

## Age and Gender-based Sociolinguistic Differences in Naming Patterns among Bedouin Communities in Jordan

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study aims to examine and reveal the sociolinguistic implications of personal male names used in the Jordanian Bedouin community as incarnated in the Bani Saker tribe. The study also aims to trace the changes that occurred to naming patterns in three successive generations: sons, fathers and grandfathers. Based on a previous study conducted by the researcher on female names, this study also attempts to highlight the gender-specific differences in naming among this community.

**Method:** The researcher carried out an in-depth analysis of 300 full names of school male students obtained from 20 male schools affiliated with Al-Muwaqqar Directorate of Education. This sample was selected by drawing 15 names from each school. Then, the names were divided into 3 categories (sons, fathers, and grandfathers) and grouped into several classifications according to their sociolinguistic implications.

**Results:** The study results showed that the names given to males through the three generations underwent some changes on the level of their sociolinguistic implications as well as the level of the motive behind their selection. It also showed that naming in each generation had different backgrounds; that naming among this tribe has experienced some shift away from traditional Bedouin names in favor of modern names. For example, 34.7% of the grandfathers' names constituted Bedouin-exclusive names compared to 9.6% and only 2% of the fathers and sons' names, respectively. As for the gender specific differences, results revealed some commonalities regarding certain aspects as well as significant differences in other aspects. The Bedouin exclusive names, for example, accounted for 69% of the grandmothers' names compared to 34.6% of the grandfathers' category.

**Conclusions:** The study highlights the strong affinity between the lifestyle change of Bedouin communities and the naming patterns in those communities. It also suggests that gender plays a considerable role in naming conventions.

**Keywords:** Onomastics, anthroponomy, toponymy, nomenclature, naming conventions, Bani Sakhar, Jordan.

### الاختلافات القائمة على العمر ونوع الجنس في أنماط التسمية في المجتمعات البدوية في الأردن

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#### ملخص

الأهداف: هدفت الدراسة إلى كشف المضامين اللغوية الاجتماعية للأسماء الشخصية للذكور المستخدمة في المجتمع البدوي الأردني ممثلاً بقبيلة بني صخر، والتغير في تقاليد التسمية عبر ثلاثة أجيال متتالية (الأبناء، الآباء، الأجداد). المنهجية: أجري تحليل معمق لعينة تضم 300 من أسماء طلبة الصفين الخامس والسادس الأساسيين في مدارس الذكور التابعة لمديرية التربية والتعليم للواء الموقر وعددها عشرون مدرسة. جرى اختيار العينة بسحب 15 اسماً من كل مدرسة قبل القيام بتوزيع الأسماء على 3 فئات (الأبناء، الآباء، والأجداد) وتصنيف الأسماء في كل فئة إلى عدة مجموعات حسب مدلولاتها اللغوية الاجتماعية. وأفادت الدراسة من دراسة سابقة للباحث نفسه حول أسماء الإناث في المجتمعات البدوية وإظهار الاختلافات في معايير التسمية بناء على الجنس.

النتائج: بيّنت النتائج أن الأسماء المستخدمة خلال الثلاثة أجيال قد شهدت اختلافات على صعيد المضامين اللغوية الاجتماعية، والدوافع وراء اختيارها، فقد أشارت إلى أن هناك توجهاً ملحوظاً بين أوساط قبيلة بني صخر في التخلي عن الأسماء التقليدية القديمة لصالح الأسماء العصرية. وتبين من مظاهر هذا التحول أن ما نسبته 34.7% من أسماء الأجداد حصرية على المجتمعات البدوية، أمثلها الظروف المحيطة مقابل 9.6%، و2% فقط من أسماء الآباء والأبناء على التوالي. وفيما يتعلق بالاختلافات القائمة على الجنس، فقد توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود تشابه في بعض الجوانب واختلافات ملموسة في جوانب أخرى، فعلى سبيل المثال فإن 69% من أسماء الجدات حصرية على المجتمعات البدوية مقابل 34.7% من أسماء الأجداد. الخلاصة: أكدت الدراسة على وجود علاقة وثيقة بين التغير في نمط حياة المجتمعات والتغير اللغوي المتمثل بأنماط التسمية وتقاليدها، وأن للجنس علاقة وثيقة في تقاليد التسمية.

الكلمات الدالة: علم أسماء الأعلام، دراسة الأسماء الشخصية، المجتمعات البدوية، نظام التسمية وتقاليدها، بني صخر، الأردن.



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## 1. Introduction

The Bani Sakhar is a large Bedouin tribe living in Jordan. History shows that the tribe moved to Jordan from the Hijaz, a region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia, in the late eighteenth century and inhabited the Jordanian central desert which is known officially as al-Badya Alwusta (the central desert) and exclusively comprises the Bani Sakhar population. The official name of the population of this district is Badu Alwast (the nomads of the center). In agreement with the 1986 Jordanian Electoral Law, the Bani Sakhar tribe is composed of 13 clans (Bin Muhammad, 1999, pp. 9-10).

Bedouin communities in Jordan have distinct dialects that distinguish them from other communities, be they urban or rural communities. Further, each Bedouin community or tribe has its own distinctive dialect that distinguishes its members from other Bedouin communities. This also holds true for the Bani Sakhar people who have a distinctive Jordanian Arabic dialect to the extent that one can recognize the speaker's tribal affiliation once he/she speaks. Likewise, almost all the clans constituting the Bani Sakhar tribe use the same dialect except for some tiny phonological differences that can be spotted only by an experienced observer.

The *nomenclature* or the naming system adopted by the Bani Sakhar people is part of the Jordanian Arabic naming system which is also adopted in different Arab countries. In their article "The Arabic Naming System," Notzon and Nesom (2005) indicated that traditional Arabic names consist of five parts. These are the *ism*: a given name bestowed to children at birth; the *kunya*: a name for an adult derived from that of a child, especially that of the eldest child (teknonym in English); the *nasab*: a patronymic naming starting with bin or ibn, which means 'son of' or bint which means 'daughter of' followed by the bearer's father name. It is used to communicate lineage; the *laqab*: an epithet which often follows the *ism* and usually carries a religious or descriptive connotation; and the *nisba*: a similar term to what people in the West call the surname.

