

The Role of the Press in Monitoring the Development Stages of Saudi Cities (Onaizah in Um Al-Qura Newspaper as a Model 1343-1400-1982 AD)

Dr. Mariam khalaf sheedeed Alotaibi ¹

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the function of the press in monitoring Saudi city development by evaluating the Um Al-Qura newspaper's coverage of Onaizah and the country's development programs. The study used the historical technique based on analysis and deduction by categorizing what was written about Onaizah in the daily Um Al-Qura. The study found that um Al-Qura covered Saudi Arabia's renaissance. Um Al-Qura newspaper's coverage of Onaizah's development revival is broad, which can be used to trace its beginnings (health - educational - service). The study found that the Saudi government is interested in sustainable urban development and tracking its progress. According to the report, Um Al-Qura is vital for analyzing Saudi Arabia's progress. Based on the preliminary study's findings, several recommendations were made, including using Saudi newspapers as a primary source for understanding the beginnings of the renaissance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and directing researchers, especially graduate students, to the methods for studying such topics. This effort aims to promote awareness of Saudi newspapers' relevance and encourage authorities to preserve them for researchers. It also stressed the significance of maintaining and developing the country's contributions to the development of Saudi cities for present and future generations.

Keywords: Press, Newspaper, Saudi, Saudi city development, Onaizah, Um Al-Qura.

Introduction

In all of its manifestations, whether audio, print or visual, the mass media plays a crucial role in educating and enlightening the public. As one of the mass media, the press is not just a source of news but also information and a vehicle for public critique. The press also serves as a conduit between the government and the populace. It is also a

¹ Department of Social Sciences, College of Education in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia, mk.alotaibi@psau.edu.sa

means to build nations, raise their level, and expand their knowledge of what is happening around them and the development that comes with societies at all levels.

The Um Al-Qura newspaper was published during the outset of the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was and remains the official newspaper of the country due to its uniqueness in disseminating news about the country and the Founding King - may God have mercy on him - and his men, as well as the activities of the country and the events occurring on all political, economic, and social issues locally or globally. It has assumed a major role in publishing news about the nation and the decisions of the supreme leadership.

The only distinction of the journal was that it was the only Saudi publication to witness the entry of King Abdulaziz Al-Hijaz and to accompany his administration for three decades. On the local level, Um Al-Qura discussed only the regions and cities of the Kingdom, and its preparation detailed the development services offered to inhabitants during that time. And it attempted to incorporate all Saudi cities in its news coverage.

This distinguished Um Al-Qura newspaper from other Saudi newspapers: it was launched thirty years before the demise of King Abdulaziz. It was the only source to discuss the regions and cities of the Kingdom and the events and facts occurring in them. Rather, it was followed by a discussion of climatic conditions and meteorological variables such as rainfall and flooding, drought, health issues, crises, and epidemics.

Among the Saudi cities well represented in the daily Um Al-Qura was Onaizah, one of the most prominent Saudi cities. It was noted and commended, as was the case with other cities. This study will examine what the editorial board of the Um Al-Qura wrote about the city of Onaizah. It will adhere to all written about it from a political, economic, or social perspective.

As one of the Saudi cities, Onaizah gained a presence in the Um Al-Qura newspaper due to its central location in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the variety of news reported concerning the government's services to the region and its inhabitants.

Objectives of the Study:

The current study aims to achieve the main goal of identifying the press's role in monitoring the stages of development of Saudi cities. From this main goal, several sub-goals can be formulated in the form of the following questions:

- (1) Was King Abdulaziz able to bring about a developmental renaissance in the media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? What are his most important goals?
- (2) Was the editorial board of Um Al-Qura newspaper able to monitor, analyze and track what was written about the city of Onaizah, especially regarding monitoring the country's developmental projects carried out by this city?
- (3) What did this news include? And how important is the information that can reflect the government's keenness and interest in establishing a comprehensive developmental renaissance throughout the country?

