

# **Using Cloud Computing to Promote Case Studies in the MENA Region: A Conceptual Framework**

## **Final Report**

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## Executive Summary

Case studies are gaining momentum in the higher education sector and are considered a very effective and innovative pedagogical tool. Currently, they are heavily used in international institutions, which have the readiness to adopt such tools due to their financial resources and faculty development programs. Nevertheless, in the MENA region, the practice is still lagging behind due to various challenges.

Literature has shown that case studies have been adopted in the higher education sector since the 1970's as a way to provide students the practical side of conducting business in parallel with the traditional lectures and theoretical concepts. It has been proven as an effecting way of bridging theory with practice in the classroom. Benefits for students include developing and enhancing decision-making and analytical skills. Traditionally, faculty members write cases with their respective teaching notes. However, students are now considered a contributor to the case writing process. In addition, cases are published in the form of casebooks to be later used in the classroom by other professors. Case usage in classrooms has become a predominant practice in top business schools. The pioneers are considered to be Harvard Business School and Ivey Business School. In fact, they are the catalyst for fostering the case culture in business schools. On another note, technological innovations are now considered an essential component in higher education. In fact, cases are now delivered through videos, presentations, simulations, etc... This shift is supported by various cases centers around the world, namely Harvard & Darden publishing in USA, Ivey Publishing in Canada, and KCC in the MENA region.

Recent efforts are being made in the MENA region to promote research as a main educational pillar. That includes building the case culture and creating casebooks, which could be shared across different universities. However, the main challenge is the lack of readiness in public and less-privileged universities in MENA to shift their pedagogical tools to case usage. Additionally, the number of cases pertaining to the MENA region and local business dilemmas remains very limited, demonstrating that there is a gap in the MENA region's higher education sector, which justifies the purpose of this research.

Another dimension is worth noting, which is the rise of cloud computing technologies in higher education. It has been argued that the use of cloud technologies in the storage and delivery of data, as well as in e-learning activities, is increasing. Indeed, online platforms are already being made available online for the sharing of teaching resources and dissemination of knowledge. Benefits include openness of information across geographical borders, cost saving and the internationalization of higher education on a global level. From this, we can draw the main objective of this research, which is to investigate the impact of the cloud computing technologies on promoting the development and usage of case studies in the MENA region.

The proposed conceptual framework encompasses the three dimensions of case development, publishing and usage, as well as the important determinant factor of community building and consolidation. The proposed model has been initially developed based on studies from the literature, and then it was validated and extended based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with different stakeholders, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members, and senior administrators from three leading business schools from three MENA countries; namely Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. The three business schools were chosen based on their readiness to adopt case usage as an innovative pedagogical tool in their curricula. All interviews and focus groups were conducted from December 2014 to February

2015, and a total of forty (40) respondents were involved. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively using a directed deductive content analysis approach.

Research findings validated the proposed model and offered specific subcategories for each model component. The online component has been added to the sub-variables generated, as the participants agreed on the importance of having an online platform in the proposed model. Data gathered from all stakeholders has shown that case development is considered one of the main pillars in the proposed business model. It is important to write business cases that fit with the local MENA culture in order for students to relate to the current business environment and be familiar with the challenges faced by the emergent economies. On another note, research has shown that there is a growing gap in the number of cases published on the MENA region. Therefore, case publication is also a dimension that has not yet achieved its full potential. Business schools in the MENA region are already starting to encourage their faculty members to build a portfolio of published cases, by incorporating cases as a component in their academic assessment. Regarding case usage and solving, all stakeholders agree that case usage in classrooms definitely adds value and fosters students' soft-skills. Integrating practice with theory is essential to provide high quality business education in the region. One of the main challenges is for professors to adopt a case-based learning approach; therefore case usage workshops for faculty are desired. As well, case solving workshops are demanded for students as they expressed their need to get more thorough feedback and guidance to be able to participate in case solving competitions, which help in broadening students' mindset. Additionally, research findings validated the idea of an online community building process. The creation of a platform that disseminates cases on the MENA region, promotes the usage of cases in higher education, and contributes to business knowledge building would definitely generate a stream of information and facilitate collaborative and joint work across different universities on a virtual level.

In addition to proposing a more comprehensive framework to promote case studies writing and usage in the MENA region, the research results provide an assessment of the current state for the different model components. Some are currently absent and need to be introduced on the local level in order for universities in the MENA region to elevate the quality of business education. Others need substantial improvement in the sense that universities need to invest heavily from a financial and training perspective to bridge the existing lag in the case usage practice.

As well, a thorough discussion of the areas where cloud computing technologies could play a key strategic role is presented. The benefits of cloud computing technology in the creation of an online platform include the promotion of both experiential and blended learning, the branding of MENA business schools by placing them on the international map, the creation of a solid business community based on joint teaching and research, the development of a consortium of different stakeholders, and the increase of local cases' marketability. With the adequate blended-learning tools, the process of collaborative work will be achieved through blogs, online communities, video and screen sharing, etc...

The findings of the study provided evidence-based recommendations for university administrators and policy makers to promote the usage of case studies methodology in higher education in the MENA region.

## Introduction

Case studies are gaining more and more ground worldwide as one of the most effective teaching tools in higher education. However, in spite of this success, the number of universities and higher education institutions using intensively cases as a learning tool, in the MENA region, remains limited (Gillespie & Riddle, 2005). The main objective of this research is to investigate the impact of the cloud computing technologies on promoting case studies writing and usage in the MENA region.

It is argued that technological innovation is an essential academic practice for enhancing and developing higher education services (Wiley, 2006). Generally, innovation in higher education comprises the new pedagogical tools and application methods that enhance the learning experience for students and the educational system in general (Mourad, 2010). In addition, investigations of students' adoption of and global access to such pedagogical tools through the new online facilities, have gained recognition by several stakeholders (Harvey & Slaughter, 2007; Vallance, 2007; Wiley, 2006). Hence, adoption of technological innovations in the higher education sector becomes essential to examine and analyze.

This research seeks to investigate the issues relating to the adoption of the cloud computing technology within the higher education sector in the MENA region. The focus is to capitalize on the cloud technology to develop a platform that fulfills the gap between the limited resources available for the educational sector and the urgent need to introduce new teaching tools in higher education in MENA. The proposed platform will focus on the practical aspects of education in the form of case writing and usage. More specifically, our main objective is to assess through an empirical research how could the cloud technology help in promoting case usage and writing as an effective practical learning tool in the MENA region. Through an empirical investigation of the topic in three MENA countries, namely, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, we propose a new interactive model that capitalizes on the benefits of the cloud computing technology to boost case studies usage and writing in MENA.

The report will start with a review of the existent literature to generate the conceptual framework of the study and specify the research questions. Then the methodology used to collect and analyze the data is presented in the second section. A third section will follow with the main findings of the research and the revisited model for the online platform. Finally the report ends with discussion, based on the research results, about the best practices and evidence-based recommendations to help promoting case writing and usage as tool to enhance the quality of higher education services in the MENA region

# I Literature Review

## 1 Case Studies as a Learning Tool in Higher Education

### 1.1 *The rise of case studies*

In the business discipline, a case study is a real-life or imagined business situation, which requires students to use their analytical skills and come up with solutions related to the proposed problem. Data is collected using interviews with leading practitioners and top-level managers. A case is typically a detailed account of businessmen's activities, which is often accompanied with appendices (financial statements, company background and profile, managers' biographies...) Cases are used in graduate-level business courses at top academic institutions, instead of regular textbooks, to give real life insights about the practical side of business. In academia, they are often written by business faculty members, while having teaching objectives in mind.

The notion of teaching cases emerged in the 1970's, during the presidential address to the American Educational Research Association. In fact, Shulman introduced the idea of "case knowledge" to define the "knowledge of specific, well documented, and richly described events"(Shulman, 1986). Researchers have suggested that the goal of using teaching cases in class is for professors to incorporate practical experiences and situations with the already existing theoretical principles (Calderhead, 1987; Clark & Yinger, 1977; Sykes & Bird, 1992; Merseth, 1996). Doyle argued that cases are used to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Doyle 1990). This characterizes a shift in higher education that has proven to be efficient in classroom settings (Yadav et al., 2007).

The process of case writing has several advantages for academics. Indeed, research has shown that cases are used as exemplars to develop or built new theoretical concepts, as ways to practice decision-making and problem-solving, as well as opportunities for the writer to stimulate his personal reflection (Merseth, 1996) and teachers to increase their professional knowledge (Ingvarson & Fineberg, 1992). Nowadays, case writing is practiced in various countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Japan, and they are developed not only by academics and practitioners, but also by college students. Case writing is therefore made through "project teams" or workshops constituted of both students and professors reflecting on practical business situations (Gillespie & Riddle, 2005). This is increasingly practiced in the United States, and it has been argued that editors, researchers, academics and professionals collaborate together and "maintain close contact with their international colleagues" (Merseth, 1996) in the creation of a database.

