



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Navigating Challenges in Higher Education: An Analysis of Community College's Institutional Obstacles and Opportunities for Reform

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the challenges facing Arar Community College, a pivotal institution in the Northern Border Region of Saudi Arabia. Established in 2002, the college initially catered only to female students and has since evolved under various educational affiliations. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, gathering data from 64 participants, including students and faculty, through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal significant issues, including a negative perception of community colleges, a mismatch between program offerings and labor market demands, and the academic underperformance of students. Key challenges include low-quality diplomas, insufficient alignment with job market needs, and a prevailing stigma that undermines the college's reputation. The study concludes with actionable recommendations for reform, including renaming the institution to "College of Applied Studies," updating program curricula to reflect market requirements, and implementing student incentives to enhance enrollment and engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

The common aim of Community Colleges is to provide broad access to higher education. Although nearly all these colleges have open access policies that permit students to enroll, regardless of their academic preparation, not all students can study all programs and courses. Most community colleges offer a wide range of programs and degrees. They prepare students for both four-year institutes and

the labor market. Changing community demands and priorities necessitate the creation of specific programs. Some colleges dedicate significant resources to programs that appeal to community members who are passionate about education.

Many of these programs are categorized as noncredit programs. While some community colleges mainly grant degrees dedicated to obtaining a bachelor's degree, others offer diplomas for students to fit into the labor market. According to Baime & Baum (2016), "These differences in community colleges' missions and programs complicate the measurement of student success." Many students leave community colleges without earning or completing a bachelor's degree after being transferred. The Higher Education Data System defined these students as "noncompleters" (Baime & Baum, 2016). This idea is perfectly sustained in the study by (Bahr & Booth, 2012) in California community colleges, where the percentage of dropouts who took some courses and left ranged from 8 to 84% (Bahr & Booth, 2012).

The unstable student situation in community colleges has recently caused dire problems, especially in measuring institutional and student success. Students' unclear aim of having a job or continuing their education led to an equivocal situation since they can neither have a diploma nor be transferred to a four-year institution. As Scott-Clayton puts it in Baime & Baum (2016), the "shapeless river" of many community colleges with their many offerings can easily end up derailing students. In order to overcome these problems, community colleges worldwide should implement well-established programs, proper objectives, and appropriate academic counseling (Baime & Baum, 2016).

In Saudi Arabia, in response to the National Transformation Program and inspired by the ambitious goals of "Vision 2030", the deanship of Arar Community College, led by its honorable dean, decided to conduct a study on the efficiency and future of Community College in the region of Northern Border. It is worth noting that the ever-changing society, the growing economy, and the mega projects that will be introduced to the region have made Community College and its university counterparts face many challenges. These challenges resulted in serious repercussions, including low student enrolment, inability to respond to the labor market needs, and fierce competition from other faculties aiming at increasing their share of workforce development.

1.1. Research Problematic

The society and economy of the region where Arar Community College is located are in flux. This situation has deeply affected the quality of programs and diplomas offered by this college. Some students went even further to claim that the diploma obtained from Community College is no longer beneficial and inadequately demanded in the labor market. Consequently, the college's reputation and image have been seriously smeared.

1.2. Research Question

What are the challenges facing Arar Community College and what are the possible remedial solutions?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community colleges play a vital role in higher education globally, especially in the United States, where they serve as an accessible entry point for many students. According to Fabes (2007), nearly half (46%) of all undergraduate students in the U.S. are enrolled in community colleges, which are often referred to as "junior colleges." These institutions typically offer two-year diplomas at a lower cost than four-year universities, making them an attractive option for students seeking affordable education (Fabes, 2007). In addition to cost-effectiveness, community colleges provide flexible schedules, part-time programs, and various support services catering to students working or managing family responsibilities (Fabes, 2007). Community colleges' primary mission is to address their local communities' needs and adapt to demographic and economic changes.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (2007), community colleges offer various services, including workforce training, contract training for industries, academic remediation to prepare students for college-level studies, and developmental education for those lacking high school credentials or English proficiency. They also provide enrichment courses for adult learners. This diversity of offerings contributes to the popularity and proliferation of community colleges in the U.S. and internationally (1202 Community Colleges).