The *kunya* is a widespread practice among the people of the Bani Sakhar. Nevertheless, it is used in this community as an informal form of address expressing respect. Another special naming feature evolved among the people of the Bani Sakhar is what is known locally as *nakhwah*. According to a number of leading figures in the Bani Sakhar tribe, the *nakhwah*, which is close in meaning to a "nickname", is used in times of hardship and adversity with the aim of mobilizing people and evoking enthusiasm amongst them. It is also used in times of victory over enemies or even over bad circumstances to express pride. The *nakhwah*, the leading figures say, is expressed by a combination of either /ahl/ 'people of', /ra:'i/ 'fellow of', /akhu/ 'brother of,' or /ibn/ 'son of', and a name of a natural object (e.g., weapon, land) or an animal (e.g., horse, camel), among others. in a genitive construction. Each tribe has its own *nakhwah* which portrays a specific story or situation. Alfayez (1995) provided examples of such naming patterns and their use among the Bani Sakhar tribe.

### 1.1 Onomastics

Studying proper nouns is referred to in literature as Onomastics which subdivides into two principal parts, namely anthroponymy, the study of personal names or names of human beings, and toponymy, the study of place names (Vamitela, 1999; Al-Zumor, 2009; Bramwell, 2012; Mutanda, 2016; Mandende, 2009; Bush et al., 2018; among others). Anthroponymy has recently been given much attention by both linguists and anthropologists. Some researchers use the term *personal name* to refer to first name, middle name, and surname. Others use this term to refer only to the first name. Depending on the author, first names are also referred to as forenames (Bramwell, 2012), given names (Mehrabian, 1997; Seeman, 1983), Christian names (Huschka, et al., 2009), and baptismal names (Lawson, 1984). In this respect, the most widely used term in the relevant literature to refer to the name that is given to a child at birth is first name (Ellis and Beechley, 1954; Antoun, 1968; Zweigenhaft, 1983; Cowan, 1983; Erwin, 1999; Abdul, 2014; Seide and Petrulionè, 2018, to mention only a few).

### 1.2 Cultural differences in the naming process

Cultural groups differ from each other in a variety of practices and the naming process is no exception. Some groups have familiar culture and procedures for bestowing first names on their children, others have unique ones. In Arab countries, for example, people must select desirable names for their children and keep away from the disliked names. Plenty of research on Western naming conventions has also emphasized the need to give attractive names to newborns and to keep

away from derogatory or peculiar names that may result in a severe emotional disturbance among the holders of such names (e.g., Levine and Willis, 1993; Mehrabian and Piercy, 1993; Pinzur and Smith, 2009). However, in some West African communities, derogatory names (death prevention names) are believed to have inherent power to prevent death and withstand bad situations (cf. Agyekum, 2006, for a discussion of the beliefs of Akan people of South Africa behind giving unattractive and nasty names).

### **1.3 Research questions**

In summary, the study seeks to answer the following main questions:

- (1) To what extent have the sociolinguistic implications of personal names among Bedouin communities changed over generations?
- (2) To what extent are communities distancing themselves from traditional names in favor of modern ones, and why?
- (3) To what extent is the process of naming different with respect to gender?

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

The present study seeks to do a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of masculine personal names in Jordan represented by the Bani Sakhar tribe to show whether the naming process has witnessed a qualitative change throughout successive generations or not. The study also attempts to reveal to what extent the change of the lifestyle of communities affects naming practices. It also attempts to highlight the gender-specific differences in naming among this community. On account of this, the study adopts a synchronic and comparative approach into exploring and investigating the significance of personal names and naming practices in a specific community.

In this perspective, this study draws on the theory, which holds that there is a firm interrelatedness between a community's language and its lifestyle and cultural practices. Within the broad field of sociolinguistics, William Labov, a leading scholar in the field of sociolinguistics, pioneered this research model, which is known as variationist sociolinguistics. The core notion of variationist sociolinguistics is that language has an underlying structure, and that this structure changes according to external variables such as age, social class, gender, nationality, community membership, and so on (Botha, 2011: 2). In this regard, Labov (1972) says:

One cannot understand the development of a language change a part from the social life of the community in which it occurs. Or to put it another way, social pressures are continually operating upon language, not from some remote point in the past, but as an immanent social force acting in the living present.

Labov explains that language change, following this paradigm, is motivated by several factors such as assimilation, analogy, borrowing, fusion, or any other processes in which the language system interconnects with the physiological or psychological qualities of the person. This change, as he explains, originates as a variation in a limited number of words in the speech of a few people. Most of the new forms arise only once, and wither away as soon as they occur. However, a few cases reemerge and may spread to the point where the new forms are in contrast with the older forms. This process may continue until at some later stage one or the other of the two forms usually wins, and regularity is achieved.

This paradigm, according to Gordon (2017), was one of the first branches of linguistics to adopt a quantitative approach to data analysis. It allows linguists to examine the linguistic active changes through a quantitative comparison of speakers representing several generations, unlike historical linguists who traditionally study completed linguistic changes, often long after they occurred. As stated in the study by Abdul (2014), the "Labovian approach" differentiates five different stages of methodology and data analysis: selecting speakers, circumstances and linguistic variables, collecting the sample, identifying the linguistic variables and their variants in the texts, processing the figures, and interpreting the results.

Language, in this view, is used as an instrument to mirror the social change and the cultural contact experienced by a particular society. Naming, which constitutes a distinct part of language, in consistent with this view, is seen as a unique linguistic act, closely related to values, traditions, hopes, fears, and events in people's lives (Rosenhouse, 2002). There is also a general agreement between linguists that personal names are words that represent a part of any language. They

constitute a special group within the vocabulary of a language and follow most morphological, phonological, syntactic, orthographic, or semantic rules (Abdul, 2014; Agyekum, 2006). The above theoretical framework is referred to by some researchers in the field of socio-onomastics. For example, in his study on the sociolinguistic of personal names of the Akan people, Agyekum (2006) remarks that anthropological linguistics is that sub-field of linguistics which is concerned with the place of language in its wider social and cultural context. Therefore, anthroponomastic studies are based on the theory which used language as a microscopic lens to view and understand the day-to-day activities of a society.

