He only wrote three pages about the whole Arab animation in his book. The three pages are written exclusively about Egypt. "In 2010 I met him. He asked me to write about animation in Jordan to be included in the next addition of his book" He stated. According to Alrimawi, the emergence of the Jordanian animation started with “Al Manahel” television program. It is the Arabic edition of the "The Electric Company” Program. Al Manahel was made in Jordan and broadcasted for the first time in 1987. The animation of this program was produced by artists and animators from the USA in the Jordan TV studios. It is important, here, to document that this program was the early emergence of animation in the all Arab world. In Jordan which was a leading country in this sector, this early production gives the opportunity for many Jordanians to explore this new media and learn the animation techniques from the visitor artists.

According to Alrimawi (Personal Communication, December 10, 2016), it was in 2006 the first time when 3D short animation films produced and participate in the international festivals. It was the film which produced by the Jordan Germany University students and participated in Japan for the very first time. For this film, and for the best of the researcher’s knowledge, it is notable that there is nothing documented about this film and the participation in Japan. For the history of Jordan animation film, we may talk about “I AM HUMAN” in 2009 and “THE STREET ARTIST” by Mahmoud Hindawi in 2013, and “MISSING” in 2010. Actually this is the animation history in Jordan. Even, if we talk about the “AL MANAHEL” program which contain some animation scenes it is a Jordanian program but the animation scenes were made by American artists, which, for Alrimawi, cannot be attributed to the Jordanians.
Another powerful Jordanian company that empowers the animation sector in Jordan was the Rubicon Group Holding company. Its pioneering efforts in the practice of animation are a great contribution to the early development of animation industry in Jordan. While Rubicon was co-producing the Pink Panther series and animated film, hundreds of young animators and character designers practice animation industry. It was a great opportunity for the young to train, learn and practice and explore many techniques at Rubicon studios. From this practice it is interesting to know that due to this deep practice and training, many artists like Mahmoud Hindawi, Hosam Al Natour and Hassan Manasreh took the advantage to create their own early animation projects and animated films. Those companies with other entrepreneurs who successfully involved in the section still represent the current situation of animation in Jordan. Unfortunately, Rubicon is now facing some difficulties which may cause to reduce or minimize the animation department. In this context Alrimawi (Personal Communication, December 10, 2016) asserted the importance of studying the history to pass to the future. He stated that the current situation indicates that some companies cannot sustain and many of them are closed.

Alrimawi summarized the issues and limitations faced those animation companies and caused them to close; the first issue is the financial investment and the income. He said that the low income and high risk make this field not attractive for the investors. He also emphasized on the importance of investment in this industry to sustain because the Jordanian market is so small that require this sector to depend on the Arab countries near to Jordan. This issue is associated to second issue which is the political circumstances in the region. Political situation in the Arab region nowadays is terrible. The circumstances in Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen affected the animation industry in general. It is a fact that Jordan depends on the Arabic region to promote animation productions. But, Alrimawi
added, even in this situation we can sell our production to others because our production took the Jordanian identity in its narrow margin in which it is difficult for others to understand the work itself. Therefore, we need to promote our works in a new and effective promotion strategy where the creative ideas gain the profit to develop other new ideas and influence the creativity of the artists.

Currently, animation sector in Jordan is suffering. The situation is like a roller coaster, sometimes going up and sometimes going down. It depends, as Alrimawi said before, on the regional political situation. In the current situation some companies, for example in KARABEESH’s case, starts to depend on internet and social media networks to publish and promote their works which reduce the working time and expenses then affect the quality of the animation. But, this is the nature of working for the social media networks. The job of social media networks lies on speed of working and also reducing the time of working to be the first to broadcast news and not on the quality.

In 2010 pioneer institution such as The Royal Film Commission Jordan (RFC) conduct many events and activities about short animation films. There are also many educational institutions like the universities which start to establish new programs to teach animation in Jordan. They often do many activities in animation filed to involve the students more in animation. They organize workshops in collaboration with Japan embassy about anime industry in Japan. Another workshop where Al Rimawi participated was carried out by (RFC) with professionals from Denmark for children about stop motion animation techniques. The (RFC) try to enhance the awareness about animation art among the society by conducting these workshops in Jordan.

For Alrimawi the human figure representation is one of the most important issues that
affected the animation industry in the Islamic and Arab world. Representing the characters is prohibited in Islam. Therefore, managing and representing characters in animation films is something forbidden especially for the case of the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and for his colleagues. Alrimawi found the answer for the question how can Arabic / Islamic or even the international film makers use stories of the Qur’an in animated films without offending Islamic tradition and culture? The solution which he presented in his thesis is achieved by “representing the prophets by anthropomorphizing the symbols of language - which has been an accepted practice of representation in Islamic visual arts - by using animation to give visual power to the linguistic signs” (Alrimawi, 2014).

According to Alrimawi (Personal Communication, December 10, 2016), Jordan animation sector made a good development in human resources issue. In the past there was a lack of professionals in this sector which affected the cost and the quality of animation production. For instance, some Jordanian producers went to Egypt to make their 3D animation series with low prices. In the current situation we have excellent qualifications that surprise all with their professional skills and their creativity.

4.1.7 Wael Attili/Kharabeesh

Wael Attili is a Jordanian architect graduate in the University of Jordan, blogger, an entrepreneur, and an avid storyteller. In 1997 while studying at university, he worked as a character designer for Arabia.com. Later, Wael took a job in information design, user experience, branding, and innovation in a leading branding and design company in Jordan. During that time, Wael helped found the first video and photo sharing website ikbis.com in 2005, in addition to the first Arabic twitter clone watwet.com. That same year, Wael started his personal blog sha3teely.com, which rapidly gained fame and inspired the
establishing of Kharabeesh in 2008. Kharabeesh is considered one of the fastest growing YouTube networks for Arabic content in the world. It started as a small storytelling house for the new Arab generation and has since put online Arabic content on the map. His hobby-turned-career has resulted in a large profile of productions that recount stories of society its daily realities (Marwan Soudi, 2014).

Kharabeesh is a platform for Digital Creators. A modern media company creating and producing dynamic e-content in Arabic language "bil 3arabi". Kharabeesh partner with tribe of creative personalities to produce content in a number of genres such as Comedy, Animation, Kids and Family, Social, Tech and Gaming, Beauty, Travel, and more. Nowadays, Kharabeesh owns 135 Channels, 5M Subscribers, 90M View/month and 2.6 Billion Lifetime views ("About Kharabeesh," 2017).

Kharabeesh is one of Jordan's success stories. After numerous political cartoons broadcast during the Arab Spring, the company began expanding vastly. and now offers five separate content streams, Toons, its adult animation channel, “Dawsha”, its music production channel, Tahsheesh, its comedy center, Kharabeesh Street, its talk show channel, and Rusoom, its channel for caricatures (Curley, 2012).

Wael Attili is a co-founder of “Kharabeesh” which is a media and entertainment network. “Kharabeesh” took an entrepreneur idea to enhance and to expand youth-oriented Arabic e-content, by creating exceptional, funny, edgy and innovative video shows designed to undertake social and political issues.

As Arabic is one of the fastest growing languages on the Internet. Arabic language has jumped to seventh position in the list of top 10 languages of internet users by language for
2011 (UN, 2012). Kharabeesh directed to become the biggest and the most popular Arabic speaking network on YouTube, by owning and managing more than 130 channels. According to the highest standards and based on copyrights regulations, brilliant script-writing and animation team at Kharabeesh is supported by certified YouTube professional experts that handle all aspects of publishing the videos online.

![Image](https://www.google.jo/imgres)

**Figure 4.11**: Give Me Back My Chicken, 2D Short Animation, by Kharabeesh, 2011

Source: https://www.google.jo/imgres

In 2010, the company received the first financing round of one million US dollars. In 2012, Kharabeesh ranked fourth in the Arab world as the most watched channel on YouTube, reaching the peak of its success by surpassing the one billion views for all the clips produced in 2015. This success enabled it to win the second financing round in 2016 worth $ five million from Wamda Capital.

For Attili, who graduated from the Faculty of Engineering, he engaged into the difficult business space. With new idea in his mind which is out of the traditional curricula forms,
he gets the benefits of the World Wide Web which lacks creatively Arabic content. He chose to provoke the young creators who did not find a real chance to blow their energies. He founded Kharabeesh network that rebelled against all traditional styles, and crossed the red lines with courage and creativity showing their animation and comic satirical sketches of talented Arab young.

Kharabeesh produced many talents in the Arab world, and carved with the image and name a landmark on YouTube pages. Subsequently Kharabeesh turned into one of the most developed networks of the Arabic e-content especially in animation field. Because of this unique experience, Attili was selected to participate in many international, Arab and local conferences to share ideas and experiences with those interested in the field of electronic media, creative industries, artistic and intellectual creativity.

In his interview to Masrawyya channel, Attili (TV Interview, November 20, 2014) emphasized the importance of the internet and social media networks for his company. He said that since 2005 the internet and social media networks like YouTube, Facebook have been available for more people in the Arab countries as well as in the world. Also the development of the new technologies offered many products we did not know before. Digital cameras on the mobile phones and high performance computers make it easy for people to work and produce creative content. For Arab users, the opportunity to express their self and ideas and to create new content was opened. Before 2005 there were many political, social factors that limit the creativity and self-expression as well as those factors related to public freedoms. It was very difficult to produce something bold and that is not used to be common within the society. In 2000 I established a blog. I was introducing some critic animations. After seven years I started thinking to develop the blog to be a big
company which came to the light in 2008. The idea of the company was to produce our stories, ideas and our characters and try to promote all of these things.

By four companies and individual money Kharabeesh was established with a capital of U$ 40,000. We faced big difficulties to produce within the name “Kharabeesh” which means in Arabic a rough copy or rough sketch. The idea was to be spontaneous and bold and introduce something new and also to be experimental. The goal was to create a model that based on the low budget production, abstract and simplicity and the boldness of the content.

Attili added that it was very difficult to promote this production because the people were not used to see this style of production. Traditional media was focusing on regular and assured programs. They often will not focus on criticizing the society and politicians; and also not take care and look at young and bold ideas. Consequently, most of our ideas were unmarketable which caused financial problems for us. In these circumstances we were obligated to work with commercials. We used our creative experience in commercials and get the money to sustain. This was not our goal, but working with commercials makes Kharabeesh a big name in the market.