Harvard Business School is considered the pioneer of business case usage in graduate school. Their cases are developed according to the needs of faculty members; sometimes organizations are the ones that choose the business dilemmas to be later published. Research assistants, as well as faculty members, do the process of writing, and occasionally students are involved ("Case Studies for Harvard Business School", 2015). As well, Ivey Business School is another catalyst for business cases and has been fostering the usage of cases in teaching pedagogy since 1923. In fact, Ivey publishing is considered one of the major case producers and publishers on the international level. According to Ivey publishing official website, the center currently has more than 8000 case-related products and all cases come with teaching notes; case studies are written by academics and experienced faculty members are used to "test

the understanding of theory, to connect theory with application, to develop theoretical insight and to enable students to learn by doing” (“Teaching & Authoring Tools”, 2015).

## 1.2 Usage of case studies as teaching methods

Teaching cases were first introduced around 1870, at the Harvard Law School, with faculty members emphasizing the importance of analysis and discussions of individual cases by students (Shulman, 1992). Subsequently, in later years, cases emerged in the fields of law, business, engineering and medicine and were widely used by prominent scholars and teaching staff (Herreid, Schiller, Herreid, & Wright, 2014). The most effective use of cases is to tackle it from a practical point of view for which pure theoretical concepts are not effective (Cornuel, 2007), highlighting the skills of analysis, decision-making and problem solving (Merseeth, 1991; Silverman et al., 1992; Merseeth, 1996; Herreid & Schiller, 2013). In fact, scholars mainly use cases to apply already existing theoretical concepts (Doyle, 1990; Shulman, 1986), stimulate students’ personal reflection in order for them to develop self-analysis skills (Herreid & Schiller, 2013), as well as encourage debate between different academic communities (Hansen, 1987). Research has shown that cases are mainly used in higher education pedagogy as a tool to develop students’ critical thinking, problem-solving and strategic thinking (Yadav et al., 2007). It has been argued that the use of cases convey moral and ethical principles and provide students guidelines of business behaviors considered worthy and appropriate to the situation studied (Pandey & Abu Faiz, 2013). Typically, in a class setting, case participants are handed the case before the class starts for initial individual reading and study, reviewing important data provided and answering study questions provided by the instructor. Sometimes, cases are discussed in groups of four or five, allowing students to share their insights and opinions about the concepts discussed (Christensen, 1981; Sykes, 1989; Wasserman, 1994).

To capitalize on the importance of cases as an innovative and efficient method of teaching, traditional casebooks were organized in such a way that “case reports, case studies, teaching cases are sequenced and glossed for particular educational purposes” (Shulman, 1992). In addition to cases, casebooks also include discussion or study questions (Kowalski et al., 1990; Silverman et al., 1992; Merseeth, 1996). The organization of cases could be done according to the topics tackled, the types of students and the challenges presented, as well as the universities’ educational programs and curricula. Researchers have mentioned that teachers are resorting to literature detailing the use of case in higher education in order for them to maximize cases’ benefits in the classroom (Merseeth, 1996).

Literature shows that technological innovations are incorporated in the use and delivery of cases in the classroom through videos, simulation games, as well as digital files and multimedia, which are highly valued by students (Watson & Pecchioni, 2011; Greene & Crespi, 2012; Sherer & Shea, 2011; Lean et al., 2006; Li, Greenberg, & Nicholls, 2007). The databases of case materials and methodologies are sustained through active faculty members who foster the pedagogical aspect of teaching cases in higher education and sometimes adapt them to specific cultural context (Hayes, 2014). Indeed, numerous centers for business case development have been established in the USA, such as the Harvard Business School Publishing and Darden Business Publishing, as well as Ivey Publishing in Canada. In the MENA region, the Khazindar Business Research & Case Center (KCC) of the American University in Cairo (Egypt) remains the most active case center.

Nowadays, top universities in the MENA region rest on three pillars, namely teaching, research and community service. The MENA region is beginning to witness a shift in education towards research centers that capitalize on scholars' research (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2006). This characterizes the long-term objective of the project, which is spreading the use of case studies as an innovative pedagogical tool, in higher education, across the MENA region. Information technology helps in transferring knowledge from joint research between universities to the publication of journals, free courses, and curricula (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009; Riebe, 2012). It is worth noting that while case studies are offered at some leading universities in the region, almost none is used at public and less-privileged universities, who primarily rely on obsolete learning methods, have less faculty development, limited faculty time and financial resources to spread the know-how. The number of high quality business cases on the regional level is very limited in comparison to the international ones (Gillespie & Riddle, 2005). This shows that there is a gap in the MENA region higher education sector, justifying the purpose of this research.

## **2 The Impact of Cloud Technologies on Higher Education**

### *2.1 Cloud computing technologies, an emerging trend in businesses*

Cloud computing corresponds to a "model for enabling ubiquitous, convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., networks, servers, storage, applications, and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction" (Mell & Grance, 2011). Cloud technologies encompass software (applications running on a cloud infrastructure), platforms (services for information uploading and sharing) and hardware (the infrastructure to support such technology) (Low, Chen & Yu, 2011; Goscinski & Brock, 2010). These platforms can be open to the general public, private or restricted to a specific group of users and networks (Mell & Grance, 2011). Nowadays, business firms massively use cloud technology to share resources and information between business employees and trading partners; which helps improve operating efficiency (Low, Chen & Yu, 2011). Research shows that cloud computing would make more sense to SME's and recent startups, and constitutes a viable opportunity to businesses in the developing countries (Marston, Li, Bandyopadhyay, Zhang & Ghalsasi, 2010).

### *2.2 Application of cloud computing technologies in Higher Education*

These past decades, higher education has witnessed a rise in research universities worldwide. Research has shown that the demand for education has risen and changes in funding, infrastructure and teaching jobs are required. The major factors affecting this phenomenon are the rise of globalization, internationalization and student mobility, which contribute to the increase in the number of educational programs and institutions and the need for top universities with strong research centers and highly qualified academics (Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007; Heyneman 1997).

Consequently, cloud computing technologies are starting to emerge in the area of higher education. They are incorporated in e-learning activities, whereby a platform is created for the sharing of teaching resources across the Internet to turn the dissemination of knowledge into a more global, flexible, open, and collaborative process (Masud & Huang, 2012; Ercan, 2010). Nonetheless, cloud



computing technology has its benefits, as well as its drawbacks. In fact, its main benefits encompass the access to applications from any computer, support for teaching and learning, and increase openness of students to new information and technologies; whereas its limitations include lack of support of all applications by the technology, security and data protection issues, as well as difficulties in the implementation and readiness of adoption of such technology by a higher education institution (Mircea&Andreescu, 2011). Accordingly, in the case of higher education, universities should access the costs versus the benefits of adopting such technology, and align them with their educational strategies before adopting the technology.

Universities are starting to shift their educational activities to the cloud computing technology; for instance, the University of California at Berkeley uses the cloud technology for the delivery of its courses online; others are starting to adopt it to cut down economic costs. In the UK, universities such as the University of Aberdeen & the University of Westminster have already adopted Google applications. Recently, cloud computing technology has started to make its appearance in universities in Africa to compensate for the underdeveloped IT infrastructure (Sultan, 2010). Recent research has shown that nowadays, the phenomenon of “consumerization”, which is discovering and adopting recent technologies in our personal lives, has started to boom at a tremendous rate (Ercan, 2010); the educational system should therefore capitalize on this phenomenon and promote this lifestyle to current students and faculty members to enrich their educational experiences via information and knowledge sharing (Hawawini, 2005).

To further illustrate this point, faculty members at top-research universities have started to promote the use of cloud computing technology in the establishment of joint material sharing and platforms. In fact, Vest, president emeritus at MIT, has asserted the concept of a “meta-university”, where a framework of open access and sharing of material on a local and global level is in place, enabling the dissemination of knowledge and the establishment of exchange programs and collaborations among different institutions. This process is facilitated by the public access of Internet and is expected to extend far beyond residential campuses (Wheeler & Waggener, 2009).

## II Research Methodology

### 1 Conceptual Framework & Research Questions

From the literature review stated above, it can be attested that there are new and growing innovative learning methods and tools worldwide. For the purpose of this research, the focus of our framework will be on case studies in terms of writing, publication and usage as the proposed practical learning tool. This is to fulfill the gap in the regional higher education market in the MENA region, as cases are extremely important practical teaching methods that give students the chance to get exposed to the practical side of conducting business in the region.

The diagram (*Figure 1*) and table (*Table 1*) below present the conceptual framework, obtained from the literature. The case development dimension indicates the case writing process, from the collection of data to the compiling of a written document with teaching notes. The case publication dimension

corresponds to the process of assembling case studies in a database. Case usage and solving is the process of case usage in class or online through innovative and technological pedagogical tools. Online community building is achieved by having various stakeholders included; namely administrators, faculty members and students.