2.1. History and Challenges Facing Community Colleges

The history of community colleges in the United States dates to the establishment of the first community college in 1901, designed to provide local education and training. These institutions were intended to prepare a local workforce while serving as a stepping stone for students who wished to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Historically, community colleges catered to students perceived as needing further education beyond high school but were not academically inclined toward traditional university programs. Today, however, community colleges are often viewed as institutions for students from low-income backgrounds or those academically unprepared for graduation (Miles et al., 2018).

Miles et al. (2018) note that while community colleges provide remedial courses and tutoring in basic skills, establishing the high academic standards necessary for students to transition successfully into four-year colleges and achieve degree completion remains a significant challenge (p. 13).

This study addresses the key challenges faced by community colleges globally. In the Arab world, only a few countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Jordan, have implemented two-year higher education colleges modeled after the American community college system. Most other Arab nations have opted for specialized technical and polytechnic models influenced by educational systems from Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. Al-Tal et al. (1992) emphasize the critical role of community colleges in promoting higher education development in Jordan, identifying five primary challenges: articulation, comprehensive exit examinations, remediation, community service, and graduate unemployment. Many of these challenges mirror those faced by community colleges in North America (Al-Tal et al., 1993).

In the U.S., numerous community colleges have begun to drop the term "community" from their names, a shift observed in 21 states that allow two-year colleges to award bachelor's degrees. This change reflects an effort to enhance their market relevance and attract more students. For example, colleges like Seattle College and Henry Ford College have adopted names that emphasize their commitment to degree offerings. Tim Westerbeck, president of Eduvantis, states, "The changes are driven by a desire to remain more market-relevant in the eyes of prospective students and employers," emphasizing that this transformation aims to reshape the perception of community colleges as viable educational institutions rather than as last-resort options (Marklein, 2014).

A report by the Saudi Ministry of Labor and Saudi Social Development in late 2018 highlighted significant job opportunities in sales and marketing, indicating a pressing need for trained graduates. Abu Khashabah (2019) argues that the disconnect between business education and practical skills leads to difficulties for graduates entering the labor market. Community colleges can address this gap by providing hands-on training in sales skills, thus preparing students for careers that require strong communication abilities, negotiation skills, and customer service expertise (Abu Khashabah, 2019, p. 5).

2.2. Suggested Solutions for Community Colleges

2.2.1. Development Trends of Applied Studies Colleges in Saudi Arabia

The evolution of applied studies colleges represents a crucial aspect of the education sector in Saudi Arabia. The following points illustrate the long-standing tradition of these colleges and their growing significance:

- **Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University:** Established in 1975, the College of Applied Studies and Community Service continually enhances its curriculum to equip students to tackle environmental and community challenges.
- **King Saud University:** Founded in 1981, this college has played a pivotal role in meeting the local community's needs through its applied studies programs, leading to its eventual renaming as the College of Applied Studies and Community Service.
- **King Faisal University:** Established in 2000, this college evolved from its initial focus on continuous education to a comprehensive applied studies program, offering diplomas that cater to labor market requirements.
- **Jazan University:** Recently renamed the College of Applied Industrial Technology, this institution aims to align its programs with the demands of the industrial sector in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing the importance of technical training.

2.2.2. Global Trends in Professionally Oriented Higher Education

An increasing number of students are pursuing professionally oriented higher education across Europe. As of 2011, the average rate of students in European applied studies programs was 30%, with variations such as 10-15% in Austria and up to 70% in the Netherlands. This shift towards medium qualifications reflects a growing recognition of their importance in the labor market, with medium qualifications projected to surpass high demand by 2020 (Stanković et al., 2011, pp. 10-14).

2.2.3. Community Colleges and the Labor Market

The development of a skilled workforce is closely tied to economic progress. Applied studies colleges contribute to this by integrating practical teaching into their education systems. The Saudi Ministry of Education and accreditation bodies have implemented quality assurance measures across these colleges to ensure they meet labor market needs. Strategic planning aligning with Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision emphasizes the importance of these colleges in diversifying the economy and enhancing job opportunities for graduates (Adam, 2019, pp. 8-9).