It is interesting to note that Kharabeesh within short period could make a positive change in the society towards new issues. Attili explain this change: After this period, we notice that changes in opinions of the society towards the new issues we presented. Our ideas became more acceptable. Some individuals and companies started to imitate us. In this environment the main change happened when the level of Arab creators went forward and start their first steps. The level of boldness goes for more intension when the Arab spring started. Obviously, Arab spring revolutions were one of the transformation and shifting
factors that influence Kharabeesh situation. Kharabeesh started to show ideas and
courageous animation never could be shown before. Our short animations were talking
about Arab leaders used to treat as icons that could never be touched. But this matter was
changed too.

Attili (TV Interview, November 20, 2014) considers the Arab spring as a breaking point
for Kharabeesh to the next level of growth and potentials. He asserts this point saying that
it was the breaking point which allocates us in the level we never expect within the Arab
audiences. Kharabeesh became an Arabic idea not only a local one. This allows us to start
Kharabeesh network that gathering the creative people from all over the Arab world. They
join our experience and reach the same level with us.

For Attili, the internet offers a free platform to share the bold and creative ideas. By
internet, he clarifies, we gain the ability to produce and broadcast our ideas with free or
low budget platform. This ability helps our paradigm to grow and to develop. Again, a
good income for Kharabeesh and for the Arab creators who used to work for free achieved.
So, we now start to get good income on behalf of our creativity.

In his talk about income resources, Attili declare that they work on how to build a brand
name from creativity as a principal adopted by Kharabeesh. He also added that their basic
income comes from the sales for the telecommunication companies and sponsorships and
internet sales. In addition, he added that the company now is transforming to be a media
network which is a publishing and broadcasting media where we can introduce the content.
Through this we can attract more sponsorship where we can gain good income.

Optimistically, Attili express his point of view about the Arab spring. For him it is not a
political revolution only; it is a revolution that changed the people’s ideas regarding many issues. In addition, it played a major role to promote the internet as a platform where people can get the news. He thinks that we are living now in a renaissance of the Arab creators on the internet.

At the end, Attili added, everyone can notice how much is the Arabic content is published in the internet within the Arab spring and those presented in Ramadan period. As a conclusion, Attili said, there is an attitude towards advertising and publishing on the internet and the statistic numbers is proving this fact. He advises the young to “Keep the innovation and creativity and experimentation all the time because YouTube gives you the luxury of free publishing and low cost of production, it gives you the luxury of experimenting with new ideas and new formats and new shows, so you can come up with the next big thing or the next viral thing,” (Crompton, 2013).

4.1.8 Zaidoun Karadsheh/Sketch in Motion

Sketch in Motion (SIM) was founded in 2007 as a company devoted to bringing quality Arab animation to the international market. Its founders saw the lack of quality cartoon animation in their local and regional community and wanted to address the issue. Without any external financing or technical support, Media Plus, a leading online media producer, partnered with two creative freelancers with exceptional animation talent, and by October of 2007 had their first series broadcasted on Jordanian national TV featuring the famous Jordanian comedian Mousa Hijazin. Shofit Ainak (See It with Your Own Eyes) is a program targeted Jordanian families, presenting political and community issues in a comedic and meaningful manner. “Shofit Ainak” was a hit at the local level and throughout the Arab region. It is still being viewed on YouTube, with one episode having
over 200,000 views. Sketch in Motion continues to produce clips of M. Hijazin through ‘Takarub’ mobile content provider.

In the years since, SIM has achieved recognition and has won awards for its contributions in the field. Sketch in Motion are pioneers animation in the region, producing unique industry-leading content. Along with its strategic partner Media Plus, SIM produces industry-leading 2D animation delivered via the various mediums of broadcast TV, web, and mobile.

Merging design and animation proficiency with skills from different fields, including architecture, graphic design and visual arts, Sketch in Motion began with a group of avid artists dreaming to make a difference through animation. Sketch in Motion produces computer-animated productions with memorable characters and heartwarming stories, always faithful to the heart ideology of utilizing comedy, animation and entertainment productions for communicating meaningful messages.

The Sketch in Motion team never rests, always learning and integrating new technologies. 3D animation and visual effects are also currently being pursued as SIM strives for continual improvement along new edges of technology.

Sketch in Motion is also an exclusive partner with Media Plus, the most acclaimed web development company in Jordan. This partnership gives Sketch in Motion reach into the full gamut of multimedia and internet communication tools. Together the two firms produce and start matchless Arabic content online and in new mobile stages for different industries.
Sketch in Motion is dedicated to delivering meaningful messages with humor and laughter. They recognize the ability to cross dividing walls through amusement, utilizing its genuine universal experience. Sketch in Motion aims to reach a wide audience ranging from adults, teenagers, and friends to couples and children of all ages through animation and cartooning products with witty content and stylish artwork, combined with meaningful messages.

Sketch in Motion, produces one of the best animation show in the Arab World, “Al-Masageel” (Figure 4.12). Al Masageel, an animation series of thirty clips, eight-minute duration each, broadcasted daily in Ramadan on MBC1, Season one aired in 2011 with a big success, Season two aired on 2012, and Season three aired during Ramadan 2013. Al-Masageel tells an entertaining story of traditional Bedouin Saudi tribes. They interact with new technology and their modern surroundings in a funny enjoyable scenes (“Al Masageel,” 2011).

Figure 4.12: Al-Masageel, Animation Series of Thirty Clips, 2013.

Source: Courtesy from SIM
Zaidoun Karadsheh is a spokesman and the Managing Director/Partner of Sketch in Motion and Media Plus. He is an architect by education, and the ambassador of cartooning and animation for Sketch in Motion. He has invested his knowledge and skills in designing communication tools and internet space in Jordan and neighboring regions. For over eight years, he has led the award-winning multimedia and web development powerhouse Media Plus. He has served hundreds of clients in Jordan and UAE, and is co-founder of Sketch in Motion. In addition to major traditional internet projects, Zaidoun has served clients and agencies in the region by developing ground breaking animation, online campaigns and micro-sites. Zaidoun manages the communication channels for Sketch in Motion and is passionate about using animation as a communication medium. He is proud of the proven ability of Media Plus and Sketch in Motion teams to achieve results for their clients and break new ground in online marketing communications.

According to Karadsheh (Personal Communication, August 15, 2016), the beginning of Sketch in Motion company was in 2007. In 2006 there was one project accomplished by a group of young people. The first project we produced was in 2007 when we produce “Shofit Ainak “with my partner and three employees. Then we made “Nahfat Eyletna” for Jordan T.V. and other production for The Royal Scientific Society in Jordan.

After good successful projects for three years, Jordan T.V stopped dealing with SIM. Responding to the first difficulties facing the company, Karadsheh says: They decided to develop and produce new series and new content, Bedouin style was good for the gulf area markets. In 2010 it was the production of “Al Mahabeesh “then, the name of series changed to “Al Masageel “in which we employ famous Arab artist to give the Arabic Bedouin concept. We also used painted backgrounds which also emphasized the concept.
After months we made the first demo to the owner and program manager in MBC, the biggest Arabic TV channel. They agreed to broadcast our project but they asked us to transform the Jordan accent to Saudi Arabia accent to make the series more appealing to the gulf countries audiences.

The first broadcast of the series was in Ramadan 2010 at the same time of “Eftar” which was the peak hours of viewers. For Karadsheh, it was a great and interesting experience for us and obviously a great influence for the viewers as well. As a continuous success, he states, we continue to produce the series in 2011, 2012 and 2013 when we started to merchandize all products related to the characters of the series. Change in MBC administration caused a stop to producing the series for the next year. MBC then made contract with Saudi company to produce a similar program. This Saudi company, in turn, made a contract with us to produce the new project.

![Image of two animated characters](image)

**Figure 4.13:** “Eyal Noair”, Animation Series, Broadcasted by MBC1, 2015.

Source: Courtesy from SIM

The new series of “Eyal Noair”, (Figure 4.13), didn’t make the same success as “Al
Masageel” did. Karadsheh gives explanation regarding this issue. He argues that the series did not make the same success because the concept was western and imported. It is not fitting our culture and it was targeting a younger age group. We tried to reproduce it again this year; restore and repair this problem by making small contracts with many companies in many countries.

Indirectly, Karadsheh acknowledged he was disappointed in this case. He thought that the changeable mood influenced the work, not the quality and other logical reasons. So, he thinks that good relationships with good communication and general public relations are very important to sustain in this competitive market. In other words, if you have good contacts with powerful people in important positions of the important channels, you will have a good opportunity to convince decision makers to adopt your project.

“Our dream is to make universal film or series namely stories from the orient” to be exported around the world translated to many languages. To communicate our culture with the world, this dream needs huge investment but it will form an Arabic heritage and influencing our new generations. What is pushing us to achieve this dream is that we miss the meaningful Arabic content in the Arabic channels. Even if we don’t have high quality humanistic content we convey human values. We try to demonstrate and promote this project to T.V channels but we did not have success yet. Why they are not interested in this project? He wondered. Then he continues saying: After 2007, many companies like Corel Stone, B4, and Crazy Birana could not sustain their finished projects and closed their companies.

For the best three Arab animation aired in the most important channels, two of them were produced in Jordan. “Shaabeyat al Cartoon” made by Crazy Birana, “Al Masageel” made
by Sketch in Motion. The third one, Al Fareej, was made in India and Philippines. Many things are not from our culture; for example, body language in Arab countries is different from Europe or in India so that if you let artists from other culture to represent the scene, there are many details that make a difference. This detail is only recognized by an expert artist. Karadsheh asserted the importance of artistic quality, value, and meaningful content saying: “By good quality and meaningful Arabic content our ambition is to be a “center for animation” in the region” (Karadsheh, Personal Communication, November 20, 2014).

Regarding the government support, I can say that there is neither government support nor big business investments. In this subject, and for the investors, I have some reservations on this matter because they are seeking quick money. The right recipe is to have the right investor and the right money; then the right talent who will give the best of their efforts to return the revenue and success. The big investment in many projects came through “Oasis500”. Unfortunately, few companies are successful and sustainable. Actually, it is kind of filtering the companies. The success stories are limited. So, when we participated in the exhibition and events we notice that it became smaller. Most of the companies tend to make merchandize, games, puppets, showing T.V channels. But the real animation content is done only by few companies. In general, Karadsheh added, Sketch in Motion is in a stable situation now but not for the other companies in Jordan. The needs and potentials are big; some investment is still available, and also the companies are filtering though time.

Regarding the current situation and the future of animation sector in Jordan, Karadsheh see that the world is changing and disruptive. New platforms disrupt the older one. However, in animation the tool is becoming easier. Technology is going faster and makes working
with animation easier. So, the creativity is not influenced as it was in the past. Technology and creativity is the challenge in the future (Karadsheh, Personal Communication, November 20, 2014).