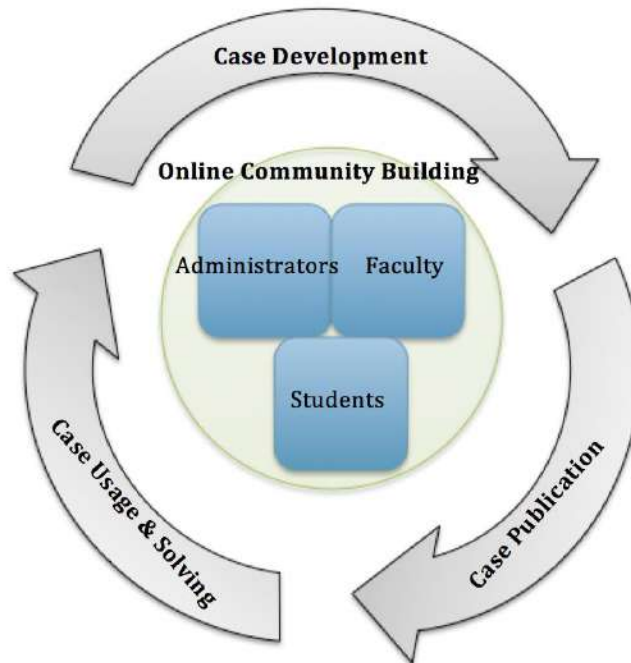


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Dimensions	Literature Support
<b>Case Development</b>	Shulman, 1986; Calderhead, 1987; Clark & Yinger, 1977; Shulman, 1992; Doyle, 1990; Sykes & Bird, 1992; Ingvarson and Fineberg, 1992; Merseth, 1996; Yadav et al., 2007; Gillespie & Riddle, 2005
<b>Case Publication</b>	Kowalski et al., 1990; Silverman et al., 1992; Shulman, 1992; Hayes, 2014
<b>Case Usage and Solving</b>	Herreid, Schiller, Herreid, & Wright, 2014; Merseth, 1991; Silverman et al., 1992; Doyle, 1990; Shulman, 1986; Hansen, 1987; Christensen, 1981; Sykes, 1989; Wasserman, 1994; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Shulman, 1992; Herreid & Schiller, 2013; Pandey & Abu Faiz, 2013; Yadav et al., 2007; Herreid, Schiller, Herreid, & Wright, 2014; Lean et al., 2006; Cornuel, 2007; Li, Greenberg, & Nicholls, 2007
<b>Online Community Building</b>	Sykes and Bird 1992; Windschitl, 1998, Jack A. Cummings, Curtis J. Bonk, & F. Robert Jacobs, 2002, Stigler & Hiebert, 1998, Wiske, Sick, & Wirsig, 2001, Shulman, 1992; Watson & Pecchioni, 2011; Sherer & Shea, 2011; Greene & Crespi, 2012

Table 1: Conceptual Framework Dimensions

The conceptual framework of this research builds on the cloud technology to help in bridging these gaps and promote the writing, publishing and usage of case studies in the regional higher education sector. The research scope involves the possibility of developing a modified framework that would encompass online training, database, publications, competitions and discussion platforms related to case writing and usage.

Based on this conceptual framework, the research questions could be stated as follows:

- Q1. What variables compose each dimension of the model and what's their current state in MENA?
- Q2. How could cloud computing technologies promote the implementation of this model in MENA?

This research is based primarily on qualitative data obtained from in-depth semi structured interviews and focus groups with several key stakeholders in top higher education institutions, in the MENA region. The stakeholders involve students, faculty and senior administrators who are familiar with the use of case studies as a pedagogical tool. The following section tackles the research methodology, comprising the sampling, instrument used, as well as the data collection and data analysis processes.

## 2 Sampling

### ❖ Population & Target Market

For the purpose of this research, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are chosen to be representative of the North African region due to the fact that they have top foreign-language universities, with leading business schools that have already started or are ready to adopt the usage of case studies in their curricula.

In fact, research has shown these past few years that Egypt has made substantial progress in higher education, particularly in regards to access to education and enrollment rate (Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Galal, 2002). Egypt has been affected by educational internationalization, with various higher education institutions that have internationalized their programs and accredited their curricula, via the provision of campus international initiatives, offering study abroad and exchange programs that suit the globalized world (Siaya & Hayward, 2003; Altbach & Knight, 2007).

On another note, the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education is undertaking efforts to pass reforms that elevate the quality of education, focus on the training, pedagogic, administrative and financial management of universities in order to enhance the employability of fresh graduates (The Development of Education National Report, 2008). There is an increase in the number of research units whose main goal is to forge positive business relations and international partnerships with other centers (Tempus, 2010). Accreditation of programs happens when the institution answers the minimum level of quality criteria and professors are subjected to training programs to ensure that there is constant innovation in educational methods. Current challenges faced by the Tunisian higher education sector include establishing flexible curricula that are high in quality and comparable with international ones, enhancing the value of Tunisian diplomas and focusing on the digital delivery of courses (Tempus, 2010).

In Morocco, the private educational sector has been boosting rapidly these past few years. Recent reforms aim at implementing innovative methods of teaching, based on the creation of technological networks, the establishment of centers of excellence, and the creation of interface and technology-transfer structures in order to provide more course variety and greater program flexibility (Tempus, 2010). The introduction of innovative methods of teaching, that emphasize research and a positive culture of learning, is undertaken (Bounahai, 2014). As well, efforts are done to increase international partnerships with foreign universities, enhance the scholarship system and provide educational training to enhance students' practical and research skills (OBG, 2013; ADB, 2013).

#### ❖ Sampling Frame

The sampling frame, from which key stakeholders are chosen for the qualitative research, includes 3 top-leading private universities, located in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

For Egypt, the American University in Cairo (AUC) is chosen as its School of Business programs are internationally and triple accredited, which makes the School competitive on the global level. AUC has developed a strong base for research, namely through El-Khazindar Business Research & Case Center (KCC) that offers world-class case studies and educational services for students. KCC helps in bridging the gap between academic research and practical business applications, particularly for students in the MENA region. Indeed, the center's two main activities are centered around case development and publishing, as well as case usage and solving. KCC has published over 100 business case studies covering different fields in the Arab World. It has also published casebooks, such as "Innovations" (which was done in collaboration with MIT). Case writing workshops are sometimes conducted once per semester for faculty members. In Spring 2015, 10 workshops were conducted for undergraduate students, and 4 for graduates. As well, KCC has already run an annual case writing competition and has regular case solving competitions in collaboration with top multinationals (E. Magdy, personal communication, May 18, 2015).

In Tunisia, the Mediterranean School of Business (MSB) has top business programs according to its website, and is the first English-speaking university in Tunisia that has an intensive experience in using cases in their graduate programs. Its Master in Business Management and Executive Master in Business Administration are AMBA accredited; and efforts are being made by MSB to achieve the AACSB accreditation in the near future ("About MSB", 2015).

In Morocco, ESCA Ecole de Management is ranked as an excellent business school, according to Eduniversal ranking. As well, ESCA is in the process of launching a case center, named "The Case Studies Institute". It is responsible for organizing case study seminars, workshops, competitions, as well as connecting faculty and professionals from different business areas. Its database comprises of both local and international business cases that tackle different disciplines and respond to the emergent economies of the region ("Business Cases Institute", 2015).

#### ❖ Sample

A convenience sample is drawn from the 3 universities stated above. Qualitative research is undertaken, including in-depth interviews and focus groups depending on time and resources constraints. The sample

chosen includes graduate and undergraduate students, faculty members, and senior administrators. Graduate students represent the majority of the students studied given the fact that they are more subjected to coursework that incorporates business case studies. As well, faculty members are affiliated with different academic departments, namely marketing, finance, management, accounting, entrepreneurship and operations. Administrators are either occupying senior administrative positions in the business schools chosen, such as vice-dean or associate dean/chair, or working closely in the already established case centers.

### 3 Research Instrument

An interview grid was prepared based on the literature and used as the main research instrument in this study. Each interview or focus group was conducted by at least two researchers in a formal manner; and the data is recorded in written or typing. The set of questions vary depending on the stakeholder interviewed. For instance, students, faculty members and administrators had each their independent set of questions (see appendix). However, for all stakeholders, the set of questions fall under the four dimensions illustrated in the conceptual framework. Questions are mainly open-ended in order to generate qualitative and exploratory data. Their objective is to validate existing dimensions in the model, to generate new ones, and to assess the benefits or constraints related to the use of cloud-technologies in the existing research model.

### 4 Data Collection

Data collection started in December 2014, at the American University in Cairo in Egypt. A pilot interview was done to a graduate student in order to test the questions. Furthermore, for the Egyptian sample, data collection was conducted till end of March 2015, for a total period of 4 months. 2 focus groups were done, each comprising either graduate or undergraduate students. Administrators and faculty members were interviewed separately. For the Tunisian sample, 3 focus groups were conducted at MSB (one for each stakeholder), on February 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>. For the Moroccan sample, the study was conducted on February 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, at ESCA. For graduate students, researchers opted for a focus group; however for other stakeholders individual interviews were conducted.