2.2.4. Strategic Directions for Professional Education Development

Critical strategies for advancing applied education include improving the quality of applied programs, enhancing curriculum standards, and fostering continuous professional development for educators. Strengthening connections between education and the labor market is crucial to meet rising economic demands (Stanković et al., 2011, p. 20).

2.2.5. International and Local Cooperation

Collaboration between applied studies colleges and the labor market is essential for improving educational quality. Examples of international cooperation include student and faculty exchanges and joint projects with institutions in countries like Germany. Such partnerships foster practical experience and help align curricula with global standards (Stanković et al., 2011, p. 20).

2.2.6. Aims of Community Colleges

The primary objectives of community colleges include enhancing teaching quality, fostering collaboration with local economies, and implementing long-term educational strategies. Recent initiatives in the U.S. aim to increase the completion rates of students in developmental programs, with organizations like the American Association of Community Colleges and the Lumina Foundation

setting ambitious targets for degree attainment by 2020 (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2016, p. 1-3).

2.2.7. Basic Skills and Labor Market Requirements

The labor market has shifted focus from traditional hard skills to a greater emphasis on soft skills. Aba Khalil (2019) identifies essential skills students must develop, including personal traits, effective communication, emotional intelligence, and adaptability. Training in these areas will better equip students for success in an evolving job market (Aba Khalil, 2019).

2.2.8. Holistic Research on Applied Studies Colleges Worldwide

A comprehensive review of colleges offering applied diplomas globally revealed that the term “community college” is not commonly used; instead, similar designations such as “College of Applied Sciences” or “Institute of Technology” are prevalent. The investigation highlighted the role of applied studies colleges in bridging the gap between education and labor market needs by offering programs that produce well-trained graduates in high-demand fields.

2.3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Recent trends in educational institutions reflect a desire for change, often termed academic drift or mission creep (Clark, 1978; Morpew, 2009; Aldersley, 1995; Gonzales, 2012; Longanecker, 2008). Various drift forms occur due to significant policy shifts, beliefs, and academic objectives. These changes can impact critical operational areas, including student recruitment, faculty roles, curriculum development, external relations, and resource allocation. Community colleges face numerous challenges and opportunities adapting to the changing educational landscape. By aligning their offerings with labor market needs and enhancing the quality of education, these institutions can continue to serve as vital components of higher education systems.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Setting

This research was carried out at Arar Community College. The latter was established during the academic year 1423/1424 H. It started with the Department of Computer Science, which offered a two-year diploma program. Initially, it was only for females. Then, the college was affiliated with the Ministry of Education. Later, by the Royal Decree numbered (3030 / mb) dated 23/3/1428 H, the College was brought under the direct control of the Ministry of Higher Education and continued to remain so until the colleges of the Northern Border Region were affiliated to King Abdul Aziz University. Those colleges were known as the Northern Border College Consortium. After establishing Northern Border University through a Royal Decree, the region's community colleges were affiliated with the newly established university. In the years 1437-1438 H, the Males' Section of the college was established. At the beginning of the academic year 1435/1436 H, under the supervision of the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, the college programs were unified, and the study plans were developed in coordination with the Community Colleges in Rafha and Turaif. A student must complete 74 credit units to obtain a diploma in the abovementioned programs. The students who obtain this diploma can pursue bachelor's degrees in different disciplines.

2.2. Participants

64 participants, 43 students, and 21 faculty members have contributed to this study. To be more specific, 33 students responded to a questionnaire, among them 27 females and 6 males (see Table 1). However, 10 other students were randomly selected to participate in a face-to-face interview. It should be highlighted that these students were mostly aged between 17 and 22. On the other hand, 21 faculty members participated by responding to a questionnaire (see Table 2).