The current study, at the same time, adopts a mixed-method approach (using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches) in examining personal names. This means that the study, in part, uses numerical analysis and comes up with statistics such as averages, percentages, or quotas. The study, for example, finds that 34.7% of the elderly men in the Bani Sakhar tribe are Bedouin-bound names derived from the conditions of immediate impact on Bedouin life compared to 9.6% and only 2% of the fathers and sons' names, respectively. Incorporating such quantities in the study makes it quantitative research. Nonetheless, analyzing names in terms of their origins, motivations, and implications and revealing the quality of the change that touches the names over time marks the study qualitative.

In this context, it is worth referring to some remarks about the three aforementioned research methods made by two experts on methodology who have long been associated with research methods and in particular the use of mixed methods. In his book *Social Research Methods*, Bryman (2012) argues that quantitative research can be described as a research approach that highlights quantification in collecting and analyzing data. Further, quantitative research, according to Bryman, emphasizes a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, which accentuates the testing of theories. Qualitative research, on the other hand, can be interpreted as a research method that accents words rather than measurement in collecting and analyzing data. It emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, which underscores the formation of theories. Mixed methods research which, as Bryman says, has increased in popularity since *Social Research Methods* was first published in 2001 is widely used nowadays to refer to research that combines methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research.

The second work that needs attention is Creswell (2014). In his book *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Creswell argues that the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is outlined in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative) or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions). However, these two methods should not be looked at as distinct categories but as two opposite ends on a continuum. Then, we can say that mixed methods approach establishes itself in the middle of this continuum because it involves the combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

## 2.2 Literature review

The study of personal names has caught the attention of not only linguists but also anthropologists and psychologists over the years. They have been approached from different perspectives. These include, among others, the following aspects:

### 2.2.1 *The typology of personal names*

The typology and etymology of personal names (i.e., the sources from which names are derived), was the subject of an early study (Mill, 1843). Based on their significance, Mill classified names into a number of divisions. A name, for example, can indicate a thing (concrete names) while others indicate an attribute (abstract names). Hawana (1977), also provided an account on Arabic and Muslim personal names in terms of their typology and objectives. The study emphasized the role of religion in naming among Arabs. Further, Abd-el-Jawaad (1986) revealed that personal names reflect the positive sociocultural values of society (beauty, generosity, glory, etc.) and the political, economic, and atmospheric conditions and circumstances in which the baby was born. In the same way, Busaba (2013) classified female names in Yemen into three categories: Yemeni-exclusive names, names shared with Arab countries, and foreign names. The study concluded that female names in Yemen were associated with social, cultural, religious, temporal (circumstances of birth), and spatial (names of places, cities country, etc.) implications. Other names were found to reflect political events, (October, September), Socialism and the Russian culture. Another work which arose from a sociolinguistic interest and that on which

the current study reported on for the purpose of comparison was the one by Aljbour and Al-Abed Al-Haq (2019). They looked into feminine personal names across three generations (grandmothers, mothers, and granddaughters) among a Bedouin community in Jordan. Results indicated that female names among this community have witnessed a dramatic change in respect of their implications and the motives behind them.

Abubakari (2020) also looked into the sociolinguistics and semantics of personal names among the Kusaas of Ghana. She demonstrated that there is strong linkage between language and the social, religious and moral beliefs of the people as well as the events and circumstances surrounding the birth of the name-holder. The study also argued that personal names in Kusaal have a set of meaningful 'linguistics forms' rather than being assumed or 'mere forms'.

Based on the hypothesis that naming practice is not done randomly even when it is done fictionally, Badi, et al. (2021) also explored the names of the characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of their meanings, origin, and history. They concluded that names in this novel were divided into four major groups, mainly, religion, occupation, honorifics and place.

Again, in the Jordanian context, Tarawneh and Hajjaj (2021) looked at specific factors that influence naming in the Jordanian society, namely religion, culture, politics, inheriting family members' names, and musicality (the sound of the name). Results show that the religious factor is the most influential factor, whereas, the political factor is the least.

In a more recent analysis of naming and names in American English societies, Salih and Ahmed (2022) insisted that personal names and naming are a human universal, and whatever the source of a names is, it should carry an acceptable meaning in society. However, naming practices vary enormously across cultures.

#### *2.2.2 Studies on name and identity*

The relation between names and identity has also been the subject of many studies. In her investigation of the naming process among Canadians who belong to different backgrounds, Seeman (1980) stated that identity can be expressed in a name as "the name bears the stamp of the namer's tradition and their hopes for the child."). In another article, Seaman (1983) proposed that "bestowing or adopting a name is often dictated by a number of wishes and associations which may not all be conscious". For example, names starting with labials are more likely to be unconsciously bestowed to girls as these sounds connote smallness and weakness (e.g., weak, mini, bit, baby, and pigmy, among others). In contrast, velar sounds connote largeness (grand, great, huge, heavy, king, etc.) and thus they are more likely to be given to boys. In relation to naming, identity for Kotilainen (2012) refers to understanding and comprehension of oneself and one's social role as a member of a society. She asserted that a personal name has always performed a key role in building an individual's identity.

Other researchers, however, provided a counter argument to the belief that a personal name influences the personality of an individual. For example, in approaching the personal names of the Zulu people of South Africa, Mabuza (2014) believed that a personal name reflects the taste of the named person's parents and thus personal identities are unlikely to be the same even if the personal name shares the same meaning.

#### *2.2.3 Studies on effects of name peculiarity*

It has also been published that individual holding unique first names are viewed by themselves and by others as subordinate to people with popular names. Savage and Wells (1948) offered a brief exploration of Kraepelin's hypothesis which holds that there is a possible association between a peculiar given name and a less adjusted personality. The study, which was conducted on 3,320 Harvard undergraduate students at the time, concluded that students with peculiar names are more expected to be demarcated as "psychopathic" or "psychoneurosis." In a similar manner, Ellis and Beechley (1954) examined the records of 1,682 psychiatric patients taken from the files of the Northern New Jersey Mental Hygiene Clinic to determine the peculiarity of the names and the extent of the holder's disturbance. They found that boys with peculiar first names were more likely to be severely emotionally disturbed whereas no significant effect was found concerning girls.

