

Review of: "Wasta: The Culture of Nepotism on the Arabian Peninsula"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This study aimed to evaluate the phenomenon of wasta in the socio-cultural fabric of the Arabian Peninsula, particularly within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. The research topic is important and interesting. Several points to which attention should be paid are presented below.

Introduction:

- The introduction provides a good overview of the wasta phenomenon and its relevance in the Gulf region, as well as comparisons to similar concepts in other cultures.
- It could be strengthened by incorporating more recent data or statistics on the prevalence and impact of wasta, if available.
- The introduction could also highlight the importance of understanding public perceptions of wasta, which is the focus of the study.

Literature Review:

- The literature review is comprehensive and covers the key perspectives on wasta - as a form of corruption vs. a mechanism for generating social capital.
- It could be improved by incorporating more recent academic sources, as the references are mainly from the 2010s.
- The review of the "theory of hybrid sociocultural capital" is an interesting contribution but could be expanded to better explain how it relates to the wasta phenomenon.

Methodology:

- The methodology section is well-explained, with a clear rationale for using the hermeneutic approach and LDA analysis.
- It could be enhanced by providing more details on the data collection process, such as the specific keywords used to gather the social media comments.
- The limitations of the data sources (e.g., language, platform biases) could also be addressed.

Analysis and Findings:

- The integration of the hermeneutic approach to interpret the findings is a strength of the analysis.

- It is appropriate to specify the times when the data was collected from YouTube and to expand on the way of selecting the specific data.

Conclusion:

- The conclusion effectively summarizes the main findings and their implications, highlighting the complex and ambivalent nature of wasta.
- It could be strengthened by discussing potential avenues for future research, such as investigating generational differences in perceptions or the impact of ongoing modernization efforts in the Gulf region on the role of wasta.

Overall, the article provides a comprehensive and well-researched exploration of the wasta phenomenon. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as the integration of the hermeneutic approach, is a strength of the study. The conclusions are generally consistent with the theoretical background presented in the literature review.

To further strengthen the article, the authors could consider incorporating more recent academic sources, providing additional details on the data collection and analysis, and exploring potential future research directions. Additionally, the bibliography could be expanded to include any relevant studies that may have been overlooked in the current version.