In another side, Karadsheh emphasizes the role of institutions and companies in the animation sector. He describes the role of these saying: there are many entities impacting the animation sector in Jordan. It is a loop; we have the graduate student and we have the animation companies. Now after decreasing markets, many graduate students did not have any job. So, we should make something to refresh the sector. Trade missions are one of the solutions.

In his answer about how to refresh the animation sector in Jordan, Karadsheh asked for supporting the start-ups to participate in Arab and international exhibitions. He also identified four factors that impact the animation sector in Jordan. He stated that he believed in exhibitions and trade missions because it could refresh the sector. He also added there are four factors impacting the animation sector in Jordan; a) access to finance, or financial support and investment. b) Balance in graduation student need training before they start real production. c) How to advertise Jordan as an animation hub for animation industry with good infrastructure. d) Art, drawing skills is the core of the animation where art and design institution should be concerned about this matter.

### 4.2 Conclusion

As a conclusion, all of the founders and academics interviewees in this research provide significant data about the history and current situation of the animation sector in Jordan as well as the issues influenced it. The emergence of animation is seen as an expansion in the
art and design practices and as a development of TV programs in the eighties. The existence of the new technology, in spite of low budget investment in the industry, associated with computer software has created a good and interesting entertainment and animation industry in Jordan. This situation has involved and embedded the awareness and the culture of animation industry in the Jordanian scene. It is also obvious that the social media networks have played an important role in supporting the Arab artists as a free platform to broadcast and share believes.

Emad Hajjaj, one of the first generation, is well known for his pioneering in exploring and employing the capability of computer technology in his drawing and designs. Meanwhile, Randa Al Ayoubi is known for her entrepreneurship in the sector by establishing the biggest animation and entertainment company in Jordan. Moaiad Zaidan, is an animator and director who follow his passion and was fully engaged with animation industry in 2000’s. He displayed an interesting and successful project since he engaged with the sector. His approaches and practices depend on solid drawing and painting skills and also depend on self-learning on the early time of his practices. Fadi Barghouti, Omar Al Abdallat, Tareq Alrimawi and Wael Attili are representing the generation of animators and entrepreneurs in Jordanian scene. All of them showed an interesting approach in their ideas and believes as well as interesting production.
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to give a clear and detailed description of the early emergence, development and the current situation of animation in Jordan. Overview of the history of animation in Jordan was introduced in Chapter 2. It reviews the art and design scene until the foundation of graphic design, multimedia and visual communication design departments which established in fine art collages in the eighties and the nineties of the last century. The review also covers the establishment of graphic design programs which later embedded animation programs which give a new dimension to the art and design scene in Jordan.

The chapter will be divided into six main sections: the first section will give a clear and detailed description of the early emergence, development and the current situation of animation in Jordan. The second section will discuss the self-learning in approaches and practices of Jordanian animation artists. The third section discusses the importance of internet and social media networks for animation sector in Jordan. The forth section is dedicated to discussion of characteristics of Jordanian animation industry. The fifth section discusses the identified challenges facing the industry that arose from the primary data findings on the Jordanian animation industry. And the last section is the conclusion.

The emergence of animation is seen as expansion and in the art and design practices and as a development of TV programs in the eighties. The existence of the new technology associated with computer software in addition to skillful artists has created a good and interesting entertainment and animation industry in Jordan. This situation has involved and embedded the awareness and the culture of animation industry in Jordan scene. The first section in this chapter discusses the historical development of Jordanian animation scene.
5.1 The Historical Development of Jordanian Animation

This section provides a general understanding of the emergence and development of the animation sector in the Jordan landscape. First, it is important to understand the modern and current Jordan scene. It is believed that the emergence of animation in Jordan was influenced by many factors particularly the spread of TV channels, internet and the social media networks, awareness, establishment of multimedia and animation programs in the higher education institutions development of software and technology.

The history of Jordanian animation is short (Alrimawi, Personal Communication, December 10, 2016). However, the development of the animation sector in Jordan is evolved and expanded by the artists and animators who came from different backgrounds such information technology, architecture, computer science and art and design as well who have the passion to work in animation. Talented artists in drawing and painting are involved in the field too. The animation industry depends on those artists from a variety of fields. At the early time, it was difficult to find the qualified human recourses that have the good experience to take on the jobs. This is emphasized by Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016) who faced this problem when he established his company in 2000. He conducted a big survey to find any individual who graduated in an animation program or anyone who have the skills of animation. He said he was able to find only one.

The history of the animation in Jordan can be divided chronologically into three phases: The beginning phase, the construction and growth phase or Pre-Arab Spring phase and Post-Arab Spring or the Current Phase.
5.1.1 The Beginning Phase (1987-2000)

The beginnings of animation in Jordan trace back to the 1980s. Early development of the current Jordanian animation sector began before the establishment of animation programs in art and design departments. Its first initiatives start with Jordan TV in 1987 when they produced “Al Manahel”. It is believed that the TV program “AL Manahel” had introduced the first animation series to the Jordan viewers and inspired the artists after twenty years. Thus, the establishment of modern animation practices in Jordan was influenced and inspired by “Al Manahel” which included many animation scenes.

Al Manahel is a Jordanian edutainment program produced for children in 1987. It was distinguished in direction and in the subject. It included educational passages in various subjects and was presented in such an interesting way that the child's mind is captivated by the exciting representation and comic comedies. Al Manahel is the Arabic version of the American program “The Electronic Company”.

Producers used the cynical attitude and other methods to lift the ceiling of pleasure in the series and enter the joy on the hearts of the children who did not exceed primary education in order to improve spelling and proficiency in reading.

The animation scenes were made in Jordan by American artists who come to Jordan to work in this project. The animated scenes in the program include “The Adventures of Abil Huroof”. Abil Huroof, (Figure 5.1), is the saver of the letters that “Kharbout” is playing with. Abil Huroof comes out of his stomach to correct words and return them to their origin. The character is quoted in the Adventures of Letterman series. And it carries almost the same meaning.
Since that time, the practice of modern animation began to appear on the T.V as advertising clips and began to be accepted by Jordanian audiences and viewers.

In 1994 the period marked by establishing the first company founded by Rubicon Group Holding (RGH) which start to produce educational animation. Then, the establishment of “Abu Mahjoob” company by cartoonist Emad Hajjaj in 2000. As stated by Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), at the end of nineties it was only individual practices that tried to animate characters and make demonstrations in graphic design companies and in the electronic drawing section in Jordan TV. All these practices start animating characters using the FLASH program. It was a simple and easy program to use by the artists and animators. The beginning period was marked by the beginning of 1980's until 2000, which was the period of T.V programs. In this context, Al-Manahel program was a combination of animation with cartoonish style and T.V acting represented by the actors.

The beginning period revolves around the early initiative efforts by the governmental Arabs and Jordan T.V.s in introducing a new education approach that contribute to
education system in the Arab world by involving the animation as a new approach in the education system. This period witnessed the growth of the animation sector in Jordan. The period was shaped by contemporary issues involving cultural, social and education issues.

5.1.2 The Construction and Growth/Pre-Arab Spring Phase (2000 – 2011)

This period was marked by the establishment of Abu Mahjoob Company by cartoonist Emad Hajjaj in 2000 and the “official establishment” of Rubicon in 2004. This period witnesses a very interesting development. For Alrimawi, Karadsheh, and Hajjaj, the years 2007-2008 was the peak of animation production, in quality and quantity. The growth of animation sector in this period came from the expansion of Jordan animation production in the Arab Gulf countries.

In 2003, the cartoonist Emad Hajjaj, who owned Abu Mahjoob Company, was the first to produce thirty episodes of TV series Abu Mahjoob. The series was broadcast on the official Jordan TV. According to Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), the series took three years to be produced. He added: at that time, we made a survey to attract anyone who had the skills to work in this project. But we only found a person who had B.A in animation. He graduated from Canada. I think he was the first animator with a degree in animation; his name was Tareq Alla Ad Deen. He was very useful for that project and gave us his experience—the one employee who was the talented and passionate artist who involved in the field. The series won the second prize at Cairo Festival 2003.

Later, in 2004, the internet spread out through Jordan and the Arab region. This expansion gave the opportunity to publish some short clips of animation on the web which made the Jordanian characters such as Abu Mahjoob to be famous in all the Arab World. Demand on
animation increased and some investment started to flow into Jordan. In this context, it is notable that the communication companies in Jordan made good contracts with animation companies to create Arabic content to be used as MMS on mobiles which was a new trend at that time. This was emphasized by Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), Karadsheh (2016) and Zaidan (2017).

For Hajjaj (Personal Communication, January 20, 2016), the main problems that confront the companies in that time was the lack of qualified human resources and the need for specialists for every step of the production process. He added: it was something like one-man show. One artist was doing almost everything from concept art, story board, screen pay and character design. The third challenge was the lack of investment in this industry. It was well known that this sector was fast to develop and needed to be supported by cutting-edge technology which needed financial support.

Primarily produced by Rubicon in 2008, a rising educational and CGI Animation Company to entertain, Ben and Izzy is a Jordanian animation television series also created to educate viewers about aspects of Arab history and how it affected western culture. These aspects are reflected in the bond between the American Ben and the Jordanian Izzy (Bendazzi, 2015).

Emad Hajjaj, caricaturist, creating the character Abu Mahjoob (Figure 5.2). Despite his Jordanian identity, the character became a well-known and a true comic hero in the Arab world. Since 2004, Abu Mahjoob has appeared in animated series on the official Jordanian T.V (Bendazzi, 2015). This famous character opened the Arab market for Jordanian animation studios.
At that time, many Jordanian successful animation series aired on MBC channel. It is the biggest T.V channel in the Middle East. For the international market another big project was produced. The re-production of Pink Panther of the sixties to the twenty first century is a co-production project between Rubicon and MGM studios. The project made a significant contribution to the sector. These projects attracted the talented and offered good training opportunity to numerous artists and character designers to develop and improve their skills in animation practices (Ayoubi, 2012).

According to Karadsheh (2016) and Hajjaj (2016), most of the animation studios called attention to the themes that related to identity and Arabic / Islamic values. They were trying to produce Arabic content that represented the values of the society instead of the imported animations.

5.1.3 Post-Arab Spring Phase (2011- Now)

The post-Arab spring revolution period was marked by the Tunisian revolution in 2011.
This period witnessed the fast diffusion of short animation online clips. This period was shaped by contemporary, political issues as the main subject of the animation clips influenced and inspired the revolution in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Syria.