Methodology of the Study:

To achieve its aims, the study employed the historical method based on analysis and deduction by following what was written about the city of Onaizah in the daily Um Al-Qura and then categorizing these articles according to the study's parameters. Due to the unavailability of its complete issues and the loss and deterioration of some of its problems, it isn't easy to trace historical events in the Um Al-Qura newspaper. However, I attempted to follow what was mentioned in the newspaper about Onaizah in terms of news and indications, whether political, economic, or service-related, in light of the shortage of comparable research studies on the subject of the study.

The Importance of the Current Study

- (1) This research work helps fill a gap in the historical collection of the Saudi library by contributing to the field of history.
- (2) Researchers who want to write about the extent to which the press contributes to monitoring the developmental evolution of Saudi cities could use this study as an important reference.
- (3) A study that can serve as a reference for historians interested in writing about the history of Onaizah, located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- (4) The significance of this study work stems from the fact that it is first of its kind, serious, and authoritative. According to the researcher, there has not been a previous research study that addresses this topic and addresses it in detail to the extent that it is covered within the body of the research.

Study Results and Discussion:

First: King Abdulaziz's interest in the media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and his attempt to benefit from them in communication between regions.

Second: Um Al-Qura newspaper monitoring the manifestations of the developmental renaissance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Third: Diversity of developmental evolution news published by Um Al-Qura newspaper on the city of Onaizah, Which the researcher can benefit from in knowing the beginnings of the renaissance (health - educational - service).

Fourth: The Saudi leadership's interest in the comprehensive development of Saudi cities and tracking its developments.

First, the geographical location of Onaizah:

Onaizah is one of the Najd cities and the capital of Qassim. It is situated 200 miles northwest of Riyadh, 150 miles southeast of Hail, and midway between Basra and Makkah. It is considered the centre of the Arabian Peninsula by its inhabitants, who refer to it as "Um Najd." Although Onaizah has a significant commercial sector, it entirely depends on agriculture, producing palms, wheat, common grains, and fruits and vegetables. Its inhabitants engage in handicrafts and industries like gold and silver craftsmanship and woodworking (Dictionary of Countries and Tribes, 2014: Part 7, P. 389-393). Before the Saudi occupation, Onaizah was governed by local princes and sheikhs from prominent families. Local authorities were delegated to them, resulting in a regional administrative organization.

Onaizah's accession to Saudi authority on March 22, 1904, prompted the union of Qassim towns. As with other towns, King Abdulaziz benefited from the backing of its people, which enabled him to lavish the city with care and attention (Al-Zarkali, 1985).

The media during the reign of King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud

Before the incorporation of Hijaz, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia lacked modern forms of media for various reasons. The most important of them is the economic state of Najd and the implications of the social climate that punishes any innovation that deviates from the standard in the region, as well as the customs of the locals (Al-Shubaili, 2003).

In 1924, when Hijaz joined King Abdulaziz, the region had eight radio stations, a telephone line parallel to Hijaz Railway, and two telephone lines connecting Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Jeddah, and Taif. King Abdulaziz supported modern media and communication despite the

country's economic problems. Early on, within 10 years, the government created a department of publications and adopted two radio regulations. The King consented to publication of various Saudi publications that advanced the country's media revolution (Al-Shubaili, 2003).

Due to the nature of the research focusing on readable media, our discussion will be confined to readable media and the obstacles the country had to overcome to grow locally and globally. Customarily, the history of the Saudi press is divided into two phases: the first (individual journalism) and the second (group journalism) (institutional journalism). The first phase began in 1924 and lasted until 1964. It had more than forty newspapers, most of which were privately owned, including the Um Al-Qura daily, Al-Islah magazine, Sawt Al-Hijaz newspaper, Al-Manhal magazine, and Al-Munawwarah newspaper (Al-Shubaili, 2003).