Name peculiarity is also reported by a number of researchers to have negative effects on the holder's creativity and achievements. Joubert (1993), for example, discussed the effect of uncommon names on students' academic achievement. He concluded that undergraduate students with uncommon names were the least expected students to receive honors when they graduated. Similarly, Name familiarity and its effect was the focus of Mehrabian and Piercy (1993). The findings of the study

revealed that individuals with unusual names were rated as having less desirable attributes than were those with usual names.

The literature also suggested that a relationship exists between names and life expectancy. Christenfeld et al. (1999), for example, examined death certificates from the state of California and found that males with positive initials lived an average of 4.48 years longer than the control group, and those with negative initials die 2.80 years younger than the control group. It was also found that the death of the negative group is more likely associated with psychological causes (e.g., suicides and accidents). In like manner, Abel and Kruger (2007) reviewed the longevities of 3,835 deceased baseball players whose initials constituted known terms. Results indicated that players with positive initials (e.g., L.O.V., W.I.N., and V.I.P.) lived a mean of 13 years longer than those with negative initials (e.g., S.A.D., P.I.G., and D.I.E.).

The reviewed literature so far showed that even while the researchers seem to be addressing the sociolinguistic aspects of personal names, many of them gave special importance to the typology and the structure of the names. Others also focused on the relationship between a person's given first name and the development of self-concept. Some of the researchers also discussed the socio-cultural aspects of personal names but few discussed the changes and innovations that have occurred in the various naming systems.

The current study, based on the notion of the Variationist Theory has investigated personal names across three successive generations (grandfathers, fathers, and grandsons) and revealed considerable variations and innovations in naming overtime. Therefore, it can safely be argued that the study has contributed anew addition to the field of Onomastics by extending the notion of this theory to cover the naming process over generation.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Data Sources**

To obtain the information needed for this study entailed collecting full names of male school students in the elementary stage and particularly from the fifth and sixth grades. This allows obtaining the first names of students who are young enough to represent the modern and stylish trend in naming patterns, and the names of their fathers, and grandfathers who are old enough to represent the traditional naming system.

##### *3.1.1 Directorate of Education*

Name lists of the targeted classes were collected from the database of Al-Muwaqqar Directorate of Education in Al-Muwaqqar district. The directorate incorporates forty (40) elementary schools divided equally between males and females with a total number of 2985 fifth and sixth graders. Out of this number, 1475 are males and 1510 females.

##### *3.1.2 Structured Interviews*

In view of the fact that this study attempts to identify the factors and conditions, which influence the naming process in this community, a structured interview was conducted to obtain information from well-knowledgeable people about the sociolinguistic implications of the names. Six male Arabic-schoolteachers were selected to help in this regard. The researcher presented the teachers with the sample of names and asked them to provide their comments on the sociolinguistic implication of the uncommon names. Such information is of significant benefit when it comes to analyzing the names according to their implications. There was a need to consult eight elderly notables from Beni Sakhar tribe who are old enough to provide genuine information concerning the sociolinguistic implications of peculiar Bedouin exclusive names and the original reasons behind giving them. Structured interviews were also conducted to obtain information from the parents about the reasons behind giving foreign and modern invented names to their children. There was also a need to determine whether certain names are Bedouin-specific or popular names (i.e., names that can be found in other regions in Jordan). Besides the researcher's knowledge as a member in this Bedouin tribe, lists of names were prepared by the researcher to be rated as Bedouin specific or popular names by the Arabic-teacher group and the elderly notables from Bani Sakhar tribe mentioned above.

#### **3.2 Sample of the Study**

Three hundred (300) names were selected by drawing fifteen (15) names from each of the twenty (20) male schools. The sons with their fathers and grandfathers' names make up nine hundred (900) names as the total size of the sample of the study.

### **3.3 Data analysis of the study**

The 300 names were classified into three categories: the first category included the names of grandfathers, the second included the names of fathers, and the third category included the names of sons. Each category contained 300 names. Within each category, the names were further grouped into classifications based on their implications and backgrounds. Given the wide scope of reasons for naming individuals in the Bani Sakhar tribe, the examples and analysis were limited to regional, religious, political, romantic, and other social backgrounds.

### **4. Discussion and findings of the study**

In the following subsections, each category was examined separately, and the findings were discussed for each category before highlighting the age-specific differences, i.e., the difference between the names of each category. Then the names were investigated in relation to the female names among the community in question (gender-specific differences).

#### **4.1 Grandfathers' names**

When discussing the 300 grandfathers' personal names, it was found out that 104 of the names (34.7%) were Bedouin-exclusive names while the rest 196 (65.3%) were identified as normal names, i.e., those that can be found in other parts and communities of Jordan. In general, the grandfathers' names were mainly motivated by the following factors.

##### *4.1.1 The season during which the named person is born*

Some names in the grandfathers' category, especially the Bedouin-exclusive names, were motivated by the seasons of the year during which the namee was born. The following are examples of such names which constituted 3% of the total number of the grandfathers' names.

- /rbey<sup>c</sup>a:n/ relating to 'spring'
- /shtayya:n; shteywi; sha:ti/ of or relating to 'winter'
- /qa:yiTH/ of or relating to 'summer'
- /jrayyid/ of or relating to 'fall'

##### *4.1.2 Emergent social events*

Twelve names (4%) were identified out of the 300 grandfathers' names to reflect such events. Examples included:

- /ghazi/ 'invader'
- /jalwa:n/ relating to the 'forced expulsion of a perpetrator and their family from community'
- /reḥi:l/ 'departure'
- /rḥayyil/ diminutive form of 'departure'
- /mreyḥi:l/ 'frequent desert wanderer'
- /nazza:l/ 'relating to arriving in certain area and dwelling there'
- /ḥarb/ 'war'

##### *4.1.3 Conditions of immediate impact on Bedouin life*

The Bani Sakhar people have experienced severe conditions which have determined the lifestyle they have led. This exceptional lifestyle, as stated earlier, in addition to the natural surroundings they interact with, have made an immediate impact on people's practices and customs including naming practices. The pressing need for water and pastures, for example, is one of the primary sources of naming among this community. Names of animals, birds living in the desert, and types of desert grasses and herbs are another source of naming. Such names recorded 31 instances (10.3%) out of the total number of the sample (300 names). The following are just examples of grandfathers' names motivated by such conditions and needs:

- /thalji/ the male adjective form of 'snow'
- /muṭar/ a synonym for 'rain'
- /ḥanTHal/ 'desert gourd'
- /geysu:m/ 'a type of desert grass'

- /shi:h̥a:n/ 'relating to a type of desert herb'
- /dirgha:m/ 'lion'
- /dhi:b/ 'wolf'
- /fahad/ 'leopard'
- /fhayd/ diminutive form of 'leopard'
- /faha:d/ 'relating to leopard'
- /THab<sup>c</sup> a:n/ 'relating to hyena'
- /saqer/ 'falcon'
- /ʔ<sup>c</sup>qa:b/ 'vulture'

#### 4.1.4 Hopes, wishes, and expectations of the namer(s)

Some names were found to reflect the namer's tradition and their hopes for the child. The following are examples of such names which sum up to 21 names (7 %):

- /ʔ<sup>c</sup>qayil/ 'wise'. It expresses the namer's wish for the child to be wise.
- /bkhayta:n/ 'lucky'. It expresses the namer's wish for the child to be lucky.
- /<sup>c</sup>awwa:d/, /ʔ<sup>c</sup>wayid/, /a:yid/, /<sup>c</sup>awdah/, /la:fi/, /melfi/, /tha:ni/, /thnaya:n/. They all imply the 'hope for somebody or something to come back or reoccur.'
- /sala:mah/, /slayma:n/, /sweylim/, /sa:lim/. They all imply 'safety, and express the namer's wish for the child to be safe in the future.
- /khalaf/ 'substitute; compensation'. This name is one of the most frequent names within the grandfathers' category. It is usually given to a newborn with the hope that it will serve as a compensation for the death of an antecedent sibling or as incantation that protect the newborn in the future.

#### 4.1.5 Implications of success, prosperity and highness

From the 300 grandfathers' names, 17 names (5.6%) were found to express meanings of success and prosperity. These, among others, included:

- /fa:lih/, /flayyih/, /meflih/, /fala:h/: These names are found to be of the most frequent names in the grandfathers' category. They all have the same meaning and imply 'success and prosperity.'
- /meshrif/ 'high; noble'

#### 4.1.6 Religious motives

Religious names in this category were identified as those pertaining to the attributes and names of God, which are often a combination of /<sup>c</sup>abd/ 'slave,' with one of the divine attributes of God (henceforth compound religious names or theophoric names). Names referring to the prophets, especially the name of the prophet Mohammad "praiseworthy" and those derived from the verb "praise" are also considered religious names in addition to the names of the four rightly guided caliphs. Accordingly, 88 names (29.3%) out of the 300 grandfathers' names are marked as having religious connotations. Examples include:

- /mhammad/ the Prophet Muhammad which registered 25 instances
- /ahmad/ (10), /hamda:n/ (4), /ha:mid/ (3), /hamad/ (1), /hamma:d/ (1), /hmu:d/ (1): They are all derived from the Arabic verb /hamad/ 'praise.' Together, they recorded a total of 20 instances.
- /slayma:n/ the prophet Sulaiman (5)
- /salih/ the prophet Saleh (2)
- /ibra:hi:m/ 'the prophet Ibrahim' (1)
- /deyfallah/ 'guest of God' (8)
- /<sup>c</sup>abdallah/ 'slave of God' (4)
- /<sup>c</sup>atallah/ 'gift of God' (3)
- /<sup>c</sup>ali/ cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad, fourth caliph of Muslims (13)

The most frequent name in the grandfathers' names was found to be /mhammad/ the prophet Muhammad which as



mentioned above registered 25 instances. The name /<sup>ʕ</sup>ali/ mentioned above as one of the most frequent names among the religious names reveals itself to be the second most frequent name among the grandfathers' category. It was the only name of the four caliphs of Muslims to appear in the grandfathers with 13 occurrences. The most frequent compound name is found to be /<sup>ʕ</sup>deyfallah/ 'guest of God' with 8 occurrences.

#### 4.2 Fathers' names

When analyzing the fathers' personal names, the study found that the relative change in the lifestyle of the Bani Sakhar tribe has its influence on the naming practices among people. Bedouin exclusive names, for example, have decreased significantly from 104 names (34.6%) in the grandfathers' category to 29 names (9.6%) in the fathers' category. Examples included:

- /fhayd/ diminutive form of 'leopard'
- /<sup>ʕ</sup>eqla/ 'a man of wisdom; thick rope or string used for tying and fastening'
- /ʔinhayir/ diminutive form of 'daytime'
- /ʔidh<sup>ʕ</sup>a:r/ 'horrifying; intimidating'
- /ḥatmal/ borrowed from well-known Bedouin figures with no specific meaning
- /ʔihja:b/ 'screen; covering'

New names have also entered the fathers' category; others have disappeared from the list due to the changing factors behind naming. In general, the fathers' names can be mainly divided into the following two subcategories.

##### 4. 2.1 Names relating to religion

Names of religious background have increased from 88 names (29.3%) in the grandfathers' category to 106 names (35.3%) in this category. Like in the grandfathers' names, the name /mḥammad/ 'the Prophet Muhammad' which registered 25 instances in the grandfathers' category turned out to be the most frequent name in this category with 31 instances followed by the name /<sup>ʕ</sup>ali/ 'the fourth caliph of Muslims' which occurs 11 times. The name /<sup>ʕ</sup>umar/ 'the second caliph of Muslims' appeared 4 times, and the name /uthma:n/ 'the third caliph of Muslims' appeared also once in this category. In addition to the three religious compound names which appeared in the grandfathers' category, five new religious compound names showed up in this category. These were:

- /<sup>ʕ</sup>abdarruḥma:n/ 'slave of the Merciful'
- /<sup>ʕ</sup>abdalkeri:m/ 'slave of the Generous'
- /<sup>ʕ</sup>abdal<sup>ʕ</sup>azi:z/ 'slave of the Powerful'
- /<sup>ʕ</sup>abdanna:ser/ 'slave of the Victorious'
- /maddallah/ 'offering from God'

In addition to the four names of the prophets which appeared in the grandfathers' category (/mḥammad/, /slayma:n/, /ḡalih/, and /ibra:hi:m/), two new names of prophets appeared in this category( /yu:sef/ 'the Prophet Yusuf', /yahya/ 'the Prophet Yahya'). The most frequent compound name in this category was /<sup>ʕ</sup>abdallah/ 'slave of God' with 7 occurrences followed by /<sup>ʕ</sup>abdalkeri:m/ 'slave of the Generous' which occurred 3 times.