After the Arab spring revolution political issues became the main issues in animation clips and shorts. The landscape of animation expanded in dramatic way supported and influenced by YouTube, Facebook, and social media networks. Artists in the Arab spring period take the advantage of freedom and began to produce a new alternative, fast and low cost production using social media networks as their platform to share their animation. The contemporary animation short videos spread and expanded quickly. Short animated videos like “Le journal du ZABA” by Kharabeesh reached the highest viewing hits with 2,531,697 views. According to the art director of Kharabeesh Salem (2016), “Le journal du ZABA” was the most successful movies made within only forty-five minutes and shared in YouTube on low budget cost. Cut out technology was used in this project, but even then, it got the highest scores. During this period the artists started feeling the freedom and ability to express their selves. In addition, this great impact of this new platform on the development of animation industry and their audiences.

In this context it is worth to remind that in most Arab countries, film project, for example, must first pass a state committee, which grants or denies permission to shoot. When the permission is obtained, another official agreement is required to exploit the product commercially. This requirement should be approved by a special censorship authority (Shafik, 2007).

However, animated clip makers started to explore a new strategy to distribute and utilize their production utilizing the social media networks and the freedom opportunities to
express their thoughts and ideas. The social media networks culture, based on the wide spread of internet technology has transformed the approach and practice of publishing, and distributing the animation video clips. This has created a new platform for the makers. The YouTube and social media networks have opened the door for anyone to share and contribute the animation scene in Jordan and the Arab and international world. This led to dramatic changes in the approaches and practices in the field as well as the changing the awareness about the political issues and freedom, especially in the Arab region.

Table 5.1: Historical Phases and Features of Animation in Jordan

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<tr>
<td>Phase</td>
<td>The beginnings</td>
<td>Pre-Arab Spring</td>
<td>Post-Arab Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>T.V</td>
<td>T.V, MMS, Internet</td>
<td>Internet, Social Media, Smart Phones</td>
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<td>Issues</td>
<td>Comics, Social,</td>
<td>Entertainment,</td>
<td>Political</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>edutainment, cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Al Manahel</td>
<td>Abu Mahjoob, Ben and Izzy</td>
<td>Escape of Bin Ali</td>
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5.2 Self-Learning in Approaches and Practices of Jordanian Animation Artists

Obviously, Jordanian character designers who are involved in practices of character design in specific and animation in general, understand the significance of the animation field in the future. They start teaching themselves how to ride this wave of fast technology
development. From the responses, the researcher realized that Jordanian character designers tend to approach and practice animation and character design depend on self-learning.

As most of the people who are involved in this field are not coming from an art background, and they did not attend animation programs, self-learning is considered a common approach and practice in Jordan. The lack of such programs in the nineties of the twenty century and the early ten years of the 3rd millennium pushed them to self-learning practices. They started to explore the new computer programs and applications to enhance their skills in using the digital techniques.

According to character designer Hindawi (Personal Communication, August 17, 2016), he depended on himself to learn the new design and drawing applications. He added that the most interesting thing in the university was that the instructors “always just let me do what I want to do”. The friendly and easy-to-use of computer applications, which is evolving and developing continuously, makes it possible for self-learning. The simplicity and easy software that launched and used in Jordan at the end of the 20th century, like (Flash) gives a big shift to the animation filed. Gathering the artists and character designers and animators (not specialists) in one company and from fields like IT and architecture was a leading step towards establishing the animation industry in Jordan.

However, artists believe that self-learning was the best way to feel their passion towards new art technology and animation. So, they carried out searching the new software, application, digital tools and devices by themselves. In the nineteen of the second millennium, Hajjaj started to draw his characters using “the first device in Jordan” Macintosh computer with skuzzy Wacom by teaching himself through testing and
exploration. It was a very big transition from traditional drawing and painting to digital techniques.

This big shift allows him to create an alternative, new and unique drawings and paintings. This new development was noticed by the public. For the first time an artist produced his caricature using computer software (fracture designs then Photoshop). The audiences feel the difference. And the new techniques give more attention to the drawings and to the newspaper publishing it. Meanwhile, pencil sketches have mostly been replaced with electronic pen and the sketching paper with electronic pad too. The computer application and digital devices becomes the efficient tool to develop graphic design, character design and animation and other media and entertainment sectors.

5.3 The Importance of Internet and Social Media Networks for Animation Industry in Jordan

The number of Jordanian internet and social media networks users increased greatly during last few years. According to World Bank, (Figure 5.3), more than fifty percent of the Jordanians are using the internet and social media networks (Bank, 2016). For the creative artists who established their companies at this period, social media networks has played an important role in supporting the Arab artists that believe their contribution matters to share their works and interact with the Arab audience anytime they want (Jenkins, 2006).
Based on the interviews of the Jordanian animation producers, directors and character designers, and observation of the practices on the field the researcher found that the use of internet and social media networks by them took four significant functions. Firstly, the economic function when the internet and social media networks became the low-cost platform for Jordanian animation producers. Secondly, the social media networks are the environment where the artists can freely express their social and political issues and ideas. Thirdly, the internet and social media networks functions as a learning tool where they can find the educational videos. Fourthly, internet and social media networks in Jordan also purposes as documentation and archiving tool. Nowadays it is the biggest archive of Arab and Jordanian animation films and clips available any time to everybody. The significance functions of social media networks for the animation sector in Jordan is illustrated in Figure 5.4.
The use of internet and social media networks functions as a low-cost platform and easy fast technology to broadcast the animated clips. This economic factor makes a significant contribution to develop the sector especially when we retrieve the talks with the owners/founders of the companies that the financial support is one of the main challenges that face the animation sector in Jordan. In this context, animation studios like Kharabeesh and sketch in motion often create their animation clips and short movies in a very simple form using low quality animation to reduce the cost. It is notable that sharing and distributing clips/movies via social media networks increase the income by reduction of cost but affected in a negative way the quality of Jordan animated products in the artistic and aesthetic aspects, when they produce clips within a very short time, Forty-five minutes for Tunisie fuite ben Ali video clip, and using cut out technique to animate it.

**Figure 5.4:** The Significance Functions of Social Media Networks for the Animation.
Since the Arab Spring in the Middle East, the censorship of movies, clips and all animation content in comparison to the limited chances and freedoms of the earlier period, the direct instant importance and significance of this is an explosion in the broadcasting, sharing and publicity of Jordan animation production and animation artists to the world. The “Tunisie fuite ben Ali “, (Figure 5.5), clip produced by Kharabeesh hit 2.5 million views in YouTube. It is something notable that this clip took only forty-five minute to produce.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 5.5:** Kharabeesh Cartoons, Still of Le journal du ZABA (2011).

Source: (Kharabeesh, 2011)

Social media networks encouraged the Arab artists not only to create political works, but to recover their previous work that had been excluded due to the strict state censorship, and share these films with the public too. In addition, some artists uploaded their political works during or/and after the Arab Spring because of the rising interest of the Arab people in political issues and the changing events (Alrimawi, 2013). This situation also matches the situation in Jordan. Therefore, YouTube became a big achievement of Jordan animation films.
5.4 Characteristics of Jordanian Animation Industry

Based on the collected data about the Jordanian animation industry, it can be said that Jordanian industry is still in the introduction stage. The introduction stage of a given industry has specific characteristics that include poor product quality, few competing companies within the market, and high risks (Porter, 1980). Despite the fact that some Jordanian animated films and series have won international awards, it can be said that these features applicable to the current Jordanian animation industry.

In general, the quality of Jordanian animation production is somewhat poor compared to the quality of mature industries such as those in the United States and the United and Japan. There are many different functions that show the quality of animation products, such as the scope of demand: for example, Disney animations are required in many different countries (Alharbi, 2017). In this context, the Jordanian animators are required in many Arab countries and also in the international scale. Reviews on the LinkedIn network about Jordanian animators showed that they got jobs in Arab Gulf countries as well as Europa and the United States.

International award winning is another milestone in the reliability and the quality of animation. In this context, Al Rimawi, Jordanian director, has won numerous international awards for his short film, Missing, in international festivals such as Barcelona International Audiovisual Festival, Catalonia 2012. He won the Creative Award in festival. He also won a prize of Guro Kids International Film Festival, 2018 for his sort film Surprise. Besides, Mahmoud Hindawi, Jordanian artist has recently been winning top awards at local and international film festivals of his film, The Street Artist. The short film won the main prize at JoAnimate, Jordan’s foremost animation film festival.
However, there are several different reasons come beyond the inappropriate quality of animation production. To compare, the poor quality of Malaysian animation was due to the lack of knowledge that higher education institutions could provide students with (Muthalib, 2007). Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, an absence of higher education institutions that offer full time animation courses affects quality (Alharbi & Baines, 2015). It is also emphasized by Islam, Shamsuddin, and Choudhury (2013) that lacking animation institutions affect the quality of animation too. In the same way, in Jordan, the delay in the establishment of institutions of higher that offer advanced programs in animation has affected the quality of production. Higher education institutions started to offer qualifications relating to the animation industry only in 2010.

According to data collected from the official web sites for all Jordanian Universities, there are five institutions in Jordan who offer different skill development programs, including diploma, and bachelor degree programs. Three public universities and two of private are offering Bachelor degree programs on visual communication, animation and multimedia design technology. One Institute offers Diploma in visual effects animation. Table 5.2 summarizes information collected from different multimedia institutions and shows the details of programs offered by institutions teaching animation in Jordan.

Only two universities, Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) and University of Petra (UOP), offers deep specialization in animation, with an animation track within its Computer Graphics and Animation program and Animation & Multimedia program. It is worthy to state here that collaboration between PSUT and Rubicon Group Holding (RGH) make it possible for the students to train in RGH studios (Al-Ayoubi, 2012).
Table 5.2: Institutions offer Animation & Multimedia Programs in Jordan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Institute Type of Program</th>
<th>Type of University</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>B. Sc of Design and visual communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Jordanian University (GJU)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>BA in Design and Visual Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balqa Applied University (BAU)</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>B. Sc in Computer Aided Design &amp; Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>B. Sc in Computer Graphics and Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Petra (UOP)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>BA in Animation &amp; Multimedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Audio Engineering. SAE Institute Jordan</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Diploma in visual Effects Animation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), the faculty staff of design and visual communication program is only one staff that has master degree in animation. Higher institutions with innovative and skills providers are Key elements for generation and diffusion knowledge (Tödtling & Trippl, 2005). The absence of skills providers is an
important obstacle to the creation and the development of the animation industry in Jordan.