With the issuance of Royal Decree No. (62) on September 1, 1964, licenses were issued to establish nine private press institutions: Makkah Printing and Media Corporation, Al-Madina for Journalism, Islamic Call for Journalism Foundation, Al-Yamamah Press Foundation, Okaz Foundation for Press and Publishing, Al-Jazeera Foundation for Press, Printing, and Publishing, and Al-Balad Foundation. These institutions vary in terms of their competencies and material and human resources. (Al-Shubaili, 2003).

Introduction to Um Al-Qura Newspaper:

Um al-Qura, the official newspaper of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was published on 12/12/1924 AD. It was a weekly newspaper whose front page included the Qur'anic verse "And similarly, We have revealed to you the Arabic Qur'an so that you may warn Um al-Qura and those surrounding it." And its motto, upon which the Islamic and Arab nation's duty is built (Al-Shamekh, 1981; Al-Shubaili, 2003).

1Professor Youssef Yassin was appointed editor-in-chief of Um Al-Qura, followed by 2Professors Rushdi Malhas, 3Mohammed Saeed Abdulmaqsod, and 4Fouad Shaker. It was printed on four pages by the government press in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, then its pages were doubled in 1936 to eight. It was able to broaden its journalistic scope and covers a variety of subjects. Thus it was interested in internal news, general news, and literary articles (Al-Shmaekh, 1981).

During the Second World War (1939-1945), the number of pages of Um Al-Qura was decreased to four, and the size of its pages was also diminished. As a result, the journal was confined to publishing primarily government announcements and some local and international news. Due to these circumstances, Um Al-Qura was the

only newspaper published in Saudi Arabia during the war. However, it was only published at half-size. The official declaration was released on July 18, 1941, and reads, "Due to the paucity of paper in the country, the government has decided to suspend the publication of newspapers and periodicals." The hiatus will continue until the end of the current crisis, except for the newspaper "Um Al-Qura," which will be published at its usual hour but will be half its size (Al-Shamekh, 1981).

It is natural, given that Um Al-Qura newspaper was the first Saudi newspaper published immediately after King Abdulaziz entered Hijaz and has been the official newspaper for several years, for it to be the most important source for the history of the development of governance, administration, and country organizations, as well as a significant reference for all legislation and regulations during that time (Al-Shubaili, 2003). Following what was written about Onaizah in the newspaper Um Al-Qura notwithstanding the difficulty of doing so, as previously said, I categorized the news reported in Um Al-Qura regarding this as follows:

Health News:

While the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is concerned with the country's health situation, the newspaper Um Al-Qura has devoted portions of its coverage to Onaizah's health difficulties. As in other locations, it entailed the development of health clinics and the organization of medical teams to monitor their health conditions (Um Al-Qura newspaper, November 28, 1947, Vol. 1186, 24). As stated in the newspaper, the government continues to monitor and pay attention to health conditions, so it published the Ministry of Health's desire to launch a tender to provide food for all of its hospitals and dispensaries, including Onaizah Hospital, from Rajab 1381 AH (December 9, 1961, AD) until Jumada al-Thani the following year (Um Al-Qura newspaper, November 10 1961, Vol. 1894, 39). The next year, this lecture was repeated, and Um Al-Qura published it in its columns (Um Al-Qura newspaper, /October 19 1962, Vol. 1941, 40).

Intending to advance the country's health level, the Um Al-Qura daily announced the Ministry of Health's request to acquire eighty-five (110) volt, (60) Michael, three-bladed, (56)-inch ceiling fans with their keys. The fans must be of high quality and sourced from foreign businesses. The brand to be sold and the country of origin must be specified. Onaizah Hospital was an expert in (ten) fans (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, November 1961, Vol. 1894, 39).

In 1954, in remembrance of King Saud's visit to the region, Um Al-Qura publicized the contribution of the people of Onaizah to the construction of a hospital in the city bearing the name of the King in

recognition of their cordial connection with the country (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, February 19, 1954, Vol. 1503, 31)5.