Table 1. Students Participants

Gender	-Males: 16
	-Females: 27
Age groups	-17 - 22: 20
	-23 - 25: 11
	-More than 25: 2
Academic level	-Preparatory Year: 5
	-Computer Science: 12
	-Accounting: 16

Table 2. Faculty Members Participants

Years of teaching experience	Less than 2 years: 10
	2 to 5 years: 4
	More than 5 years: 7
Work experience at other colleges in KSA	Yes: 9
	No: 12

2.3. Method of Data Collection

The data used in this study is collected from both students and teachers. Two main data collection tools are used. First, a questionnaire was distributed to male and female students at Arar Community College. The questionnaire was designed using *Google Forms* and included fifteen questions. The questionnaire link was sent to students via *WhatsApp*. Second, semi-structured interviews with ten randomly selected students have been conducted. These semi-structured interviews lasted around five minutes and were audio recorded and later transcribed. Another questionnaire was given to faculty members in Arar Community College. Questionnaires sent to faculty were important, mainly to capitalize on their experience and elicit their impression and attitude toward Community Colleges' programs and diplomas. Student questionnaires (number of respondents 33) Faculty (21 respondents) Student interview (number of respondents 10) University Structure Questionnaires. Questionnaire on reconsideration of college structure. Addressed to the Dean 14 Question/18 Respondent Questionnaire on developing new programs. Directed to society and university graduates 20 questions/448 respondents Questionnaire for faculty members Questions/94 Respondents.

2.4. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The striving framework of O'Meara (2007) is used to analyze the collected data. The indicators of striving, especially those related to points (c) curriculum and programs and (d) external relations and shaping of institutional identity, guided the data analysis. Moreover, data from students' and teachers' questionnaires were deductively and inductively coded.

Various strategies were employed to ensure trustworthiness, such as triangulation (Tracy, 2010), critical friend (Gordon, 2006), and audit trail (Glesne, 2016). Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to validate the study's questions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

At this stage, results from quantitative analysis will be presented. The results obtained from the students' questionnaire will be listed first, followed by the Faculty Members' questionnaire results. Our data analysis was guided by the study question, "What are the challenges facing Arar Community College, and what are the possible solutions?"

4.1. Results from the Students' questionnaire

4.1.1. Challenges facing Arar Community College

Thirty-three students responded to the questionnaire, and most of them (61%) were between 17 and 22 years old (see Figure 1). Data from the questionnaire, specifically from question 5, show that 45% of the respondents claimed that Arar Community College is not their first choice. Moreover, when asked about the quality and usefulness of the diplomas offered by Community Colleges, 21% of the students noted that these diplomas are of low quality. However, only 45% of the respondents asserted that the diplomas obtained from Community College could help graduates get jobs.

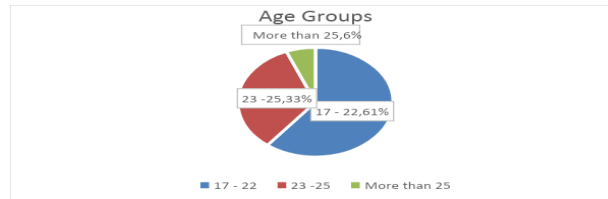


Figure 1. Students' Age Groups

In question 6 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked how much Arar Community College has contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in several areas, such as general knowledge, work-related knowledge and skills, computer skills, writing and speaking skills, and critical thinking. Most of the students' answers (76%) were positive. Similar to question 6, students were asked in question 7 to specify whether or not Community College provides exceptional services in favor of its students. 85% of the respondents asserted that the college emphasizes the importance of spending significant time studying and doing academic work. 88% also believe that Community College always provides the support students need to help them succeed academically. However, when asked about Community College's support to help students thrive socially, only 56% indicated the affordance of such service. Question 8 of the students' questionnaire is intended to glean data about the quality of relationships students have with different people at the college. Data show that 77% of the students maintain a friendly and supportive relationship with other students and faculty members. However, only 48% of the respondents asserted they have a flexible and helpful relationship with the administrative personnel. Students were also asked to give their views about the quality of the academic advising at Arar Community College. Results indicated that 91% of the students are very satisfied with the quality of the academic advising provided at the college. These findings demonstrate that Arar Community College's deanship and faculty members are both working very hard to provide high-quality teaching and establish a healthy and positive learning environment that empowers students and helps them to succeed and realize their dreams.