	Egypt	Tunisia	Morocco	Total
Students Undergraduates	5	0	0	5
Students Graduates	6	4	5	15
Administrators	4	2	3	9
Faculty Members	4	4	3	11
<b>Total</b>	19	10	11	<b>40</b>

Table 2: Total Number of Participants

	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	December 2014- March 2015
<b>Tunisia</b>	February 23-24, 2015
<b>Morocco</b>	February 26-27, 2015

*Table 3: Timeline of Interviews & Focus Groups*

## 5 Data Analysis Method

Content analysis method was the main qualitative data analysis tool used in this research. The method consists in analysis of all the verbal communication and text data obtained through narrative responses, open-ended questions, interviews and focus groups (Cole, 1988; Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). Hsieh & Shannon (2005) define content analysis as a “research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.” Therefore, the purpose of this method is to attain categories and sub-categories to describe the phenomenon studied. Content analysis could be done through two different approaches, the inductive method in which categories flow and are generated from the data at hand, or the deductive method where researchers wish to retest existing data, concepts, models or hypotheses (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). For the purpose of this research, a directed content analysis is conducted, following the deductive method, in order to validate the proposed conceptual model and extend its subcategories based on the research results (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

## III Results

The following section presents the qualitative research results, per framework dimension, from the perspective of the different stakeholders interviewed in top higher education institutions, in the MENA region. The stakeholders involve students, faculty and senior administrators, who are familiar with the use of case studies as a pedagogical tool. The online component has been added to the sub-variables generated, as the participants agreed on the importance of having an online platform in the proposed model. Verbatim is used to support each variable and subcategory generated from the exploratory research. That is say that the structure of the analysis will be based on the four main dimensions of the framework: case development dimension, case publication dimension, case usage and solving dimension, and the online community-building dimension.

## 1 Case Development Dimension

This dimension, as presented by the literature, reflects the writing process, from the collection of data to the compiling of a written document with teaching notes (Yadav et al., 2007; Gillespie & Riddle, 2005). Through an inductive method of analysis, in which categories flow are generated from the in-depth semi structured interviews and focus groups, the main variables of the case development dimension were highlighted as presented in the following sections.

### 1.1 Online case writing workshops

Most of the participants agreed that case writing workshop is one of main determinants of the case development dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that in order to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online case writing workshops. To be more specific, below is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online case writing workshops.

From the perspective of **senior administrators**, most of the participants interviewed agreed that there is a growing need and demand for case writing workshops for both students and faculty members, in order to promote the culture of case writing and obtain the desired level of quality comparable to international cases. A senior administrator in Morocco mentioned: *“Yes, each year there is a list of faculty coached by the case center director. It’s more of a collective work (editors, writers, translators). We need trainings for faculty in order for them to develop pedagogical materials (teaching notes). We are encouraged also to work with students. Our weakness is in the writing, that’s why we have plans for faculty training, qualifications and management.”* Some universities have already started providing these workshops on the local level, within their case centers. For example, in Egypt, *“KCC provides faculty members writing workshops; students are coached and given feedback”* (mentioned by a senior administrator, AUC).

However, enormous progress is yet to be made in order for these trainings to be formalized and structured. A senior administrator in Tunisia supported this as she mentioned; *“we are starting, right now to develop career progression of faculties, we agree that case writing is a criteria to be counted as a requirement for faculty to be promoted. Trainings are not yet formalized, we need to get more structured”*. The main obstacle faced by the administration is the lack of financial resources and funding. A senior administrator in Egypt supported this as he stressed that *“we need to have more workshops and exposure to different writing styles as well as capacity building exercises. We have to encourage students, promote in-house workshops to develop analytical skills. This can take 10 years to see the end results.”* Hence, it is more economical to use the cloud computing technology to deliver online case writing workshops.

From the perspective of **faculty members**, writing workshops should be available to both students and faculty when the case is written in collaboration. *“Students are requested to write case due to resources constraints. Faculty members would structure the case and its uses, name the incentives, and then encourage students to write. We have a lack of professional case writers and a quality problem. EMTA (training for faculty) was really important and beneficial because it changed the mindset of faculty”* (mentioned by a faculty member in Egypt). Faculty members have already attended workshops saying that they are beneficial and should be further promoted. This was supported by faculty members from Morocco, who mentioned *“yes, we do have workshops once or twice a year in ESCA. We get together*

*and brainstorm and look at a case from a different perspective (marketing, finance...) Practice makes perfect.*” However, others have written cases without attending a formal training, stating that they “learn by doing” and listen to others’ experiences. For instance, a faculty member in Tunisia mentioned, “*I received my training to write through my former professors and mentors.*”

On the **students’** level, opinions were divided. One MBA student, in Egypt, claimed that he doesn’t have much incentive to write cases, so he wouldn’t be interested in attending workshops. However, few other students in Egypt and Tunisia stated that mentoring and guidance are necessary in order to improve their writing skills. This point was well illustrated in the following two quotations: “*I want to put a clear-cut business problem on paper, translate the business concepts into stories. Benefits include mentoring, gaining research skills and business knowledge*” (Egypt). “*We don’t know when the case has the potential to be good. We need to match mentors and students, as there is no clear-cut system for case writing*” (Tunisia).

### 1.2 Editors and writers database

Most of the participants agreed that creating a comprehensive editors and writers database could be the most significant variable that determines the success of the proposed online platform. To be more specific, below is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online editors and writers database.

**Administrators** in Egypt have all agreed on the importance of developing a database of case editors and writers that could collaborate with each other in order to develop a collection of cases. An online database would therefore be accessible to all stakeholders wishing to collaborate together and share their knowledge. The major obstacle that business schools are facing is finding qualified editors and writers that are willing to contribute to the culture of case studies; “*we want to make sure that good editors are available and accessible. The challenge faced is that they are expensive and we do not have the budget*” (Egypt).

**Faculty members** in Egypt and Morocco have expressed their willingness and desire to collaborate with other stakeholders, across the MENA region, in the creation of new teaching cases. Therefore, establishing an online space where faculty members can work together could facilitate this process immensely. This was clear in the following quotation, “*in the future, it’s about sharing and being cooperative and transferring knowledge*” (Morocco).

### 1.3 Online writing competitions

An online writing competition is another important variable for the case development dimension in the proposed conceptual model. The participants believe that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online case solving competitions. To be more specific, followed is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online writing competitions.



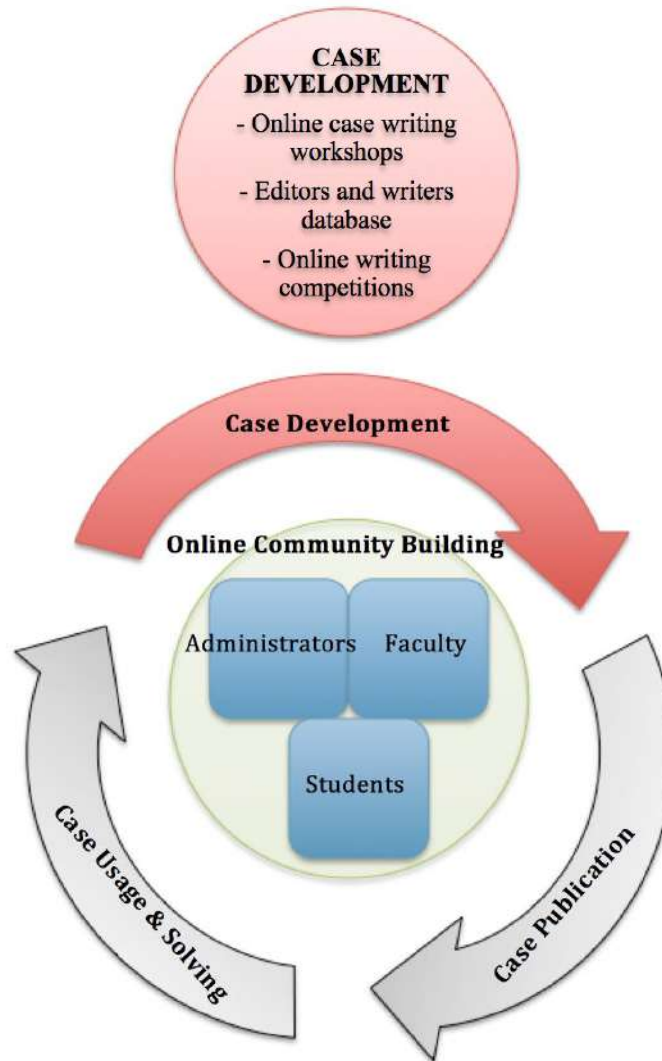
From the viewpoint of **senior administrators** in Egypt, both business schools and companies could organize writing competitions. This would facilitate the forging of long-term relationships between the academic community and the business world. KCC in Egypt has already established case writing competitions on a local level, with different universities competing with one another. However, the practice is less prevalent in other countries of the MENA region.

**Faculty members** also stressed the importance of case writing competitions. Nevertheless, when asked about their participation, mixed answers were given. Some professors at ESCA, entered an international case writing competition and are prone to repeating the experience. In Egypt, some faculty members prefer to focus their efforts towards research publications, as these are more rewarded by the academic system. This was quoted as *“I didn’t have much incentive comparable to research publications.”* Others who have tried those competitions reported positive feedback from the experience, claiming added benefits and value. *“I participated before. It provided me with great insight and helped the organization of my thoughts to write cases” (Egyptian faculty).* One faculty in Morocco was highly motivated as he highlighted that *“my case was in the EFMD competition and I won. I would like to do that in the future.”*

In the **student** sample studied, and across the 4 focus groups, the idea of taking the course project and incorporating it as a case exercise was mentioned. For instance, graduate students of ESCA & MSB never wrote a proper case study; instead they had a thesis or a final course project that was required. Two graduate students expressed the idea of taking the project, and turning it into a case exercise, which could provide a great start for them to participate in international case writing competitions. Undergraduate students at AUC emphasized that case writing, combined with a final project, will help them gain writing skills, publishing experience and practical exposure.