##### 4. 2.2 Names expressing social values

In this category, many names were found to express preferable meanings. These included, among others:

- /na:jih/, /fa:lih/, /fa:yez/, /fawwa:z/, /mwaffaq/ 'success'
- /s<sup>ʕ</sup>u:d/, /farḥa:n/ 'happiness'
- /jema:l/, /jemi:l/ 'beauty'
- /mansu:r/, /gha:leb/ 'victorious'
- /majd/, /ma:jed/ the noun and adjective of 'glory'
- /sala:mah/, /salem/ the noun and adjective of 'safety'

Unlike the grandfathers' names category which recorded 43 instances of names relating to factors of immediate impact on Bedouin life such as the severe weather conditions, the pressing needs of desert dwellers, desert animals and birds, and emergent events, the fathers' names category registered only 3 names relating to desert animals. They were:

- /fhayd/ diminutive form of 'leopard'
- /dhi:b/ 'wolf'
- /sabi<sup>c</sup>/ 'beast of prey; predatory animal'

No single name was noticed in this category to be related to emergent events, weather conditions, seasons of the year, or to desert plants and grasses.

#### 4.3 Sons' names

Today, most Bedouins are settled. They have traded their traditional existence for the pursuits and the conventions of the modern world, as remarkable changes over the last two decades have altered the nature of life for Bedouin and for the land they inhabit. Nonetheless, Bedouin culture still survive in Jordan, where there is a growing appreciation of its value. This dramatic change in the lifestyle has a direct influence on the naming practices among Bani Sakhar tribe. This evidently appeared when examining the sons' names where the study found that there were only 6 names counting for 2 % that can be considered Bedouin-exclusive names compared to 104 (34.6%) and 29 (9.6%) in the grandfathers and the fathers' names, respectively. Most of these names reflect powerful and decisive personal characteristics among the people of Bani Sakhar. These names included:

- /annashmi/ 'the courageous; chivalrous'
- /albarq/ 'lightning'
- /satta:m/ 'fierce'
- /ʔḥaymi/ 'decisive' diminutive
- /ʔna:d/ 'obstinacy; stubbornness'
- /met<sup>c</sup>ib/ 'weary'

Leaving out these names, all the sons' names can be shared by other regions in Jordan and by other Arab countries. The analysis of the names revealed the dominant social and cultural values of the Jordanian community in general. The names in this category can be generally grouped into the following classifications.

##### 4.3.1 Names relating to religious backgrounds

The names which have a religious background were more frequent in this category than they were in the grandfathers and fathers' category where they accounted for 88 occurrences (29.3%) and 106 (35.3%), respectively. Such names mounted to 114 (38%) in the sons category. The most frequent name in this category was /ṃhammad/ the Prophet Muhammad. It recorded a total of 48 instances, followed by the name /aḥmad/ which recorded 14 instances. The third most frequent name was /abdallah/ which recorded 12 instances followed by /ʕabdarruḥma:n/, /ʕumar/, and /ʕali/ with 10, 5, and 6 instances, respectively. New religious compound names appeared for the first time in this category. These included:

- /ʕabdalḥaki:m/ 'servant of the Wise'
- /ʕabdalila:h/ 'servant of God'
- /ʕabdalha:di/ 'servant of the Guide'
- /almuʕtazbella:h/ 'proud by God'
- /sayfaddi:n/ 'sword of the religion (Islam)'
- /nu:raddi:n/ 'light of the religion (Islam)'
- /ʕabdalḥaki:m/ 'servant of the All-wise'

Other new religious names, which appeared in this category were /i:sa/ the Prophet Jesus, /muʔmin/ 'believer,' and /bila:l/. The latter is the name of one of the most trusted and loyal *Sahabah* ('companions') of the Prophet Muhammad and the first *muezzin* chosen by the Prophet Muhammad to call people to their prayers.

##### 4.3.2 Names relating to nature

Many names in this category were derived from the natural environment and objects from nature. Examples of these names included:

- /badr/ 'full moon' which registered 4 instances but it was not present in the previous two categories
- /ghayth/ one of the names for 'rain'

- /raˤad/ ‘thunder’
- /ʔayham/ ‘high mountain’

These names are modern and not found in the previous categories. Other modern names which are inspired by the beauty of plants and herbs were also present, e.g., /yazan/. Other names in this category are inspired by the power and beauty of wild animals and birds, e.g., /layth/, /ḥamzah/ that are both names for ‘lion,’ /nimer/ ‘tiger,’ and /haytham/ ‘falcon.’ It should be noted here that these names did not appear in the fathers and the grandfathers' category where other names for lion are used. These names are considered more stylish and beautiful.

#### *4.3.3 Names relating to social values*

Many personal names in this category express social desirable and preferable meanings. Examples include:

- /shahim/ ‘chivalrous’
- /Karam/ ‘hospitality’
- /jawa:d/ ‘generous’
- /wa:ʔil/ ‘social person and cooperative’
- /ta:hir/ ‘virtuous’
- /aʃi:l/ ‘noble’
- /ra:shed/ ‘pious’
- /basha:r/ ‘bringer of glad tidings’
- /ba:sil/ ‘courageous’

However, the reason behind choosing these names might be ascribed to factors other than the suggested one. Some people borrowed the names of other people and gave them to their children without even know the meaning of these names.

#### **4.4 Age-Specific differences**

Findings revealed that naming among Bedouin communities has experienced some shift away from traditional Bedouin names towards modern names. This shift manifested itself in a number of revelations as presented in the following paragraphs.

A significant portion of the grandfathers' names 104 (34.7%) constituted Bedouin- exclusive names. These names were derived from the conditions of immediate impact on Bedouin life. In the fathers' names, such names decreased to 29 (9.6%) names and to only 6 names (2%) in the children's names.

Names of religious impact constituted 88 names (29.3% whereas in the fathers' names they made up 106 (35.3%) and in the sons' names 114 (38%). What increased the number of the religious names among the three categories was the high frequency of the name /mḥammad/, which occurred 25, 31, and 38 times in the grandfathers, fathers, and sons' categories, respectively.