The results from the analysis of students' preferences regarding Arar Community College show that **55%** of students chose the college as their preferred institution, while **45%** indicated it was not their first choice (see figure 2). This nearly even split suggests that while a slight majority of students favor the college, a significant proportion did not initially prefer it, potentially due to factors such as program offerings, reputation, or alternative educational opportunities. These findings point to the need for the college to address any concerns or perceptions that may influence students' decisions and work towards enhancing its appeal to prospective students.

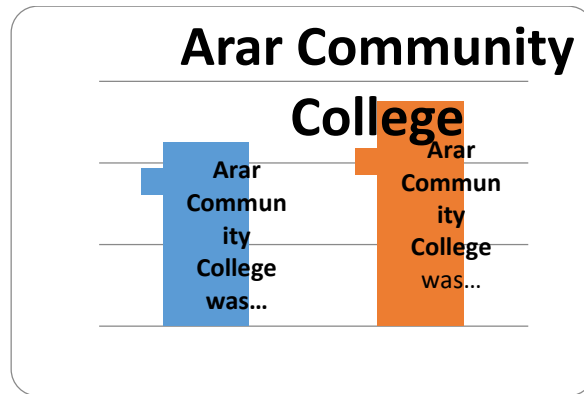


Figure 2. The inferior view of community colleges

The graph indicates that 55% of respondents believe that Arar Community College's programs are inappropriate for employment, while 45% find them appropriate (see Figure 3). This majority perception of the programs being inadequate for the job market highlights a critical challenge for the college. It suggests that many students and possibly graduates do not feel sufficiently equipped with the skills or qualifications needed to secure employment after completing their programs. This mismatch between education and employment readiness may stem from a lack of alignment between the college's curriculum and the demands of the labor market, particularly in the context of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasizes the need for specialized skills in emerging sectors like technology, tourism, and logistics. The results call for a strategic overhaul of the college's academic offerings to ensure they are better tailored to market needs, incorporating more vocational and technology-focused training, internships, and partnerships with industries. Additionally, the college must improve its career services and support to enhance students' employability, ensuring graduates can compete effectively in an increasingly competitive labor market. Addressing these concerns would not only enhance students' prospects but also improve the institution's reputation and long-term sustainability.

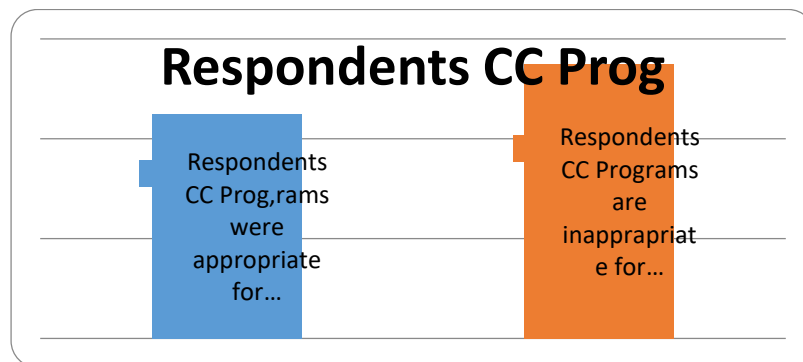


Figure 3. Incompatibility between college programs, diplomas, and growing labor market needs.

4.2. Results from the Faculty Members' Questionnaire.

The striving framework of O'Meara (2007) was adopted to guide our analysis of the data gathered from the Faculty members' questionnaire. Responses were obtained from 21 faculty members working at Arar Community College. 54% of the respondents have more than 3 years of teaching experience and taught at other colleges in Saudi Arabia. Results indicated that 85.7% of faculty members perceived that the main differences between the other colleges and the community college

mainly lie in the students' level. However, 42.9% of the respondents considered that there are big differences in terms of resources and facilities. In terms of differences in reputation, 8 faculty members out of 21 affirmed that the community college's reputation has been harmed by the level of its students' level. Empirical results from the Faculty Members' questionnaire revealed that 47% of respondents supported a positive perception and impressions about Arar Community College before starting work. On the other hand, only 9.5% held a negative perception before joining the college. However, these positive impressions will not thrive unless adequately promoted and rewarded by the college deanship. It is worth noting that 57% of the respondents do not still have the same perceptions now, and 14.3 % are likely to change their positive ideas about the college.