#### 1.4 Summary of findings

Data gathered from all stakeholders has shown that case development is considered one of the main pillars in the proposed business model. Indeed, from the exploratory research conducted, three main variables are drawn: **online case writing workshops; editors and writers database; and online writing competitions.**



*Figure 2: Case Development Dimension & Variables*

Data analysis reveals the importance of developing cases that are relevant to the MENA region. In fact, administrators stated that the MENA region differs from international business practices in terms of industry structure and the complexity of the decision-making process. Faculty members stressed the importance of writing cases that fit with the local culture of the MENA region in order for students to relate to the current business environment and be familiar with the challenges faced by the emergent economies. Writing cases also gives faculty members the balance between teaching and practice, as well as opportunities to explore new business trends and develop new local theories. The culture of case writing is yet to be publicized in the MENA region, with an emphasis on cross-disciplinary collaboration across different schools. Faculty attest that there is a big gap in cases on the MENA region, which is

why it is essential to find best-practices that would suit the local culture. To promote case writing in the MENA region, business schools are beginning to incorporate case writing as a component in the professors' tenure and promotion track, which leaves room for collegiate style collaborative work. On the students' side, it is believed that workshops and competitions would encourage students to be more involved in the cases' write-ups with faculty members.

## 2 Case Publication Dimension

This dimension as presented by the literature indicates the process of assembling case studies in a database (Kowalski et al., 1990; Silverman et al., 1992; Shulman, 1992; Hayes, 2014). Through an inductive method of analysis in which categories flow are generated from the in-depth semi structured interviews and focus groups, the main variables of the case publication dimension were highlighted as presented in the following sections.

### 2.1 Online casebook

Most of the participants agreed that publishing casebook is one of main determinants of the case publication dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online (digital) casebook. To be more specific, followed is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online casebook.

In regards to case publication, **senior administrators** in the three countries studied have expressed positive feedback about the idea of establishing an online collection of case studies, which could be shared on the regional level. The idea of having international partners is raised as well for instance; *"KCC has an annual casebook with an international publisher"*. Administrators suggested that a specific categorization should be made according to topics, industries, and countries. This goes hand-in-hand with the idea of knowledge sharing across different academic disciplines. *"It's all about sharing the knowledge. We would be focusing on different sectors and the more diversity the better"* (Egypt); *"We can filter our searches within the MENA region and then have access to cases"* (Tunisia); *"It will be great, to have a regional case center publishing our cases. We can categorize the cases by subjects"* (Morocco).

**Faculty members** mentioned casebooks when asked which publication venues they resort to. Nowadays, casebooks could be put online as digital casebook and shared to a wide audience over the Internet, which a professor at ESCA currently does. *"One of my cases was adapted for a book chapter. I also do slide sharing"* (Morocco). Some faculty members at ESCA stated that they would be willing to share their cases online, for free.

### 2.2 Online database

Participants also agreed that publishing through online database is one of main determinants of the case publication dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that to maximize the

benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online database. To be more specific, followed is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online database.

From the viewpoint of **administrators**, an online database of cases would be an excellent opportunity to promote the culture and practice of case studies in higher education. Proponents of this idea advance the notion of collaboration with international databases and having a virtual place where all stakeholders can meet and exchange information. For example KCC in Egypt stated “*we have agreements with international database, such as Emerald and the case center, to publish our cases.*” This includes a virtual community across the MENA region, where one can have access to cases from other Arab countries and diverse business industries. Such community would help faculty members save time and effort, and provide them with cases on local companies that are inaccessible to them. As well, on an administrative level, this saves a lot of financial resources, as data will be open and accessible to all participants for a nominal fee.

**Faculty** expressed the need of an online database exclusively dedicated to the MENA region, featuring local companies’ information and data. There is a growing demand of cases dealing with the local region, or multinationals operating in Arab countries, which is why a database of academics, business contacts and students would help in responding to this need and creating the link needed. A faculty from Morocco supported this: “*it’s obvious to include in the database the companies tackled and have their contact information.*”

### 2.3 Online journal

In addition, participants agreed that publishing through academic journal is one of main determinants of the case publication dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online journal with an option of free access. To be more specific, followed is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online database.

One **faculty** member in Egypt mentioned that he uses case journals as a publishing venue for his cases. “*I publish through KCC, regional and international casebooks, as well as case journals.*” This goes in parallel with the idea of online casebooks and database. However, in other countries, professors stressed more the notion of online databases and casebooks.

### 2.4 Summary of findings

Exploratory research collected from the respondents, particularly senior administrators and professors, shows that three variables emerge for the case publication dimension: **online casebook; online database; and online journal.**

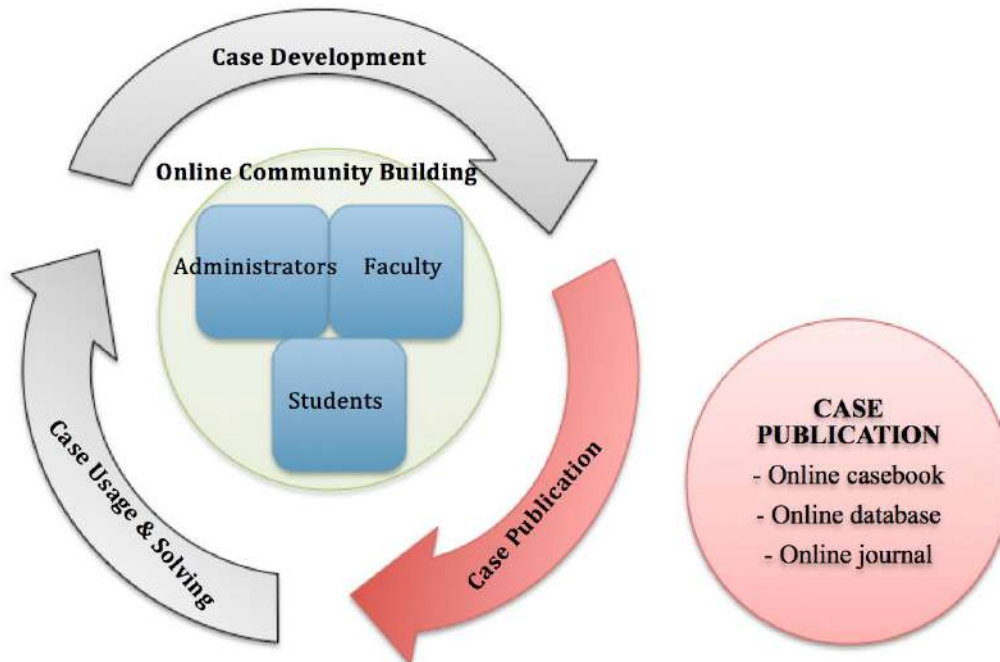


Figure 3: Case Publication Dimension & Variables

Case publication is a practice that has been growing over the past few years but still didn't achieve its full potential. Research has shown that there is a growing gap in the number of cases published on the MENA region. Another problem arises, namely students who aren't involved in the case writing process. Consequently, faculty members are the main stakeholders concerned. However, professors much rather prefer publishing research papers, as they are rewarded and valued in academia. One solution that is already in place is for the business school to encourage their faculty to build a portfolio of cases about the local environment, which counts toward their teaching and research objectives, as well as their academic assessment (through a point-system). Some schools, like ESCA, also encourage the publishing of cases with their respective teaching notes, by using financial incentives. The long-term goal would be to advocate the culture of cases in the higher education sector of the MENA region. One senior administrator in ESCA, Morocco mentioned: *"scholarly practitioners & practice academics can be qualified through publication of case studies that have been validated and reviewed by Academic Committees."*

### 3 Case Usage & Solving Dimension

This dimension as presented by the literature indicates the process of case usage in class or online through innovative and technological pedagogical tools (Merseth, 1991; Silverman et al., 1992, Merseth,

1996; Hayes, 2014). Through an inductive method of analysis in which categories flow are generated from the in-depth semi structured interviews and focus groups, the main variables of the case usage and solving dimension are presented in the following sections.

### 3.1 Online casesolving workshops

Participants agreed that case-solving workshops is one of the main determinants of the case usage and solving dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online case solving workshops.

From the perspective of **administrators**, case usage in classrooms is mandatory to provide a high quality business education and develop students' decision-making skills. Administrators claim that by integrating case solving into existing curricula, a new kind of experiential learning is created, combining theory and practice. This was supported by KCC (Egypt) administrators as they mentioned, *"we totally believe in experiential learning and bridging the gap between theory and practice through cases."*

Often, administrators have expressed their concern over students' inability to solve cases in a very technical way, especially on the undergraduate level. This is why they view case solving workshops as a mandatory step to be taken. At AUC, KCC and CFCC have already started the process, whereas the practice is less prevalent at MSB and ESCA.