It is also noticed that religious names differed in their popularity over the years. While names, such as /mḥammad/, /aḥmad/, and /ʕabdallah/ rose constantly in popularity, some decreased constantly (e.g., /ʕali/). Other names diminished completely (e.g., /ḍeyfallah/, /ʕaṭallah/) while others arose as new stylish names (ʕabdalila:h/, /ʕabdalha:di/, /almuʕtazbella:h/, /sayfaddi:n/, /ʕabdalḥaki:m/, and /nu:raddi:n/). Also, in addition to the four names of the prophets which appear in the grandfathers' category (/mḥammad/, /slayma:n/, /ṣalih/, and /ibra:hi:m/), two new names of prophets appeared in the fathers' category. These are /yu:sef/ the prophet Yusuf and /yahya/ the Prophet Yahya. Another new prophet's name, besides those mentioned above, appeared in the sons' category, namely /i:sa/ the Prophet Jesus. Table1 presents the distribution of the most widespread religious names over the three generations to show how these names differ in their popularity over the years.

**Table 1: Distribution of religious names among Bani Sakhar male group**

Religious Name	Grandfathers	Fathers	Sons
/mhammad/ محمد	25	31	48
/ahmad/ أحمد	10	12	14
/slayma:n/ سليمان	5	4	0
/i:sa/ عيسى	0	0	1
/yu:sef/ يوسف	0	1	1
/yahya/ يحيى	0	1	1
/umar/ عمر	0	4	6
/°ali/) علي	13	11	5
/°abdallah/ عبد الله	4	7	12
/deyfallah/ ضيف الله	8	2	0
/°atallah/ عطاء الله	3	1	0
/°abdarruhma:n/ عبد الرحمن	0	2	10
/nu:raddi:n/ نور الدين	0	0	1
/sayfaddi:n/ سيف الدين	0	0	1
/almu°tazbella:h/ المعترف بالله	0	0	1
/°abdalila:h/ عبد الله	0	0	1
/°abdalha:di/ عبد الهادي	0	0	1
/°abdalhaki:m/ عبد الكريم	0	0	1
/mu?min/ مؤمن	0	0	1
/bila:l/ بلال	0	0	1

Data gathered through the semi-structured personal interviews revealed that the religious compound names and the names of prophets which appeared in the sons and fathers' category were looked at among the grandfathers' generation as names relating to rural and urban communities. Therefore, they were missing in the elderly Bedouin generation but more likely to appear in the other two generations due to the growing contact with the urban and rural communities. The opposite holds true for the religious compound names which dominated among the grandfathers' category but disappeared completely as old-fashioned names.

In the sons' category, 82 new stylish names appeared exclusively, be they religious or nonreligious names. None of these names appeared in the other two categories. Examples of such names included, among others, /yama:n/ 'blessed,' /qays/ 'strength,' /bila:l/ 'dew,' /ami:r/ 'master,' /azhar/ 'luminous,' /uday/ 'courageous,' /hamma:m/ 'brave,' /ba:sil/ 'brave,' /ma:lik/ 'well-versed,' /ra:mi/ 'sharpshooter,' and /ma° in/ 'recognition of the right.'

While names motivated by the same factors over generations are semantically the same, they witnessed changes in the form and the sound. In the sons' names, for example, names derived from desert herbs such as /geysu:m/ and /shi:hā:n/ that were noticed in the grandfathers' names were never found. Instead, new alternative names were found such as /yazan/. Likewise, names that mean 'lion' or those that mean 'falcon' in the sons' category were completely different from their equivalents in the fathers and the grandfathers' categories. This incongruity in the frequency of names suggests that the taste for a name changes over time, as does its stylishness.

Having a quick look at table 2 which displays examples of students' full (son-father-grandfather) names can plainly show this striking change in naming throughout successive generations. A change that starts with names familiar to all communities and ends with a peculiar Bedouin-exclusive names.

**Table 2: Examples of son-father-grandfather names among Bani Sakhar tribe**

Son	Father	Grandfather
/rayya:n/: 'of a lively face' ريان	/nawa:f/: 'high' نواف	/nawwa:sh/: 'one whose parents stayed together for a very short time' نواش
/karam/: 'hospitality' كرم	/kha:led/: 'immortal' خالد	/ʔmna:ked/: 'ill-tempered' إمناك
/sel̥ta:n/: 'leader' سلطان	/sa:leh/: 'righteous' صالح	/jaffa:t/: 'no specific meaning' جففات
/d̥ira:r/: 'harm' ضرار	/salma:n/ 'safe' سلمان	/fneykhir/: 'a person with large nostrils' فنيخر
/shaher/: 'prominent' شاهر	/sa:mi/: 'superior' سامي	/ʔrdeyˤa:n/: 'deterrent' إرديعان
/yana:l/: 'winner' ينال	/awad/: 'compensation' عوض	/mreyhi:l/: 'wanderer'
/hashem/: 'destroyer of evil' هاشم	/jazza: ˤ/: 'compassionate' جزاع	/qey̥su:m /: 'desert herb' قيصوم
/ˤabdallah/: عبدالله	/na:yel/: 'acquirer' نايل	/salhu:m/: 'atrophic; thin' سلهوم
/bila:l/: بلال	/mhammad/: محمد	/mashu:j/: 'of or relating to a strong wind' مسهوج
/mhammad/: محمد	/sel̥ta:n/: سلطان	/ʔalbu:ri/: 'of or relating to a bare land' البوري
/ˤabdall̥haki:m/: عبدالكريم	/ˤabdallah/: عبدالله	/lefa/: 'coming back' لفا
/sa:lem/: 'safe' سالم	/aḥmad/: أحمد	/ˤeq̥la/: 'wise' عقلة
/ra:mi/: رامي	/tawfi:q/: 'success' توفيق	/THabˤa:n/: 'derived from hyena' ضيعان
/ibra:hi:m/: إبراهيم	/ha:bes/: 'confinement' حابس	/mazlu:h/: 'abandoned' مزلوه
/ʔt̥tayeb/: 'of good morals' الطيب	/fey̥sal/: 'a ruler who decides what is right or wrong' فيصل	/qt̥ayfa:n/: 'a man who reaps the fruits/benefits' قطفان