Educational news:

As with other sectors, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has paid attention to the education sector. Onaizah is one of the first cities in Najd to construct regular schools (Al-Harbi, 2017). In 1947, a Royal Decree authorized the formation of three schools in the city, and this was done to further the scientific renaissance by establishing curriculums, revising systems and programs, employing professors and qualified staff, attracting specialists, and sending students overseas (Um Al-Qura newspaper, July 16 1948, Vol. 1219, 25). Um Al-Qura pointed to the launch of the Saudi Scientific Institute in Onaizah on December 17, 1948 AD. This institute is the second of its kind after the Saudi Institute in Makkah (Al-Harbi 2017). Therefore, the institute's director requested Engineering, Mathematics, and English lecturers under the students' desires (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, December 17, 1948, Vol. 1240, 25). As a form of connection between print media and its readers, and under the habit of publishing the results of the final stages of study in the official newspaper, Um Al-Qura mentioned the first successful students at the Saudi school in Onaizah in 1951 in one of its issues (Um Al-Qura newspaper, July 20, 1951, Vol. 1371, 28).

Keeping up with the country's ongoing rebirth, the newspaper claimed in 1955 AD that five scientific institutes were to be built in Onaizah and Buraidah (Um al-Qura newspaper, January 20 1956, Vol. 1600, 33). It was mentioned in a historical document edited by King Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and addressed to his deputy, Prince Faisal, on (22/12/1952): From Saud bin Abdulaziz to the honorable brother Faisal, may God bless him, and may God's peace, kindness, and blessings be upon you. Then, at the request of the people of Onaizah and in the public interest, Sheikh Mohammed bin Ibrahim established in Onaizah a religious institute comparable to the Riyadh Institute. It was determined that the former institute's instructors and students who fit the requirements of the religious institute's system would be associated with it, and their salaries would be paid from his budget. This should be presented to the director of knowledge for approval and implementation. The next year, the newspaper stated that the religious institutes, including the Religious Institute in Onaizah, had been completed (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, November 16, 1962, Vol. 1945, 40), indicating that it not only publishes news but also pays attention to what has been accomplished.

Um Al-Qura daily contributed to elucidating the Saudi leadership's commitment to education development. It was reported that King Saud visited the Military School in Onaizah (Um Al-Qura newspaper, November 6, 1959, Vol. 1792, p. 36). In the context of communicating with his students, he honored the sports festival, the Directorate of Education in Onaizah and praised the students' sports performance. Subsequently, His Majesty presented the Scouts' squad (500) riyals to encourage them (November 6 1959, Vol. 1792, 36)⁶.

In 1962, Um Al-Qura reported the arrival of a study mission from the sons of Onaizah to enrol at the Amiri School in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, within the context of cultural exchange and the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's desire to increase students' knowledge and improve their qualifications. They were Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Hamad Saleh Qazi, Muhammad bin Suleiman bin Sunbul. They enrolled in the Saudi Institute and School for Mission Preparation (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, October 12, 1962, Vol. 1940, 39). During King Saud's visit to the Scientific Institute in Onaizah, he toured the Aziziyah, Saudi, and Al-Faisaliah schools in Um Al-Qura, indicating the leadership's concern for students' education (Um Al-Qura newspaper, February 26 1954, Vol. 1504, 31)⁷.

Um Al-Qura continues to broadcast everything related to Onaizah's education, including a tender issued by the Onaizah Education Department to rehabilitate government facilities (Um Al-Qura, January 26, 1968, Vol. 2206, 45). In 1975, the report was also published (Um al-Qura, September 12, 1975, Vol. 2593, 53). Also, in 1972, the report's release was repeated (Um Al-Qura, July 14, 1972, Vol. 2430, 49). In the context of its concern for students, the newspaper also published an announcement from the Department of Education on a tender for securing the region's needs for team clothes, sportswear, and art education for services (Um Al-Qura, May 30, 1980, Vol. 2823, 57). The administration bid second to acquire breakfast for Onaizah secondary school students (Um Al-Qura, October 10, 1980, Vol. 2840, 58).