**Faculty's** opinion goes hand-in-hand with the aforementioned in regards to students' lack of technical knowledge. It's important to emphasize that solving a case requires different set of skills than traditional lecturing. Students have always been conditioned to the lecture format, which makes the transition to case solving a challenge. *"Students need to have the technical knowledge first in order for them to solve cases properly"* (Tunisia).

**Students** across all countries studied, represent the stakeholder that emphasized the lack of case solving trainings the most. Often times, when they are faced with a case for the first time, they feel confused by the tasks required and how to properly read the information given. One of the students in Egypt mentioned *"I wish we had trainings before we are exposed to cases in class. The challenge is that we are not fully prepared to deal with cases."* Also, in Tunisia they stressed on this point, *"the problem is that we had no formal training to solve cases. We definitely think that we need more trainings, in order for us to know what to look for, how to read the cases critically... Lots of workshops are desirable."* Some students at ESCA suggested that even though a methodology course was offered, they need additional trainings to complement their case knowledge: *"we have a methodology course on how to answer case studies. This is a very good preparation for case solving, though it takes time and effort in order to get maximum benefit."*

### 3.2 Online students' competitions

The online students' competition is one of the main determinants of the case usage and solving dimension in the proposed conceptual model. This was highly supported through the empirical research

with a stress that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online students' competitions.

**Administrators** in Egypt are actively promoting the culture of international and local case solving competitions, which is met with a high level of participation, especially from undergraduate students. They also stated that undergraduates are more likely to try out the experience: *"we encourage students to participate in international competitions in Concordia, Copenhagen... We are trying to build students' capacities, as students are the ones who are more comfortable with jumping out of the comfort zone."* Administrators in Tunisia see an added value occurring, in the sense that students with different set of skills and from different academic backgrounds get to meet, exchange ideas and complement each other to solve one complex business problem: *"we are planning of sending students to international case solving competitions or inviting institutions in and hold a 2-days case competition. We didn't send students to international competitions, as there is no capacity of faculty to coach students."* This opportunity is rarely met in a traditional class setting. Plus, winning or qualifying teams get the chance to network with high-level professionals, exposing them to the real world before graduation and giving them recruitment opportunities.

**Students** gave positive feedback about their participation in international case competitions. Undergraduate students in Egypt said that their exposure to international settings and competing with teams from top business schools around the world constituted an unforgettable experience. Additionally, competitions helped them gain time-management skills, conditioned them to work under extreme pressure, and challenged their intellectual background and knowledge. *"I was a participant for 2 times. Case competitions are a new thing, and I have the curiosity to participate with my fellow colleagues. Benefits include: gaining experience from colleagues, connections, brainstorming with a group, and an added value on one's resume."* On another note, some graduate students in Egypt stated that difficulties encountered relate back to the lack of trainings on how to properly tackle a case from the right angle and come up with solutions in a timely and efficient manner. *"I tried the Aspen competition. We needed to be more prepared to solve advanced cases, so I would say it was extremely challenging to know how to approach the case."* They stated that compared to other international teams, they aren't fully up to the advanced level required. This goes along what the students in Tunisia & Morocco expressed during both focus groups: *"we are not up to that level yet"* (Tunisia).

### 3.3 Online case usage workshops for faculty

Participants agreed that the case-usage workshop for faculty is one of main determinants of the case usage and solving dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online case usage workshops. To be more specific, followed is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the online case usage workshops for faculty.

**Administrators** encourage faculty members to attend case solving workshops, but still the process is not fully coordinated. *"Case solving is absolutely important and the best way to learn. We are encouraging faculty to do it, by providing trainings, as well as faculty development programs on how to use cases in the classrooms"* (Egypt). Costs are a major concern when sending faculty members internationally to attend such trainings; accordingly efforts are being made to introduce local workshops. MSB is trying to partner with international business schools to train their faculty body to use cases in

their day-to-day teaching.

**Most faculty members** didn't attend a formal case usage workshop. Instead, they resorted to the practice of "learning by doing", through accessing teaching notes, seeing tutorials, and attending international executive education programs. This is little exceptional as in Egypt a number of professors attended international workshops with Harvard or the KCC. In addition, in Morocco, some professors either had formal workshops in France, or were mentored by their PhD advisors: "*we had a trainings in Paris with "La Centrale des Cas". However, we try to apply the learning to our own discipline, time frame and course objectives.*"

### 3.4 Summary of findings

Clearly, from the qualitative data drawn, case usage and solving represents a very significant dimension in the conceptual framework from which three variables are drawn: **online case solving workshops; online students competitions; and online case usage workshops for faculty.**

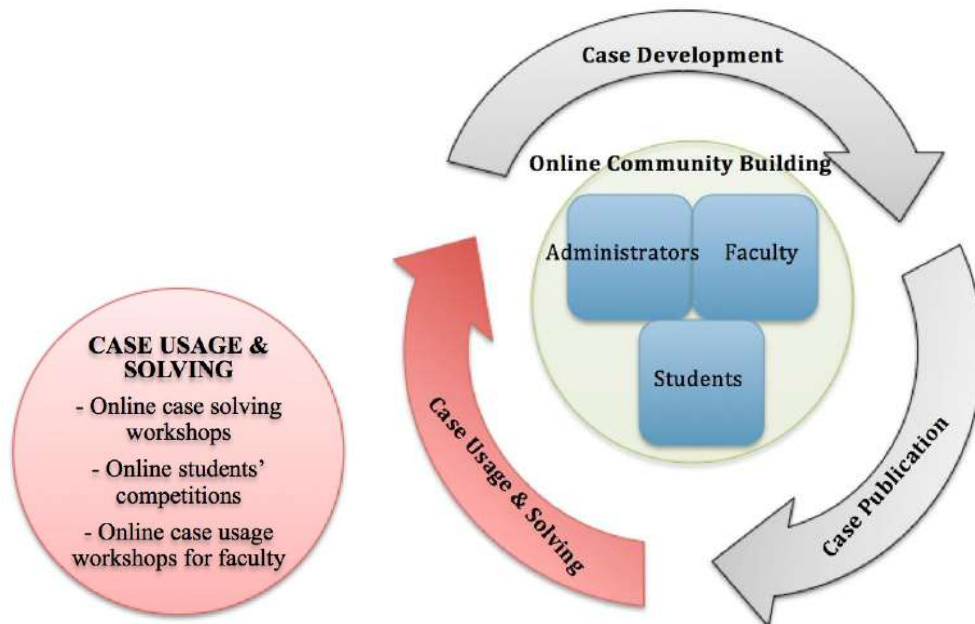


Figure 4: Case Usage & Solving Dimension & Variables

Nowadays, integrating practice with theory is essential to provide high quality education in the MENA region. All stakeholders agree that case usage in classrooms definitely adds value and fosters soft-skills such as teamwork, time and stress management, as well as critical, analytical and argumentative skills. Students enjoy interactive cases that are relevant to the course content and help them establish the link between textbooks and real business practices. Cases drive students to be challenged, operational, experience decision-making in virtual settings and maximize their learning experience. Students are in fact demanding cases to be integrated as part of their coursework and evaluations. A gradual approach is



desired whereby familiar industries are tackled first. Competitions help mainly in broadening students' mindset, and giving them opportunities to network with other students and professionals from around the world. In parallel, students express their need to get more thorough feedback and guidance from professors. Therefore, professors should master the case solving process, which can be attained through faculty case solving workshops. As well, students are demanding to have a variety of international and local cases, believing that both are complementary to their knowledge. International cases usually illustrate the best practices, whereas Arab ones prepare them to the actual job market. Business practices differ from one country to the other depending on several factors including technological readiness, economic environment, and culture... so a mix is well desired.

In parallel, students' concerns include a lack of proper trainings on solving cases in class and international competitions. Administrators have expressed that the main challenge is to get professors to be motivated to adopt a case-based learning approach, change their pedagogy style and invest their time and efforts in case-based teaching. This is why awareness is being made by the schools to promote the case culture in the hopes of disseminating knowledge to other business schools in the MENA region, on the longer term.

#### 4 Online Community Building Dimension

This dimension, as presented by the literature, reflects how various stakeholders are included in the communitybuilding process: namely administrators, faculty members and students (Watson & Pecchioni, 2011; Sherer & Shea, 2011; Greene & Crespi, 2012). Through an inductive method of analysis, the main variables of the online community-building dimension were highlighted as presented in the following sections.

##### 4.1 Platform for cases and recent business issues

Participants agreed that having a platform for cases is one of main determinants of the community-building dimension in the proposed conceptual model. In addition, they believe that to maximize the benefit from the cloud computing technology, we should foster the culture of online platform for cases.

**Administrators** from the three universities studied, unanimously agree that a platform for cases and recent business issues is an excellent outlet and tool to promote the usage and writing of case studies in higher education in the MENA region. The platform could serve as a database of MENA cases, categorized in a very concise way, whether by industry, countries, language... This was highly supported in Egypt as one senior administrator mentioned, *"I totally believe in the virtual community and I am developing an interactive database for the KCC to help in disseminating the cases regionally and internationally."* The idea of having different languages was mentioned by senior administrators in Morocco: *"we can encourage our faculty to publish the Arab cases on the platform, and they can submit cases in any language, which would be translated according to each school's language of instruction."* Also, it was mentioned that the database could serve international universities that would like to complement their already existing database.