In this context, Reviewing the course plan of Computer Aided Design & Animation in BAU, show that it covers only very basic knowledge related to animation such as character design and one course for 2D animation (BAU, 2017).

According to Al Rousan (Personal communication, 2017), who teaches 3D Modeling and animation courses within the department of design and visual communication in Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), students are taught how to use different animation techniques, including 2D and 3D, as well as the use of digital tools such as Adobe Photoshop and illustrator, Adobe After effects and Adobe Animate. However, the large number of students who are registered in this program makes it difficult for learning to take place, as there is insufficient equipment for all of the students as well as insufficient staff. Large number of students in this programs and insufficient equipment as well as insufficient staff is common challenges in Jordanian institutions that award degree in animation. The need for skillful graduates to engage in workforce were emphasized by Zaidan (2017), Hajjaj (2016) and Al-Ayoubi (2012).

Another uneasiness situation is that many lecturers, including heads of the animation programs at Jordanian universities, are not trained in animation. For instance, it is only in UOP where the head of multimedia and animation program is specialized in animation. In the rest of the universities most of the head of animation programs specialized in information technology such as in PSUT and BAU or architecture such as in JUST and GJU which is different from animation art.

Another reason for inappropriate quality in Jordanian animation is lacking investment in films and series of cartoons from private and government bodies such as state television
and private television. Animation movies and series require large budgets. These projects are usually financed by the producer as well as other bodies, including commercial sponsors, or commissioners, which in the Jordanian case is very limited. The need to avoid this obstacle by access to finance, direct and indirect assistance were highlighted by Karadsheh (2016), Bargouthi (2011) and ALabdallat (2017).

In Jordan, the high capital investment required by the production of animation is a major barrier preventing investors from entering this market, along with high cost, lack of entrepreneurship knowledge, and the absence of distribution channels. As a result of this situation, there are a few companies competing in the Jordanian animation market. This small number of companies is one indication that the Jordanian animation industry is still in its introduction stage of development. In this context, (Al-Ayoubi, 2012) within the interview emphasized the increasing number of studios to develop competition and thus move the industry to another stage.

Another characteristic of the introduction stage that applies to the Jordanian animation industry is that the high risk. This high level of risk has several reasons. According to interviews with the founders of Jordanian animation studios and experts in the field, this high risk is due to the capital requirements for such works, including budgets to cover the cost of professional equipment such as software and hardware, and the recruitment of qualified and skilled workforce (Al-Ayoubi, 2012; Alrimawi, 2016; Karadsheh, 2016).
5.5 Challenges Facing Jordanian Animation Industry

The Jordanian animation industry as an emerging industry is facing problems that are constraining its development. This study analyzes the identified challenges that arose from the primary data findings on the Jordanian animation industry. Challenges are addressed by suggesting recommendations found by showing comparative situations from selected countries which are sometimes in the similar stage development and in other are in higher level than Jordanian animation industry. Challenges facing Jordanian animation industry identified by this thesis are: lacking skilled labor, lacking financial assistance and high-risk industry.

5.5.1 Lacking Skilled Labor

The need for qualified graduates to engage directly in the marketplace is critical to the growth and development of the industry. The availability of skilled labor is the platform for the animation industry (TAT, 2010). Difficult access to skilled manpower is one of the most important industry inputs facing the sector in Jordan. The term skilled manpower includes skilled workers who specialize in any stage of the production process, whether in pre-production, production or post-production stage. These skills include: script writing, storyboard, character design, animation, direction and any other role required by the animation industry.

Script writing is very important for the animation industry because animation project start with story. Good animations begin with strong and coherent story. In this context, Amman Design Week 2015 and Jordan Royal Film Commission played important role to fill gap in script writers in Jordan. They commissioned Dr. Tareq Alrimawi to hold workshop in
script writers and the researcher has the opportunity to attend this workshop in Oct. 7, 2016. However, the availability of professional script writers remain one of the most important industry inputs facing the sector in Jordan in pre-production stage.

Analysis of a number of animated series that were produced by different Jordanian media production companies shows that these animations have been produced from animation studios in Egypt, India and Philippine. In addition, many branches of the studios such as RGH and Curl Stone Entertainment were opened in Dubai and Philippine due to availability of skilled and sometimes inexpensive manpower at these countries. This outsourcing follows by the owners of studios as a result of problems in finding enough qualified candidates. The above evidence indicates that the Jordanian animation industry suffers from the lack of one of its main supply chain, the skilled labor force. Thus, there is a strong doubt that there is a shortage of manpower suppliers to move the industry to the next development stage of the industry. Therefore, investigations were conducted into the status of suppliers of those inputs.

Higher education institutions are the main supplier of skilled labor needed for the development of the industry. In Jordan, there are no full time BA courses in animation. However, a one or two of universities offer BA degrees in related courses to animation such as Computer Graphics and Animation (PSUT), Design and visual communication (JUST), Computer Aided Design & Animation (BAU), and Animation & Multimedia (UOP). The students in these programs are introduced to graphic and multimedia software to train on simple techniques of producing animations. In particular, students only learn practical skills such as how to design a character and create simple animation scenes. According to the course plan in selected universities, the students end their four year study
with final project. They try to apply what they have learned in this project. They often produce three minutes shorts including script, characters, and storyboard and then add voice and other elements to come out with 2D or 3D short film applying the three stages of animation production. In JUST as a fulfillment of graduation, the student should also engage in two months training course in one of animation studios. But, most of the students can’t get this chance because the limited number of animation studios and large number of students registered in animation program. According to art director in SIM studio Moaiad (2017) and the art director of Kharabeesh Abo-Salem (2016), most of the studios are small size in Jordan and their capacity to train students is limited too.

Although this approach is necessary and useful to prepare students and prepare them to work in the real environment where they apply their skills and knowledge, but the period is very short and may not be able to many students to get the appropriate training opportunity, some of them find themselves train in multimedia design companies which is not specialized in pure animation. Thus, students graduate with skills that are not sufficient to involve directly working in the studios, as they need more intensive professional training courses to sharpen their skills.

In comparative with maturity animation industries, suggestions based on findings from animation industry addressed this barrier by focusing on improving the skilled manpower such as universities and technical training institution, because this will improve the quality of its outcomes, the skilled graduates. Institutions can provide this kind of training by applying twinning program with animation institution in developed countries. In Malaysia, Lim Kok Wing Institute of Creative Technology applied this twining program with Canadian institute (Muthalib, 2007).
The findings indicated that the animation program in the institutions should be defined as a full-time focused and an independent plan whose contents are accurately defined. This matter should be considered because acquiring knowledge and mastering skills in animation art requires long time of practical hard work and training.

Consequently, in order to address the shortage in skilled manpower, it is necessary to improve the quality and quantity of manpower suppliers in Jordan in order to establish bank of skilled candidates for the Jordanian animation industry.

5.5.2 Lacking Financial Assistance

Lack of funding continues to be a significant problem faced by all Jordanian animation studios. There are difficulties in obtaining financing from government bodies, banks, and the private sector. This lack of funding reduces the ability of the studios to meet the market demand. In this context, providing funds is the solution. Funding can be visualized through founding a national fund with the aim of supporting and financing the Jordanian animation studios. The Animation National Fund can be supervised by the applicable bodies. This fund will provide the studios with the financial services for the borrowing. The NGOs and private sector should be involved in supporting, investing, and development of the animation sector too.

In Jordan, most of the contents of the animation such as animated films and serials broadcast by official and private television channels are imported from international companies. Interviews with Jordanian studio owners indicated that Jordanian animation industry struggles because of the obstacles of cost advantage that competitors in other countries have. However, findings indicated that although cost advantage is considered as
an obstacle, government could play a significant role in overcoming this challenge (Jiao, Wang, Xiao, Zhou, & Zeng, 2017). In comparative with the developed countries, the governments has introduced a tax break scheme to reduce the cost of producing animation (Westcott, 2011).

This tax break has had a positive impact on local production because it adds a cost advantage to the animation industry in those countries. As a result it has encouraged domestic and international companies' investment in the animation industry. Another example, for a country that applied a large tax exemption for the production of animation is France. France has taken a political decision to support the domestic animation industry, with a structure broadly similar to federal and regional loan plans, tax credits and broadcast quotas (Westcott, 2011).

According to Alharbi (2017) one of the drivers that have accelerated the development of the animation industry in the UAE is collaboration with international investors. Many studios have collaborated in producing animated series, with international Network. This collaboration provided the local Emirate animation industry with experience from professionals who have a worldwide reputation for their animation. The collaboration approach has created a media cluster in UAE.

Such a media cluster has helped add substantial advantage to the UAE animation industry as a result of networking and interacting with partners that will facilitate the knowledge and skills transfer to the local animation industry. This is very beneficial in developing experience and diffusion of knowledge among animators.

This collaboration approach can be applied to Jordanian context. In the light of the above,
this study argues that challenges due to cost advantage and experience are able to be managed by the intervention of the government and encourage collaborations between Jordanian studios and international networks.

5.5.3 High-Risk Industry

The animation industry is highly risky. Entering the animation market may be expensive. Covering the requirements of the industry with the high level of equipment and professional labor is very expensive (TAT, 2010). One of the major inhibitors for the animation industry in Jordan to fulfill its potential is the shortage of financial investment that Jordanian animation entrepreneurs such as Randa Al-Ayoubi, RGH, and Zaidoun Karadsheh, SIM studios have made to improve the operational capacity for their production. This is including purchasing the latest animation software and rendering engines. This shortage of financial investment resulted in poor quality of production as the role of technology in affecting the quality. Studio managers, (Karadsheh, 2016), explained this lack of regulation by the high level of uncertainty caused by the absence of regulation that can provide security for people working in the animation sector, such as intellectual property protection, highlighted by Hajjaj (2016) and the priority system that requires broadcasters to use local production. In comparative case, Alharbi (2017) considers this uncertainty, and the resulting import demand, has encouraged from Egypt to improve their operational capacity, which attracts the key Saudi commissioners asking for outsourcing. In the light of the above, the studios created in the Jordanian animation market face a risk challenge that restricts the industry and limits its ability to move on to the next stage of development. To address these risk challenges, the results suggest that government support can help reduce financial risk.
This support can be in the form of funding. In this context, King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD) funded The Jordan Gaming Lab which was founded in 2011. Within a supportive environment, the King Abdullah II Fund for Development has launched the Lab to act as an initial incubator where young Jordanian creative minds can experiment with technology and can work on developing their own game ideas. "The aim of the Lab is to support and elevate the gaming sector as a fast growing and promising industry in Jordan, and benchmark Jordan as the gaming hub in the region" (Gaminglab, 2018).