Particular importance attaches to the programs and diplomas offered by Arar Community College. Data showed that 52% of respondents consider the current programs and diplomas 'good'; however, 43% believe they are 'average.' This high percentage of teachers believe that the programs and diplomas offered by Arar Community College could be explained by the tendency towards introducing new programs, diplomas, and degrees that can respond to the needs of the Saudi labor market. Following the previous findings, half of the respondents do not think or are not sure that these programs and diplomas serve the needs of the local community and the labor market ('No' 14.3%, 'Maybe' 33.3%, 'Yes' 52%) (see Figure 1). Another major problem requiring considerable attention is the students' choice to join the community college. Findings revealed that 81% of teachers believe students must enroll at Community College. Most of these students obtained low scores in high school and could not subscribe to other colleges offering bachelor's or engineering degrees. Data from the Academic Staff questionnaire illustrate this point better, where only 9.5% of them think that the academic level of community college students is good. The rest consider their students 'average' (66.7%) and 'bad' (23%). These results are further supported by the findings stating that 19% of the respondents (plus 42.9% 'not sure') do not think that the graduates of Arar Community College can meet the demands of the labor market at the local and national levels.

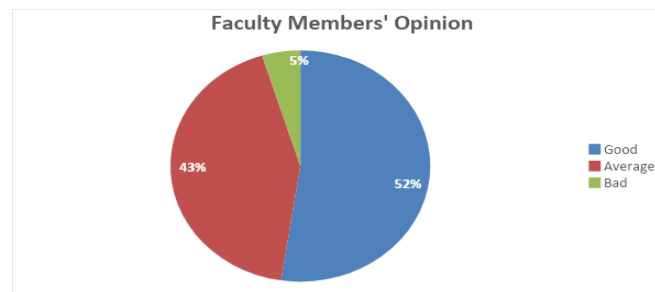


Figure 4. Faculty Members' Opinions about the College's Programs and Diplomas

At this level, it is no accident that Arar Community College teachers, in the open-ended question, suggested establishing new programs that keep pace with the labor market, such as tourism, hospitality, and preschool education, as well as areas related to technology with a particular focus on Vision 2030. The college should convert its focus from paper-based tests and learning-by-heart methods to actual application and practical courses. Over and above that, some argue that the computer department should change its programs because it is above the level of students' understanding, primarily when taught through the English language medium. This makes the students leave this section because of the need for more proficiency. Other teachers propose further studies to investigate labor market needs, which can help to implement more suitable programs. One distinguishable finding was gleaned from a teacher who stated that the college stakeholders are required "to communicate with the other community colleges in the Kingdom and learn about where we are." Others suggested diversifying programs, like other community colleges, and introducing new innovative programs that consider the students' different levels in the college and meet the needs of the labor market. Following the previous data about the bad reputation that community

college has acquired, some of the community college’s teachers proposed to change the name of the college.

The low level of perceived program quality at Arar Community College, as suggested by a significant portion of respondents, points to key issues related to both curriculum content and instructional quality. A majority of 55% (Figure 3) view the college’s programs as inappropriate for employment, reflecting dissatisfaction with the current offerings and their relevance to the labor market. This perception could stem from several factors, including outdated curricula, lack of practical or hands-on training, insufficient alignment with industry needs, and inadequate career services. As shown in figure 5, 75% view the college’s programs as Low-quality programs, which may also hinder student motivation, contributing to poor academic outcomes and a lower likelihood of students securing employment post-graduation. In the context of Saudi Vision 2030, where emphasis is placed on diversifying the economy and enhancing human capital through specialized training, this gap in program quality is particularly concerning. To address these issues, the college must prioritize program updates that reflect current industry trends, integrate more vocational and technological training, and ensure that faculty are equipped to deliver high-quality education. Partnerships with local businesses and industries would also enhance the practical aspects of the programs, ensuring that students are better prepared to meet employment demands upon graduation.