**Faculty members** are encouraging the development of the platform and would actively engage in fostering it. Indeed, the platform wouldn't just serve to disseminate cases, but also the methodologies and teaching notes accompanying it. *"This allows for collaboration in case writing, exchange of ideas and business issues, learning from others' experiences in writing and using cases"* (Egypt). This could lead to cases being comparatively analyzed by several professors, in different countries. As well, another relevant point was mentioned in Tunisia, namely professors from different universities linking the cases with simulation activities and their coursework objectives. *"We could have access to teaching notes and simulations, how to apply the case study to the course, and look at the learning objectives. Filtering the database based on a topic is an option"* (Tunisia). This can't be done without a unified place where a collection and compilation of cases on the MENA region already exists. *"We can have a big databank of case studies filtered by countries"* (Morocco).

**Students** emphasized more on the case variety aspect that would result from such platform, claiming that they wouldn't always want cases on a specific country or a particular industry that appeals to a certain professor. Nonetheless, when graduate students in Egypt were asked about their willingness to contribute to the platform, 3 out of 5 said they are during their MBA program to give back to other students, as opposed to 0 out of 5 after finishing their MBA. Also Moroccan students, during the focus group, commented on the benefit of the platform as follows: *"we can read the articles and share the case studies with other students in the MENA region. This could save costs because we pay for each case study. We can have access to a big range of case studies(not just the ones given by our school)."*

#### 4.2 Interaction with the business community

Another important determinant for the community-building dimension in the proposed conceptual model is the interaction with the business community through the online platform. To be more specific, followed is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding this determinant.

**Administrators** view the platform as a mean to bring together all stakeholders for networking purposes. Networking has many advantages, including internationalizing current business curricula and opening opportunities for students to gain practical insight outside of the lectures' content. *"Through the platform, we can get different communities in touch, make sure the cases are disseminated and link the corporate with the academic"* (Egypt senior administrator). This will definitely foster university partnerships in the Arab region. A Tunisian senior administrator supported this as she mentioned: *"we need to develop the culture of networking. It's really important and there is a clear added value. This could help in building connections, sharing of information and broadening the scope of school"*.

From the **faculty** perspective, the main emphasis is sharing teaching practices between different scholars, as well as having access to companies that are willing to contribute and share internal data. For instance, in Egypt they mentioned that *"business community is a must; you can invite a guest speaker virtually to engage with students"*. In addition, in Tunisia, faculty stressed and mentioned, *"it would be good to discuss a specific case and share experience on teaching an original case in different countries."* Interaction with others through blogs and discussion forums also helps stimulate the intellectual imagination, encouraging an atmosphere of research and co-writing. This was highly supported by a Moroccan faculty member: *"we could do a blog or a forum of discussion. We can learn from others, give recommendations and have students and companies participate. This is especially good to bridge the gap between business community and students."*

**Students** stressed that the business community could give them a chance to share their experiences with cases with other students in the MENA region, as well as find solutions and give feedback. *“The platform can serve us to looking for solutions, guidance and feedback. It’s a very good place to share information, enhance our learning experience, and achieve synergy. Other students can have fresh solutions” (students from Egypt).* The same issue was highly supported during the students’ focus group in Morocco, as one of the students mentioned: *“that would be interesting; we can network with people from the company itself or meet the authors of the case.”*

#### 4.3 Business knowledge building through blogs, online communities, etc

Participants agreed that building business knowledge through blogs and online communities is one of the main determinants of the community-building dimension in the proposed conceptual model. To be more specific, below is the perspective of the different stakeholders regarding the business knowledge-building determinant.

**Administrators** across all countries agreed that online community building would create a blended learning experience for all stakeholders, combining online technological innovations with traditional in-class lectures. *“Researchers can monitor the blogs and discussions. It’s a place where we can formalize the case experience. The platform would help us identify potential for cases, generate more traffic and interaction” (Egypt).* In fact, the platform would serve as a catalyst to achieve a unified learning environment that is based on case writing and solving activities. On the long-term, they view it as a business knowledge building process that will integrate all aspects of business way beyond the classroom (theory and practice). A senior administrator in Egypt supports this, as he believes that through this platform *“we can directly contribute to the business knowledge by bridging the gap between theory and practice and helping the companies to enter the classrooms.”*

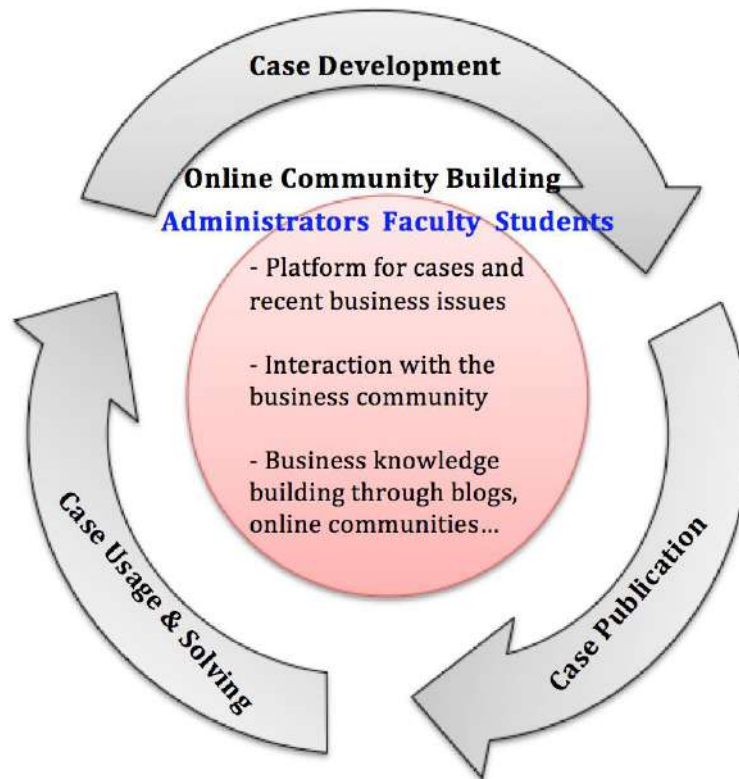
**Faculty** also agreed on this point, especially in Morocco. Indeed, business knowledge would be generated through joint academic collaboration and research, which will in turn serve companies in their day-to-day activities. They mentioned, *“peer-to-peer sharing on the platform would make huge leaps in knowledge and advocate for good business practices in the MENA region.”* Also, promoting best practices in the MENA region is a concept that needs to be invested in heavily by the academic community, which will be facilitated and mediated by an online platform. This platform is perceived by faculty members in Egypt as *“an opportunity for joint help & research.”*

**Students** didn’t emphasize on this point as much, given that they represent the stakeholder that is more likely to receive knowledge and information. However, one student at ESCA wishes to see the different usage of cases inside classrooms: *“we see the way other faculties in different universities use case studies in class, and the way their business program is structured. This could help us develop our learning methods and have access to different methodologies.”*

#### 4.4 Summary of findings

Online community building represents the most significant dimension that helps integrate all stakeholders along with the other three dimensions already established. Three variables are also drawn

from the qualitative data analysis: **platform for cases and recent business issues; interaction with the business community; and business knowledge building through blogs, online communities, etc.**



*Figure 5: Online Community Building Dimension & Variables*

All stakeholders have advanced the idea of an online community building process. In fact, research has shown that the creation of a platform will contribute greatly to the promotion of case usage in higher education in the MENA region. Students and faculty often mentioned the lack of variety and high quality written cases on local companies, or multinationals operating in MENA; therefore putting cases online is a great way to share them between different business schools and achieve a synergy in business education. The platform wouldn't only serve as a way to disseminate cases, but also current business issues and dilemmas that companies in the MENA are facing in relation to the socio-political environment. If we look at *Figure 5*, we find that the business knowledge building would be achieved by default when the platform integrates case writing, publication and solving resources on the virtual level. Also, the addition of blogs and online communities bringing together all stakeholders and professionals into one mutual place of interest would generate a stream of information, advancing the quality of business education. Students could benefit from their peers' experiences, share case solutions and give tips to one another on how to maximize their learning experience. Professors view this interaction as a way to facilitate joint work with academics from other countries and an opportunity for companies to be invited to virtual sessions in class.

On the long-term, administrators and faculty members believe this platform will be the start of business

knowledge building in the region, that would not only serve the academic community, but also practitioners. Administrators stress that the platform is an opportunity towards a long-term experiential learning trend in the MENA region.

## 5 Revised Conceptual Model

The figure below (*Figure 6*) represents the enriched conceptual framework with the 4 main dimensions and their respective variables. The revised conceptual model was generated based on the literature review (Yadav et al., 2007; Hayes, 2014; Herreid, & Wright, 2014; Cornuel, 2007; Li, Greenberg, & Nicholls, 2007; Watson & Pecchioni, 2011; Sherer & Shea, 2011; Greene & Crespi, 2012) and the qualitative research conducted in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. Another table (*Table 4*) shows the researchers' assessment of the current state for each variable.