Services:

Undoubtedly, the country offers a wide variety of services to its citizens, and the Um Al-Qura daily had a strong presence in referencing services in Onaizah, the most prominent of which are:

Airports:

Along with other cities and villages, Onaizah has gotten a great deal of attention from the government of King Abdulaziz. His primary objective is to connect the many regions of his country. His Majesty was interested in transportation and communications, particularly airport expansion (Al-Zarkali, 1985). Prince Mishaal bin Abdulaziz Al

Saud, Minister of Defense, inaugurated Onaizah Airport, which connects Onaizah to cities throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the world (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, September 24, 1954, Vol. 1532, 31), (March 9, 1956, Vol. 1607, 33).

Social Service Centers:

The Um Al-Qura newspaper reported the establishment of a social service centre in Onaizah as part of the country's program for the renaissance and development of society, particularly the Ministry of Labor and Workers' efforts to improve the quality of social service (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, July 27 1962, Vol. 1929, 39)⁸. The Supreme Planning Council was explained in Um Al-Qura newspaper in 1963. It was one of the year's most significant projects completed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1962). In several regions of the country, including Onaizah, several social assistance offices and social development centres were constructed (Um Al-Qura newspaper November 16, 1962, Vol. 1945, 40).

Mail:

Post is one of the most crucial pillars for nations' economic and social development, as well as the most effective method of intercontinental communication (Al-Shamimri, 2001). Due to the significance of postal services throughout the early years of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the country utilized its capabilities for the postal service, contributed to a safe and swift transfer between cities, and assigned personnel to the postal mission (Al-Shamimri, 2001). For this reason, the publication Um Al-Qura mentioned offering a bid for the circumambulating mail for the Onaizah villages (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, August 31, 1962, Vol. 1934, 39). This announcement was repeated after nearly a month of publication (Um Al-Qura newspaper October 12, 1962, Vol. 1940, 39)⁹.

Agriculture and Irrigation:

Among the manifestations of reform and attention to infrastructure in Saudi cities, the newspaper Um Al-Qura referred to the efforts made by the government of King Abdulaziz to support farmers through direct assistance, agricultural loans, and agricultural subsidies (Balghanim, 2014; Al-Qahtani, 2018). A group of vehicles carrying engineers and technicians arrived in Onaizah with a large artesian machine to dig wells in the town's orchards because of the fertility and quality of its lands, and its ability to dig artesian wells because of the abundance of its water and its proximity to the earth's

surface. Sheikh Suleiman Al-Saif was tasked with overseeing the operation (Um Al-Qura newspaper, December 1, 1939, Vol. 780, 16).

Electricity:

Um Al-Qura newspaper referred to the release of a royal order allowing the establishment of Onaizah Electricity Company in 1966 as being under the country's development and the Saudi leadership's goals for the modernization of Saudi cities (Um Al-Qura newspaper, July 8, 1966, Vol. 2128, 43). The Memorandum of Association and Regulation of Onaizah and its Suburbs Electricity Company was then issued in 1968, detailing the contract's provisions, the company's founders, the duration of the agreement, and how to compute earnings (Um Al-Qura, October 25, 1968, Vol. 2244, 46). In 1969, an announcement was made regarding the augmentation of the Electricity Company's capital and the distribution of earnings at 11 riyals per share (Um Al-Qura, August 22, 1969, Vol. 2285, 46).