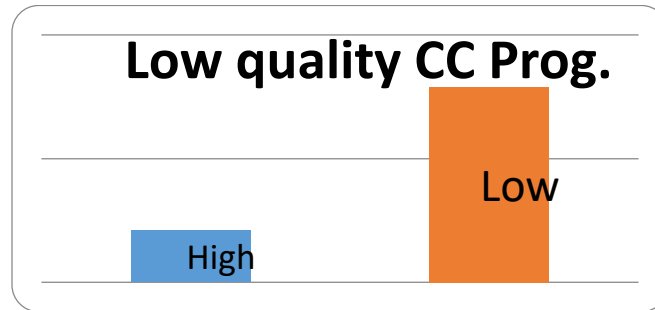


Figure 5. Low level of programs

As depicted in Figure 6, several faculty members pointed out that the students’ negative perception of community colleges stems from their generally low educational level. According to the data, 66% of the students were categorized as having an acceptable academic level, while 34% were deemed to have a very low educational level. This disparity suggests that the overall quality of student intake plays a significant role in shaping their attitudes toward community colleges. The prevalence of students with lower academic achievement likely contributes to the stigma attached to these institutions, as they are perceived to attract those who were unable to succeed in more competitive academic environments. Consequently, this creates a cycle where low student performance reinforces the inferior view of community colleges, leading to a diminished reputation and reduced value in the eyes of both the students and the wider public.

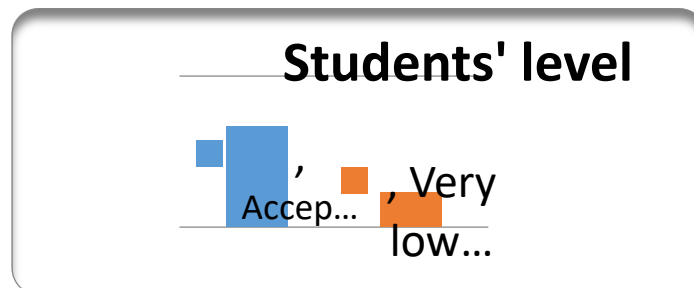


Figure 6. The growing number of students with low levels.

Arar Community College's diplomas and graduates' ability to meet market requirements were surveyed by faculty members. Most respondents (52.4%) agreed that the diplomas meet market needs, while 14.3% disagreed. However, 33.3% needed clarification about the effectiveness of the diplomas. The remaining 38% agreed that the graduates meet local and international market requirements. However, 19% disagreed, suggesting that graduates need to prepare for these demands. A significant portion (43%) needed clarification, indicating uncertainty about the graduates' market readiness. Most faculty members believe that the diplomas are aligned with market needs, but only 38% believe graduates meet local and international market requirements. A smaller percentage (14.3% and 19%) felt that the diplomas and graduate outcomes needed to align with market needs. This suggests that while there is some confidence in the Community College's programs, there is also significant uncertainty and room for improvement see Figure 7.