In another support form, the government in Jordan has established King Hussein Business Park (KHBP), which is the largest IT cluster in the Jordan. KHBP aims to provide a growth and development platform for local, regional and international businesses, by managing and operating a smart business ecosystem that capitalizes on talented human resources. KHBP has incubator spaces that offer facilities for startup businesses in the creative industries, including start up studios in animation. Findings show that a number of entrepreneurs in the animation industry favor such places to start their business such as RGH, Kharabeesh and Omar Al Abdallat studios. These places have appropriate infrastructure and reduces the budget cost that the animation studios requires to achieve their goals.

5.6 Conclusion

Primary data obtained from the participants and reviewing the early time of art in Jordan until the foundation of the design department that was established in fine art colleges is described. The emergence of animation is seen as a development of TV programs in the eighties and as expansion in the art and design practices in the universities and by the
artists themselves. The existence of the new technology associated with computer software has created an interesting entertainment and animation industry in Jordan. This situation has involved and embedded the awareness and the culture of the animation industry in the Jordanian scene.

Moreover, the study identified three phases of the emergence and development of the animation scene in Jordan. They are (i) The Beginning Phase (1987-2000), (ii) The Construction and Growth/Pre-Arab Spring Phase (2000 – 2011), (iii) Post-Arab Spring Phase (2011- Now). The economic, social and political situation of the Arab region is seen as an important factor in this chronological split. As well as developing the whole scene of animation in Arab countries and in Jordan too. For the creative artists who established their companies at this period, social media networks have played an important role in supporting the Arab artists that believe their contribution matters to share their works and interact with the Arab audience anytime they want.

Based on the interviews of the Jordanian animation experts and directors, and observation of the practices on the field it is found that the use of internet and social media networks by them took four significant functions. Firstly, the economic function when the internet and social media networks became the low-cost platform for Jordanian animation producers. Secondly, the social media networks are the environment where the artists can freely express their social and political issues and ideas. Thirdly, the internet and social media networks functioned as a learning tool where they can find the educational videos. Fourthly, internet and social media networks in Jordan also purposes as documentation and archiving tool.

There is no doubt that self-learning had become important for approaches and practices in
finding jobs even before having the degree in animation program. From this research, it can be seen that the absence art and design institutions in the early emergence of the animation evokes the artists themselves to make good contribution to the sector. Internet and social networking also played a significant role to the expansion and development of animation industry in Jordan.

Findings from collected data about the Jordanian animation industry indicate that Jordanian industry is still in the introduction stage. It has specific characteristics that include poor product quality, few competing companies within the market, and high risks. Despite the fact that some Jordanian animated films and series have won international awards, it can be said that these features applicable to the current Jordanian animation industry.

The Jordanian animation industry as an emerging industry is facing problems that are constraining its development. This study analyzes the identified challenges that arose from the primary data findings on the Jordanian animation industry. Challenges are addressed by suggesting recommendations found by showing comparative situations from selected countries which are sometimes in the similar stage development and in other are in higher level than Jordanian animation industry. Challenges facing Jordanian animation industry identified by this thesis are: lacking skilled labor, lacking financial assistance and high-risk industry.

During this research a number of issues greatly revolved around issues and challenges in the current situation of animation were addressed. As well as the stiff competition, it became obvious that the animation industry was engaged with a whole context of economic, academic, culture, technology and political issues. It had been found that there
have been a number of animated productions by Jordanian studios and filmmakers. Almost all of these productions faced many challenges locally and in the Arab region.

First, there are economic factors to consider such as the investment challenge; the Jordanian animation producers and makers needed easy access to finance to make their production. In this context, there are stiff competitions from the studios in the Gulf area which have big investment. Therefore, Jordanian animation studios have to deal with the limits of the budgets which are probably limited and determined. Low budget production strictly remains. Some Jordanian studios have managed to overcome these limitations without reducing the quality of the production.

Second, techniques of drawing and painting and designing skills is another factor. Animation departments at the universities do not include concentrated courses for drawing and painting in their programs. For example, only one course with three credit hours is dedicated for drawing and studies about human figure and animal anatomy.

In Jordan, animation films and series work as a medium to present political and social visions. It talks about present-day issues and problems of the society. It also attacks conflict, injustice and violence. As well as the public, Jordanian animators are concerned about the social and political situation in the region and in the international scene too. However, many Jordanian films appear at international animation festivals such as Missing by Tariq Al Rimawi and The Street Artist by Mahmoud Hindawi. Both of these two films are affected by the global touch as well as carrying some Arab and local and identity meanings too.

However, there is also concern with the fact that Jordanian animation studios and
producers face economic challenges; a number of them went out of business or stopped making more animated productions due to the difficulties of reaching regional and international markets. Another challenge that faces Jordanian animation production is that the official Jordan T.V and private channels offer only low budgets for purchasing animation series. Efforts from governments in Jordan are also considered insufficient by many animators, which explain why there are limited numbers of Jordanian short animation films, feature films, and animation series. Consequently, after the Arab spring, when the Jordanian people increase the usage of internet and social media, the focus of current Jordanian animation is mostly low budget projects distributed through YouTube and social media. Kharabeesh productions are a great example on this issue. Hence, the internet and specifically, the social media became the main platform for Jordanian animators to distribute their social and political thoughts as well as the whole Arab animators and artists. In other words, provoked by The Arab Spring, Jordanian artists demonstrated their creativity and distributed their political ideas using social media networks and other internet networks.

In the context of governmental support, Wael Atili, animation director and co-founder of Kharabeesh, argues that the main reason for the lack of animation production is because artists always wait for funding and support from the government and non-profit organizations. Atili advises animation producers to think about the animation as an entertainment business, not only as an art.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research pays attention to issues and challenges facing the animation industry in Jordan. This chapter provides (i) a summary of the research, (ii) achieving the research objectives (iii) recommendations for the Jordanian animation industry and (v) recommendations for further research.

6.1 Summary of the Research

The three phases of the research method have been successfully carried out. They are (i) Reviewing the Early Emergence of Animation in Jordan, (ii) Mapping the Current Situation of Animation and Defining the Issues and Challenges Facing the Sector, and (iii) Developing Recommendations for Jordanian Animation Industry. In order to accomplish the objectives of the research, which is qualitative in nature, the interview method has been identified as the most suitable method to be employed. In this research, the collected data is obtained through in-depth interviews, documentation, and observations.

The first objective which deals with history and development of the animation industry in Jordan has been explained in detail in Chapter 5. The emergence of animation is seen as an expansion in the art and design practices and as a development of TV programs in the eighties. The existence of the new technology associated with computer software has created a good and interesting entertainment and animation industry in Jordan. This situation has involved and embedded the awareness and the culture of animation industry in the Jordanian scene.

As an achievement of this objective, the research provided a clear description for the early
emergence of the animation practices, and the historical context of founding the animation companies. It has also provided a detailed description of issues and factors influencing the existence and development of the animation sector. This description is considered as building up the historical context of the animation scene in Jordan.

Moreover, the study identified three phases of the emergence and development of the animation scene in Jordan. They are (i) The Beginning Phase (1987-2000), (ii) The Construction and Growth/Pre-Arab Spring Phase (2000 – 2011), (iii) Post-Arab Spring Phase (2011- Now).

The second objective deals with determining the significant issues and challenges those face and influence the development animation industry in Jordan. This objective has been executed and achieved by analysis of interviews conducting with industry experts, observations, and secondary source analysis. The determined issues and challenges have significant impact on the animation industry in Jordan. Issues, Section 5.2 and 5.3, challenges, Section 5.4, and characteristics Section 5.5 are discussed as well in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 2, the Arab Animation History is reviewed. In addition, the development factors of Arab animation industry are addressed in Section 2.2. Characteristics of Arab animation industry are addressed in Section 2.3 as well. In Section 2.4 the history and the emergence of animation institutions in Jordan is provided. This review started with the establishment of graphic design programs which later embedded animation programs which in turn gave a new dimension to art and design scene in Jordan In addition, review of Jordanian animation history is provided in Section 2.5. Examples of digital painting from Jordan presented in Section 2.6.
Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the research in detail. The tools and methods of collecting data were addressed in detail. As a qualitative research the most suitable data collection method was the interviews. In this research five interviews have been conducted with founders to build up the history of Jordan animation and explore the issues and challenges facing the industry. Another three interviews obtained from documentation in YouTube which represents, sequentially, an archive of the animation scene in the country as well as important data about Jordanian animation industry. All the interviews are conducted in the Arabic language. They are transcribed and then the themes are translated from Arabic to English, read carefully line by line many times, and then analyzed.

Chapter 4, data collection, dealt with collecting data to describe and understand the early developments and the current status of animation in Jordan in term of the challenges facing the industry. Eight interviews with founders and experts represent the famous animation studios and lecturers in animation departments were analyzed to build up the history of Jordan animation and study it in detail and to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of the early emergence of animation in Jordan as well as determining the challenges facing the industry as well as the related issues. The selection of those respondents based on their experience and contribution to the field, and how much of they contribute in Jordan and the region. However, this number of respondents represents about 60% of the Jordanian animation studios running in the ground.

Chapter 5 findings and discussions, deals with giving a clear and detailed description of the early emergence, development, and the current situation of animation in Jordan. It is worth to remind that an overview of the early history of art in Jordan as well as the efforts of the main players of animation industry introduced in Chapter 2. It reviews the art and design
scene until the foundation of design departments established in fine art colleges in the eighties of the last century. The review also covers the establishment of graphic design programs which later embedded animation programs which give a new dimension to art and design scene in Jordan.

The emergence of animation is seen as expansion and in the art and design practices and as a development of TV programs in the eighties. The existence of the new technology associated with computer software has created a good and interesting entertainment and animation industry in Jordan. This situation has involved and embedded the awareness and the culture of animation industry in Jordan scene.

Issues and challenges identified in this thesis were discussed in details in this chapter too. Based on the collected data about the Jordanian animation industry, it can be said that Jordanian industry is still in the introduction stage. Jordan animation industry has specific characteristics that include poor product quality, and high risks those characteristics discussed in Section 5.4. The introduction stage of a given industry has specific characteristics that include poor product quality, few competing companies within the market, and high risks. Those challenges discussed in Section 5.5.

Chapter 6 entitled; Reflections and Recommendations provide (i) a summary of the research, (ii) achievement of the research objectives (iii) research outcomes, and finally (v) recommendations and further research.