Onaizah Municipality:

Onaizah Municipality is regarded as one of the most vital institutions in the region since it provides numerous beneficial services. It was founded in 1961. (Al-Qahtani, 2018). Its activities were reported in the Um Al-Qura, including Onaizah Municipality's presentation of an interior illumination display. One of its issues was the preparation of cemetery fences and the development a garden in Onayzah (Um Al-Qura February 20, 1976, Vol. 2613, 53). Following is a table depicting the neighbourhoods of Onaizah from 1953 to 1975:

Table 1: Neighbourhood of Onaizah

Districts	Location
Jinah district	Northwest of Onaizah
Salihiya District - Sulaimaniyah - Ashrafiyah	East Onaizah
Old Airport District - Shifa District	South Onaizah
Al-Dhabt district	North Onaizah

(Al-Qahtani, 2018: 289)

Additionally, the newspaper issued an advertisement for the municipality's wish to rent an annexe with at least eight rooms and sizes of at least 3/4/ and two baths (Um Al-Qura, August 1, 1975, Vol. 2587, 53). Additionally, the newspaper reported the municipality's need for publications, furnishings, surveying equipment, photography, drawing tools, and electrical instruments (Um Al-Qura, August 15, 1975, Vol. 2589, 53). These assertions appeared in multiple issues of the newspaper.

In 1976, Onaizah Municipality presented to the relevant authorities a proposal to permit the construction of King Faisal Garden and a vegetable and meat market (Um Al-Qura, January 9, 1976, Vol. 2607,

53). In 1977, the municipality notified the relevant authorities through the publication Um Al-Qura of its wish to rent a building for a warehouse with fifteen rooms of varying sizes, a hall, and a parking lot with twenty-five spaces (Um Al-Qura, March 25 1977, Vol. 2668, 54). Um Al-Qura newspaper released an announcement about the municipality's extension of insecticide spraying devices due to the municipality's desire to deliver its services to affected individuals (Um Al-Qura, April 15, 1977, Vol. 2671, 54). The publication also reported on the municipality's projects, including the fence of Onaizah's cemeteries (Al-Aqiliya and Wadi Al-Jinnah cemetery, northern and southern Al-Roghani cemeteries, and the Abu Ali Valley cemetery) (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, November 7, 1980, vol. 2842, 58). The publication then reported the municipality's request for temporary asphaltting of Onaizah's streets (Um Al-Qura Newspaper, November 7, 1980, vol. 2842, 58).

Conclusion:

This study sought to determine the function of the Saudi press, as exemplified by the Um Al-Qura newspaper, in monitoring news regarding the renaissance of development in Saudi cities. After completing its research, the study came to several significant conclusions, including the following:

- Keeping an eye on the publication Um Al-Qura for any signs that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is experiencing a revival in its developmental efforts.
- The newspaper Um Al-Qura released various renaissance-related developmental news about the city of Onaizah; the researcher can profit from this information to better understand the renaissance's origins (health - educational - service).
- The Saudi leadership's interest in the overall development of Saudi cities and its desire to monitor the city's progress.
- When discussing the many stages of development experienced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Um Al-Qura daily should be regarded as an essential source of information.

Recommendations:

The researcher made the following suggestions based on the findings that were obtained from the investigation, which were as follows:

(1) Using Saudi newspapers as the primary resource for learning about the early stages of the renaissance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

(2) The need to encourage scholars, particularly those pursuing postgraduate degrees, to tackle and investigate subjects of this nature.

(3) Educating the relevant authorities about the significance of Saudi newspapers and ensuring that they are preserved in a way that makes them accessible to researchers so they can use the information they contain.

(4) Raise the current generation's and the next generation's knowledge of the wonderful services the country has provided for developing Saudi cities and the need to preserve and develop them.

Statements and Declarations

Competing Interest

Financial competing interests

I declare the author has no competing interests or other interests that might be perceived to influence the interpretation of the article.

Non-financial competing interests

I declare the author has no non-financial competing interests or other interests that might be perceived to influence the interpretation of the article.

Ethical approval

This study is a theoretical study using no human participants, no human data, and no human tissue, and all ethical considerations have been taken into account for citations and references.

Publishing and Originality

This manuscript has not been published and is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

I certify that the submission is original work.

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