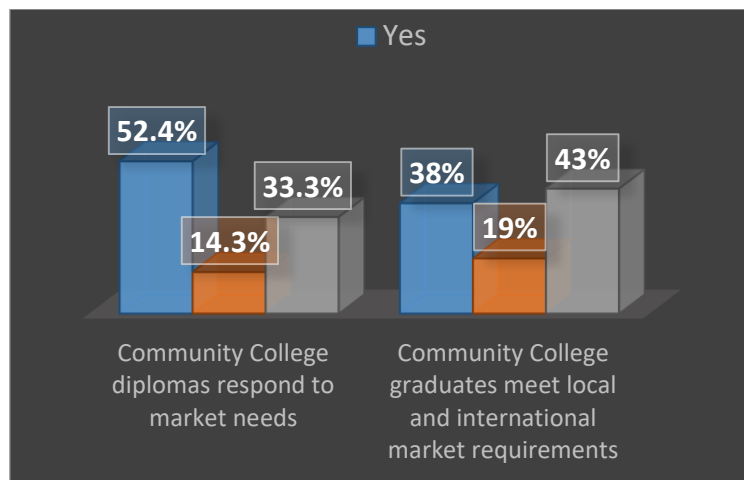


Figure 7. Questionnaire for faculty members of Arar Community College

4.3. Results from the interviews

Interviews with students yielded essential data to support the data collected from the questionnaires. An interviewee said, "Community college was my first choice because I wanted to specialize in computer sciences." An interview with graduate students revealed they were obliged to attend community College because they were denied at the Preparatory Year. They said, "We were not good at English, which was a mandatory subject to succeed." Another graduate student added, "Community College diplomas are not very accepted in the labor market compared to other Bachelor degrees obtained from other colleges." One student also talked about the bad reputation of the college and remarked that "Community College students are ridiculed and underestimated even by the university administration officials." An interviewee said, "Arar Community College staff are nice and friendly. Many activities hold us back from staying at the college." He added that:

"I am learning and improving academically. Community college is an opportunity for me to secure a future job. Community College has improved this year. I was downgraded from the Education College because of sickness, so I would prefer to go back because many choices of bachelor's degrees enable me to have a future job."

4.4. Interpretation

The research highlights significant challenges facing Arar Community College, starting with its negative reputation. A substantial 45% of respondents indicated that the community college was not their first choice, reflecting a broader issue of student dissatisfaction. This unfavorable perception can be linked to a mismatch between the college's programs and the needs of the growing labor market. Only 45% of respondents believe that the diplomas obtained from Arar Community College

adequately prepare graduates for employment, indicating a disconnect between the educational offerings and market demands. Additionally, the perceived low quality of the programs further compounds this issue, with 21% of students directly criticizing the diplomas as substandard.

The reputation of the college is also negatively impacted by the academic profile of its students, with 8 out of 21 faculty members asserting that the students' low academic performance has contributed to the college's poor image. Moreover, 667% of faculty members rate their students as merely "average," while 34% categorize them as "bad." This reinforces the idea that the college is struggling to meet the educational needs of its students, further tarnishing its standing in the academic community and with potential employers. These factors combined reflect significant challenges in the institution's ability to maintain a competitive and relevant position within the higher education landscape.

5. Recommendations

The research findings reveal challenges Arar Community College faces, including its reputation and programs. To meet socio-economic changes and the 2030 vision of the kingdom, the college needs to restructure its programs and diplomas. The paper proposes a radical change in the college's name to "The College of Applied Studies," an urgent update to its academic programs, and enrolment incentives to instill a sense of belonging and a favorable attitude towards its programs. Future studies should focus on larger-scale research and interview more participants to understand the challenges and future of community colleges in Saudi Arabia. Future research should also examine how community colleges have fulfilled their objectives and provided more effective and long-term solutions. The project recommendations include changing the college's name to "College of Applied Studies," changing the names of its sections and adding eight new programs.

6. CONCLUSION

Arar Community College faces many challenges that impede its mission to provide quality education and foster student success. The research highlights critical concerns regarding the college's reputation, the quality of its academic programs, and the preparedness of its graduates for the labor market. The findings underscore the need for strategic reforms that align educational offerings with current market demands and elevate the institution's standing within the broader educational landscape. By renaming the college to "College of Applied Studies" and diversifying its program offerings, the institution can better cater to the evolving needs of students and employers alike. Furthermore, implementing enrollment incentives will help attract a more motivated student body, fostering a culture of academic excellence and community engagement. Future research should expand on these findings to explore broader implications for community colleges across Saudi Arabia, aiming to identify best practices that can lead to meaningful reforms in response to the Kingdom's socio-economic changes. Addressing these challenges is not merely a matter of institutional growth but a necessary step towards fulfilling the aspirations of students and contributing positively to the local and national labor market.

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