6.2 Achieving the Research Objectives

The research objectives have been successfully achieved through:
6.2.1 Introducing a Clear Picture of the Jordanian Animation Industry

An original contribution to knowledge achieved by this research is that this research provides a clear picture of the early emergence of the animation and the chronological context of founding the animation studios. It is also provided a detailed description of issues and factors influencing the existence and development of the animation sector. The historical context of animation in Jordan is explained in Chapter 5. This explanation opened an extensive understanding of the development and the associated issues of the animation industry in Jordan in addition to the whole process of designing characters between Jordanian artists.

6.2.2 Identifying the Issues and Challenges Facing the Jordanian Animation Industry

One of the main findings of this thesis is that it has identified the challenges facing the Jordanian animation industry. This was achieved through an analysis of the state of the Jordanian animation industry. This thesis identified the current state of the Jordanian animation industry by analyzing the status of industry and key organizations in the industry. This involves semi-structured interviews and document analysis and observation. The challenges that make the Jordanian animation industry remain in the introduction stage include; the absence of skill providers, with only two higher education faculty offering full-time animation courses; Lack of investment in animation films of private and government bodies and high-risk challenges to enter the industry. In the Jordanian animation landscape, it is considered that higher education institutions are the most influential factor. This is because these institutions provide a skilled workforce as well as entrepreneurs, whom are both a platform for the industry. These challenges were discussed
intensively in Chapter 5. In addition, two issues emerged by analyzing the interviews; the importance of the internet and the social media networks for animation industry in Jordan. Challenges emerged from the analysis including; lacking skilled labor, lacking financial assistance and high risk industry.

6.3 Recommendations for the Jordanian Animation Industry

The animation industry in Jordan has remarkable potential to be a realistic national icon, and a hub for the Arab animation industry if there are intensive efforts from animators, filmmakers, studios, institutions and government. Some suggested improvements were derived from the challenges and issues that circulate within the animation industry in Jordan. These suggestions or recommendations can be useful to develop this industry.

In this context, another contribution of knowledge that this research added is developing recommendations for assisting the development of the Jordanian animation to shift up to the growth stage in the industry life cycle. These recommendations are based on analyzing the industry and comparing Jordanian animation landscape to other developed countries in the field. However, these recommendations are specifically for the Jordanian animation industry circumstances. Applicability kept in mind when suggesting those recommendations as many of these recommendations have already been implemented in other countries successfully. Recommendations including; develop a skilled manpower and encourage industry entrants.

6.3.1 Developing a Skilled Manpower

The strategy that targets the Introduction stage stresses the development of a competent labor force. Based on the findings of this research one of the main challenges the Jordanian
animation industry faces is a lack of skilled manpower for all animation production process stages. This is because, in Jordanian, there is a lack of skills providers and trainers; higher education institutions in Jordan started to offer animation and multimedia programs in 2005. Because of this shortage of skilled manpower in the animation industry in Jordan, the focus should be on preparing a skilled workforce by taking the following actions: a) Develop animation curriculum b) Employ local industry professionals to teach animation courses; and c) Insert industry involvement in animation curricula.

6.3.1.1 Developing Animation Curriculum

There is no doubt that art and design institutions are the main platform to develop an understanding of the whole concepts and processes regarding animation production. Animation practices must be sincerely handled in these learning atmospheres. An animation curriculum is one of the main factors that affect the graduates’ quality. Throughout the course plan, introduction to drawing and painting skills, anatomy of human figures and animals, in addition to color theory, should be emphasized.

6.3.1.2 Employing Local Industry Professionals to Teach Animation Courses

Findings from Jordanian higher education institutions demonstrate that there is an absence of teaching staff specializing in animation. To the best of the research knowledge there is only one Jordanian staff that has PhD degree specialized in animation. Most of teaching staff have only shallow knowledge of animation. This absence of specialist professional teaching staff is one of the main challenges that higher education institutions in Jordan face. In this context Ministry of Higher Education in Jordan give permission to institutions to hire professionals with 10 year experience to teach in higher education institutions.
However, comparisons with data collected from the multiple countries demonstrates that the higher education institutions there recruit teaching staff with industry backgrounds and that most of these tutors combine filmmaking and teaching at the same time. This then plays a role in providing students within these countries with core competencies and skills, as they learn directly from industry expertise. Therefore, this study recommends the employment of local Jordanian animation filmmakers winning the international prizes and those with extensive experience in animation filmmaking to hold positions on the teaching staff, even if they do not have postgraduate degrees.

6.3.1.3 Inserting Industry Involvement in Animation Curricula

Animation programs in Jordanian higher education institutions should be focused on developing a highly skilled manpower and providing students with employability skills as well as subject knowledge. Although there are compulsory field training courses for animation students in Jordanian universities, the training period is two months, but this period is considered insufficient. Therefore, inserting industry engagement such as co-projects and placements in course curricula is required to ensure that students are equipped with the skills they need to contribute effectively as new employees on the ground. Therefore, this strategy recommends establishing collaborative environments between higher education institutions and animation studios to support training an assure involvement of graduates in the production practices.

This collaboration will allow students in their early levels to produce their final projects in collaboration with animation studios. In addition, government bodies, NGOs, and big national companies should also collaborate in order to assist students' engagement in industry. For instance, the student could produce an animated instructional short film or
advertisements to be used to communicate announcements for those bodies or in relation to specific events, such as the Jerash Festival for Culture & Arts.

6.3.2 Encouraging Industry Entrants

Another recommendation that this research suggests for developing Jordanian animation industry is encouraging industry entrants. This issue highlighted by Jordanian studios. The study’s findings show that, in the Jordanian animation industry, there are only a few studios that have managed to enter the market. Some of them cannot sustain as a characteristic of the introduction stage of industry development life cycle. This is because there are high challenges that prevent market entry. These entry challenges include capital requirements, due to the high risk and costs that the animation industry causes. These entry challenges have been discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. To accomplish this strategy, the research suggests establishing and supporting networks and distribution channels.

Due to absence of distribution channels, highlighted by Jordanian founders, considered some of the main entry and mobility challenges that prevent new studios from entering the Jordanian animation industry. Thus, to support new animation studios to involve in the industry, it is important to overwhelm these issues through cultivating networks and distribution channels that play the role of middleman. In particular, the research recommends re-launching JO Animate festival at the local and regional level. Animation festivals involve firms that encourage networking among new entrants, professionals, and interested broadcasters.

JO Animate festival was an effective channel for knowledge diffusion. Therefore this animation festival should take place within collaboration between higher education
institutions, as there is availability of conference facilities, and animation studios and animation and multimedia departments in the universities. Animation festivals can also play role in networking between animators and distribution channels within regional and global scale.

Generally, in this research, a clear and detailed description has been successfully introduced. It is hoped that this would give a clear representation of the animation context in Jordan.

In spite of the short history and a small number of animation studios in Jordan since the emergence of animation in Jordan in the end of eighties, many animation contents such as commercials, e-learning, entertainment, games, series and short films have been produced. After the explosion of computer-generated image CGI as a new media to represent all kind of contents; it is clear that this CGI is one of the most significant media for producers and artists to represent their contents and creative ideas. For Jordanian people, animation became an acceptable and common culture. It is clear that the animation content on the Web has increased and the number of broadcast hours on TV is increasing too. At the time of writing up this chapter in Ramadan, June 2017 the period of broadcasting Arabic animation content had doubled comparing to the prior Ramadan 2016. For Jordanian animation producers, demand for Arabic animation content is still big for the future, even if the bad current political situation continues in the Arab region (Alabdallat, 2017b; Karadsheh, 2016; Moaiad, 2017).

This research shows that the landscape of animation in Jordan is remarkable, due to several issues and challenges such as; the access to finance (Ayoubi, TV interview, October 15, 2012; Karadsheh, 2016). The swing situation of the animation market puts the
whole sector in a difficult situation. The investors always ask for fast and high revenues. So, they often hesitate in investing in this field.

The animated productions in Jordan are facing the considerable risk as a result of the unstable Arab markets and the absence of government, NGO’s, and business support. However, the Arab countries’ market is promising. The Arabic digital content on the web, for example, is less than 1% which means that there is very big opportunity for Arabic animation to the market if there are appropriate strategies for marketing.

Today, animation studios in Jordan have number of qualified artists and human resources as well as up to date technological tools which gives them the possibility to produce high-quality animations. But the current situation needs governmental support for the filmmakers to produce animated films with enough budgets, and animation festivals and events to promote them.

Jordan has the infrastructure, human resources, and technology to be a hub for the animation industry in the future (AboSalem, Personal Communication, April 22, 2016; Karadsheh, 2016; Moaiad, 2017). Jordanian pioneers have played a significant role in the development of the animation industry in the whole Arab region. To help Jordan become a hub for the animation industry in MENA commitment to support and direct this support to the deserved entities from the Jordan government is required (AlNatour, Personal Communication, July 29, 2016). Commitment to develop the animation programs in art and design institutions is essential as well. In addition, collaboration between all entities is the fundamental issue.

In this context, art institutions are considered the most important entity to upgrade the
animation industry in the future. Indeed, there are few academic programs in Jordan which teach animation, and most of them focus on teaching the software programs applications more than the concepts, design, and artistic perspective. Consequently, the quality of the most Jordanian students’ graduation projects is not appropriate in script writing, solid drawing, and concept art.

In the process of making animation films in Jordan institutions and universities, the main concern often goes to focus on the technological stage and learn how to use the software; then the script or story comes at the end. Nevertheless, scriptwriting is an art per se, and there is a need for specialists in scriptwriting education. If we want to make an exceptional animation industry, we need to change the education system and give more focus to design process as well as the scriptwriting. In addition, there are only a few small animation festivals in Arab counties, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. The only one in Jordan is no longer conducted. Animation festivals always give importance to the animation industry in any country; it helps to develop and encourage filmmakers, producers, and the whole animation industry. These events allow the film makers to promote their films and productions in the local and international festivals.

The number of Jordanian internet and social media networks users increased greatly during last few years. For the creative artists who established their companies at this period, social media networks have played an important role in supporting the Arab artists that believe their contribution matter in order to share their works and interact with the Arab audience anytime they want.

Based on the interviews of the Jordanian animation producers, directors and character designers, and observation of the practices on the field, it is found that the use of internet
and social media networks by them took four significant functions. Firstly, the economic function when the internet and social media networks became the low-cost platform for Jordanian animation producers. Secondly, the social media networks are the environment where the artists can freely express their social and political issues and ideas. Thirdly, the internet and social media networks functions as a learning tool where they can find the educational videos. Fourthly, internet and social media in Jordan also purposes as a documentation and archiving tool. Nowadays it is the biggest archive of Arab and Jordanian animation films and clips are available any time to everybody.