#### 4.5 Gender-specific differences

Contrasting masculine and feminine names among the Bani Sakhar tribe revealed some commonalities regarding certain aspects as well as differences in other aspects. It is found that old-fashioned and Bedouin exclusive names constituted a similar portion in each the fathers' and mothers' category with 9% and 9.3%, respectively. This type of names also made up an identical portion of the daughters and the sons' categories with 2%. However, a significant difference is noticed with respect to this issue when examining the grandmothers and the grandfathers' names where the old fashion and Bedouin exclusive names summed up to 207 names (69%) in the grandmothers' names whilst their equivalents in the grandfathers' names represent 104 (34.6%) out of the total number of this category. One can conclude that elderly people had stronger reasons for giving males diverse names than they did for females. This might be greatly attributed to the fact that males were more likely to interact with other communities and get familiar with male names used outside Bedouin communities. One more explanation for this might be, as explained in the next paragraph, the higher percentage of religious names in the grandfathers' names, which existed at the expense of other types of names including the old-fashioned names.

One more difference between female and male groups was that names relating to religion in the female group (grandmothers, mothers, and daughters) were significantly less than their equivalent in the male group. Such names registered 103 occurrences out of 900 (11.4%) in the female group whilst they mounted to 308 (26.6%) in the male group. Two types of names that were abundantly present in the male group but missing from the female group might be responsible

for the increase of the religious names amongst the male group. These are the name /mḥammad/ the Prophet Mohammad which solely registers 104 instances and the religious compound names which recorded 61 instances (cf. Busaba 2013 where one can find names among Yemeni females names such as /muḥamidah/ derived from the name Muhammad and /amatarrahi:m/, a combination of /amat/ 'feminine slave' with one of the divine attributes of God).

Additionally, in the names expressing the social value of the society, the female names, even among the grandmothers, were found, as expected, to be more likely to express feminine qualities such as caring, empathy, compassion, beauty, and littleness/diminutiveness. The equivalent male names, on the other hand, tended to reflect masculine qualities such as strength, aggression, courage, and largeness (cf. Abd-el-Jawaad 1986, for his discussion of the differences between male and female naming patterns).

Another obvious difference between the two groups had to do with names derived from jewels and gemstones. Analysis revealed that in the female group 40 names were identified as reflecting such a feature. Interestingly, no single name of such significance was found among the male group. That being the case, one can conclude that a jewel-inspired name is more likely to associate with feminine attributes, and therefore, more expected to be given to a girl rather than to a boy.

One final point was pertinent to the phenomenon of foreign names. Analysis identified eight foreign names among the females and in particular among the daughters' category. By way of comparison, no single foreign name was identified in the male group. When talking to the parents of the girls holding the foreign and the modern invented names, most of them stated that they chose such names because they want their daughters to be distinguished. For them, these names were simple, beautiful, and modern regardless of their social or cultural implications. Still, few remarked that they were not fully aware of the origin or even the meaning of the names. This suggests that the parental inclination to bestow foreign and modern invented names on their girls is stronger than their desire to do so on their sons.

## 5. Conclusion

As a general conclusion, this present study, which is carried out in line with the variationist sociolinguistic theory, has contributed a new addition to the field of onomastics by extending the notion of the variationist theory to cover naming process across generations. It revealed that the change of the lifestyle and interests of communities had a significant influence on the naming system among these communities, in particular, Bedouin communities. Findings indicated that masculine personal names among the Bani Sakhar Bedouin tribe varied considerably in terms of their implications and the factors motivating them over generations. It is revealed amongst other things that there had been a trend that started with traditional old-fashioned peculiar names and ended up with modern stylish names. As far as the gender differences are concerned, the study revealed some commonalities regarding certain aspects as well as differences in other aspects between feminine and masculine names.

### Appendix 1: Transliteration symbols

Arabic words which appear in this paper are transliterated according to the following phonetic system

Arabic alphabet	Symbol	Example	Meaning	Description
ء	ʔ	ʔamal	hope	voiced glottal stop
ب	B	ba:b	door	voiced bilabial stop
ت	T	ti:n	figs	voiceless alveolar stop
ث	Th	thaʕlab	fox	voiceless inter-dental fricative
ج	J	jamal	camel	voiced post-alveolar affricate
ح	H	hub	love	voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	Kh	khubz	bread	voiceless uvular fricative
د	D	dars	lesson	voiced alveolar stop
ذ	Dh	dhahab	gold	voiced dental fricative
ر	R	rasama	draw v.	voiced alveolar approximant
ز	Z	zayt	oil	voiced alveolar fricative
س	S	sama:ʔ	sky	voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	Sh	shams	sun	voiceless alveopalatal fricative
ص	S	sayf	summer	voiceless velarized alveolar fricative
ض	D	dayf	guest	voiced velarized alveolar stop
ط	T	ti:n	mud	voiceless velarized dento-alveolar stop
ظ	TH	THuhr	noon	voiced velarized alveolar fricative
ع	ʕ	ʕabd	slave	voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	Gh	gharb	west	voiced uvular fricative
ف	F	fan	art	voiceless labiodental fricative
ق	Q	qalam	pencil	voiced uvular stop
ك	K	kalb	dog	voiceless velar stop
ل	L	la:ʔ	no	voiced alveolar lateral
م	M	madrasah	school	voiced bilabial nasal stop
ن	N	najm	star	voiced alveolar nasal stop
هـ	H	hawa:ʔ	air	voiceless glottal fricative
و	W	ward	rose	voiced labio-velar glide
ي	Y	yawm	day	voiced palatal glide
فتحة ( )	A	kataba	he wrote	short low front unrounded
ضمة ( )	U	kutub	books	short high back rounded
كسرة ( )	I	sin	tooth	short high back unrounded
مد طويل ا/ى	a:	ka:tib	writer	long low front unrounded
ضمة طويلة و	u:	fu:l	beans	long high back rounded
كسرة طويلة ي	i:	fi:l	elephant	long high front unrounded
شدة	CC	ʕamma:n	Amman	geminate consonant
Diphthongs (أصوات علة مركبة)	Aw	mawt	death	
	Ay	bayt	house	

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