Another issue emerged from analyzing interviews about the artists’ practices is the self-learning approach. Obviously, Jordanian animators who are involved in animation production understand the significance of the animation industry in self-employment and for the national economy as well. They start teaching themselves how to ride this wave of fast technology development. From the responses, the researcher realizes that the animators tend to practice animation based on self-learning. As most of the people who are involved in this field are not coming from art background, and they did not attend animation programs, self-learning is considered a common approach and practice in Jordan in 1990s and 2000s. The lack of such programs in the 1990s and the 2000s make them depend on self-learning practices. They start to explore the new computer programs and software to enhance their skills in using the digital techniques.

It is true to say that the animation industry in Jordan has met with many challenges. Between the major challenge which affects the development and progress of the animation industry in Jordan is the financial resources. It is known that producing a cartoon series may take more than a year and a featured animated film about three years or more. This
situation makes it difficult to find an investor because they often look for fast revenues. This issue is highlighted by all the interviewees in this research.

Challenges also arise from the strong competition from the new big capital investment Arab animation studios especially from the Gulf region. These studios started to occupy the air in big entertainment channels. Series of “Mansour” which is broadcasting on Cartoon Network is good example in this context. Mansour character is playing a major role in the program as an appealing character that started to attract the audiences as soon as the series started to broadcast.

Lack of animation academies is another challenge facing Jordan animation as well as the lack of academic staff in the field. It is known that Dr. Tariq Al Rimawi is the first and the only one who has the PhD in animation, at the moment in the Jordan. There are many programs in Arts schools established to teach Graphic Design and the Fine Arts, but only a very few programs, such as Princess Sumaya University, Petra University, Jordan University of Science and Technology and Jordan German University. A new program in animation is established at Arab Open University and Balqa Applied University, this year, 2016/2017. However, all of these animation programs are considered new. Also, the core curriculum needs to be enhanced and developed to give more attention to concept art and methodologies of design as well as in drawing and painting skills. Drawing skills are considered more and more significant for many non-artistic practices, as in design, advertising, medicine, engineering, and science (Miller, 2006). These skills are significant because it is seen as a visual problem solving (Davies & Duff, 2005). In this context, in Jordan, drawing classes was phased out of the animation curriculum in the established programs. This situation caused the production of unappealing and improper characters and
animation in some animation firms. In addition, there is one animation festival in Jordan, “JoAnimate”, which is newly established and, unfortunately, has disappeared. The governments of Jordan did not acknowledge the importance of the animation industry as a significant economic factor in the Jordanian economy. Giving financial support and organizing animation festivals will develop the animation makers and the animation industry in Jordan and will help Jordan be a hub for animation industry in the region.

Lacking management skills particularly, financial management skills, is something noticed in many animation studios in Jordan. This condition caused the elimination of some animation studios, and creates a negative implication for business. Hood and Young (1993) considered that financial management was ranked among the most important areas in managing business. Weakness to lead employees effectively and inability to manage daily spending is an important skill for the owners or managers in SMEs. Many CEOs do not have specific plans and clear identities or an obvious direction.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The most important target audiences of this research are higher education institutions, and decision makers. This research takes elementary steps as a guide for developing Jordanian animation industry. However, this research has the potential for future researches in the Jordanian animation industry.

The research has achieved its objectives and offered answers to many primary questions about the animation industry scene in Jordan. However, it is clear that there are other issues and discussions about Jordanian animation that should receive further consideration. Thus, future research should be carried out about topics such as the influence of
globalization on the identity of Jordanian animation, as well as the influence of the Arab spring on the animation industry. In addition, more research is needed on how to produce and contribute the Arabic animation content on the media.

As an art and design lecturer, the researcher is also interested in knowing more about how to teach students to understand the process of designing characters with local identity. Developing assignments that might include visiting and observation of local live places could enhance the students understanding of what qualities these characters need to be successful and meaningful. Encouraging students to analyze and evaluate characters, not only in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of appealing target audience would be valuable.

Actually, these efforts can be achieved if there is full support such as funding for all players in the sector, coherent program of teaching animation in the universities, and high standard research platform. The implementation of these suggestions and encouragements will thrive and help support the future development of animation industry in Jordan.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide/Founders/Experts

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research about the animation industry in Jordan.

We have one and half hour to talk about your experience and your opinion on animation in Jordan.

- Let me start by asking you how did you start involving in animation?
- How do you describe your beginnings? and the first emergence of animation in Jordan?
- How did the animation sector emerge? Technological development, software.
- What are the first companies, events, exhibitions?
- How do you describe the current situation? The challenges?
- What are the initiatives responsible for development of animation sector?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you once again for your time and participation.
Appendix B

Interview Guide/Character designers

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research about the character design in Jordan.

We have one and half hour to talk about your experience and your approach in designing characters.

- Let me start by asking you how did you start involving in animation and character design?
- How do you describe your beginnings?
- How did design your characters? Technological development, software.
- What are the steps that you follow while designing characters?
- What are the attributes that make a distinguished character?
- Is there any defined characteristics of the Arab/Jordan character?
- What do you advice the novice character designer?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you once again for your time and participation.
Appendix C

Samples of Photograph/Image Consent Forms

Photograph/Image Consent Form

This form is for obtaining permission from the subjects of a photograph/image and conducting
interview to be reproduced in the researcher thesis titled:

Animation Industry in Jordan: Issues, Challenges, Representing and
Designing Human Characters

Which is conducted by researcher: Manal Hasa Janil Barqawi, Faculty of Applied and
Creative Arts and registered in PhD program.

Agreement

I hereby grant permission to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and its students to photograph and
video me, capture my image, and to make recordings of my voice and images of my artworks. I
further grant to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and its students the right to reproduce, use, exhibit,
display, broadcast and distribute these images and recordings in any media for educational and
research purposes.

Name: Dr. Janil Barqawi
Signature: __________________________

Company: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
Date: 20/12/2018

Thank you for your contribution to this research.
Photograph/Image Consent Form

This form is for obtaining permission from the subjects of a photograph/image and conducting interview to be reproduced in the researcher thesis titled:

Animation Industry in Jordan: Issues, Challenges, Representing and Designing Human Characters

Which is conducted by researcher: Manal Hasan Jamil Barqawi, Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts and registered in PhD program.

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I hereby grant permission to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and its students to photograph and video me, capture my image, and to make recordings of my voice and images of my artworks. I further grant to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and its students the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, broadcast and distribute these images and recordings in any media for educational and research purposes.

Name: EMAD HASSAN

Signature: .................................................................

Company: S.A.E.E.M CO.

Date: 2.018.1.2/20

Thank you for your contribution to this research.
Appendix D

Samples of Arabic Transcriptions and English Translations of Interviews

Interview/Artist Omar al Abdallat
Q: in 2004 you found Rubicon will you tell us about the beginnings of the company and how did you reach the position you are allocated now?

A: Rubicon was founded in 1994 with U$ 150,000. In 2004 we can call it the official establishment. It was the first time I can get a big investment. In 1994 was the early stages of establishment we was working in multimedia field. The goal was to produce a multimedia for education. In 90s there is no internet in Jordan. so, the idea was very strange for the people. We continue working in the multimedia for education until 2004. But we move from basic education to train the big establishments who can pay for training within multimedia. 2004 we could attract the first investment we were hiring 27 employer. In this period we move to produce 2d, 3d animation because the early years was a preparing stage for the core staff who will develop the company to the next stage where is it now. We start firstly to produce a co-production series with MGM studios. Pink Panther which is a re-producing of Pink Panther of the 60s to the 21 century Pink Panther. It is kind of co-production project which mean that we did not work for hire, but we share the whole property with MGM. The first deal in this level with MGM and the success that Rubicon achieve in the output make us win five international awards. One of them is the best animation series in the world and the best TV production and the best music. What happened that the position of the company is reaching the international level. The quality is the same as in the best companies in the world, and they start trust us as a good company who can meet the deadlines and hang the limitations of the budget and the high quality production.
Appendix E

Sample of: Coding and Refining the Categories of Findings

The importance of interactivity
- Sound functions
  - Archive
  - Promotion
  - Learning tool
  - Free platform
  - Expression

Development
- History
- Emergence

Players
- Rimawi
- Emad
- Ayoubi
- Karakshen
- Emad
- Tariq

Characters
- Design

Monaal
- Hajjaj

Aballat
Appendix F

List of Animation Studios in Jordan

1. Studio: Curl Stone Entertainment
   Address: King Hussein Business Complex, King Abdullah II St 242, Amman, Jordan
   Phone: +962 7 9576 8191
   Email: info@curlstone.com
   Website: www.curlstone.com

2. Studio: Ebal Studios
   Address: Al Madina Al Monawara st. Building no.222, Office no.402, Amman/Jordan
   P.O. Box 3292, Postal Code 11953
   Phone: +962 795200194
   Email: info@ebalstudios.com
   Website: www.ebalstudios.com

3. Studio: Gilgamesh Studio
   Address: Loloat Al Quraini Complex, Khalid Bin Al Walid St 198, Amman, Jordan
   Phone: +962 6 565 1157
   Email: info@gilgameshstudio.com
   Website: http://gilgameshstudio.com

4. Studio: Kharabeesh
   Address: Building 23, King Hussain Business Park, Amman, Jordan
   Phone: +962 7 9021 1719
   Email: iloveyouguys@kharabeesh.com
   Website: http://kharabeesh.com

5. Studio: Mays Al Ward
   Address: Building No 24, King Hussein Business Park Amman, Jordan
Phone: +962 79 6900217
Email: info@maysalward.co
Website: www.maysalward.com

6. Studio: Rababah
Address: Amman, Jubaiha
Phone: +0962777719090
Email: info@rabagames.com
Website: http://rabagames.com

7. Studio: Rubicon Group Holding
Address: Jabal Amman - 3rd Circle 14 Zahran, Tawfiq Abu Al-Huda St. & King Hussein
Business Park Amman, Jordan
Phone: +962 (6) 582 4953
Email: info@rubiconholding.com
Website: http://www.rubiconholding.com

8. Studio: Sketch In Motion
Address: Amman- Al Rabiah, Al Husseini Complex - 2nd floor
Phone: +962 6 5519467 and +962 6 5519464
Email: info@sketchinmotion.com
Website: http://www.sketchinmotion.com

9. Studio: Crazy Piranha
Address: Amman- Al Rabiah, Al Husseini Complex - 2nd floor
Phone: +962 6 5519467 and +962 6 5519464
Email: Info@crazypiranha.com
Website: http://crazypiranha.com