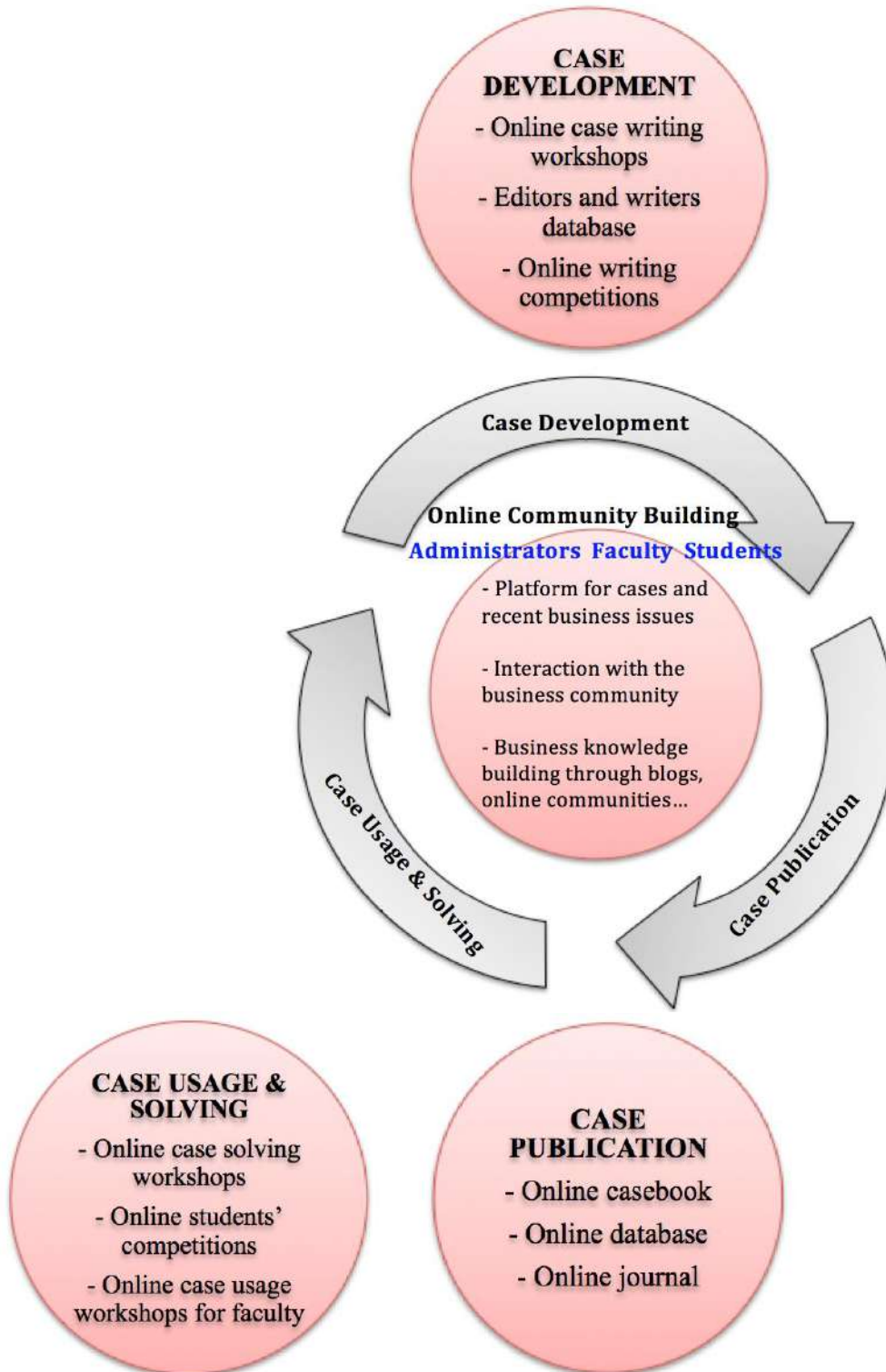


Figure 6: Revised Conceptual Model

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Current State</b>
<b>Case Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online case writing workshops</li> <li>- Editors and writers database</li> <li>- Online writing competitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs Substantial Improvement</li> <li>- Currently Absent</li> <li>- Needs Substantial Improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Case Publication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online casebook</li> <li>- Online database</li> <li>- Online journal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs Substantial Improvement</li> <li>- Currently Absent</li> <li>- Needs Substantial Improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Case Usage and Solving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online case solving workshops</li> <li>- Online students' competitions</li> <li>- Online case usage workshops for faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently Absent</li> <li>- Good State</li> <li>- Needs Substantial Improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Online Community Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Platform for cases and recent business issues</li> <li>- Interaction with the business community</li> <li>- Business knowledge building through blogs, online communities, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently Absent</li> <li>- Needs Substantial Improvement</li> <li>- Currently Absent</li> </ul>

*Table 4: Variables' Current State*

The results of the qualitative research conducted helped researchers in assessing the current state of each variable in the MENA region. For the case development dimension, the three variables generated need substantial improvement in the sense that universities need to invest in those activities from a financial and training delivery standpoint. A huge gap in the number of cases on the region exists, which needs to be bridged by heavily promoting the culture of case writing. Indeed, having cases on the MENA region stored in an online database is a very viable idea supported by the different stakeholders interviewed. In regards to the case publication dimension, casebooks and journals are developed by some case centers, however the online component is still missing. An online database is therefore a desirable feature to be capitalized on by universities in the MENA region. For the case usage and solving dimension, case-solving workshops are currently absent for students (although it's highly demanded by them), but practiced by some business schools for faculty members. The culture of international competitions is already established; nevertheless the shift to the online component is yet to be made. Concerning the online community-building dimension, a huge lag remains in the business knowledge building process in the region, as the online platform needs to be created to facilitate the process. The interaction with the business community needs major improvement as it is only practiced on a country-per-country basis.

## 6 Cloud Technologies and Blended-Learning in MENA

The purpose of this section is to discuss how cloud technologies can be implemented in the revised conceptual framework and promote the blended learning trend in business education, in the MENA region.

For case development, cloud technologies allows for an easier and more efficient process. In fact, online applications integrating file-sharing services facilitate joint case writing between faculty and students from different universities. These documents could be in text, slideshow or video form. Additional recommended features include chatting services, as well as multimedia video and screen sharing. Case writing workshop videos could be uploaded and real-time case writing competitions could be conducted through online video-conferencing. The platform would also feature a list or database of editors and case writers. Data and files will be continually saved online, on a real-time basis. Benefits of such platform to case writing would be speed of access, virtual storage of data (which saves space and money), ease of collaborative work, etc...

For case publication, the platform could host a collection of online casebooks, databases and journals comprising cases and other pedagogical materials. Again, administrators would possess full control over it and give access permissions to other schools depending on the agreements made. This sharing process would help disseminate knowledge on a very wide scale, since online technological innovations will be the medium used. As well, having an online collection of casebooks and journals facilitates cross-disciplinary collection of cases that are not limited to one country or industry. Another feature that gives cloud technologies an edge in case publication is the stakeholders' ability to continuously update company information and teaching notes. This would be nearly impossible to do with regular paper published casebooks.

Additionally, cloud technologies would be useful in case usage and solving. In fact, online case solving workshops could be done through video conferencing, as well as screen sharing for both faculty and students. A two-way interactive learning would occur in this case between the two groups. Workshops could involve both parties or be conducted separately as well. Faculty can record instructional videos and then place them online for viewing. Live case solving and simulation competitions could be done virtually, using web-conferencing software, without the need for participants to travel internationally.

Perhaps online community building will be the essence of the virtual platform function. Indeed, the platform could feature three portals, one for each stakeholder. Companies could also have access to some features in the platform. Interactions would be done among stakeholders and professionals depending on the content exchanged. Forums and blogs created would encourage such interaction in addition to networking opportunities between different groups that share common interests. In these forums, file sharing could also be made possible, as well as video conferencing. An application for email exchange is also an option.

The table below (*Table 5*) highlights the Microsoft Online 365 applications and their potential benefits in our conceptual framework.



<b>Microsoft Online 365 Software</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Mail	Establish formal communication among different stakeholders
Lync	Web-conferencing, screen sharing and chat services. Promote collaborative work on a virtual level
OneDrive	Storage of documents to be accessed everywhere (cases, teaching notes, instructional materials, videos...)
People & Newsfeed	Create blogs and online forums where different groups interact and share information
Calendar & Tasks	Keep track of professional meetings and to-do lists
Excel, Word & PowerPoint	Document editing, storing and sharing on a real-time basis

*Table 5: Blended Learning Tools*

On another note, the long-term added value of cloud technologies in the promotion of case usage in MENA outweighs the costs involved. To summarize, benefits include promotion of the case culture, branding of MENA business schools and placing them on the international map, building awareness through a user-friendly interface, and a solid business community based on joint teaching and research. The platform would emphasize both experiential and blended learning, which are opportunities for business schools to generate long-streams of revenues and encourage international faculty to contribute as well. Plus, it would serve to build a momentum that elevates the quality of business education in the region, develop a consortium of different stakeholders, and increase marketability of local cases.

However, there are present challenges in the implementation and readiness to adopt cloud technologies in the region, especially in the early stages of the adoption process. Research has shown that the major obstacles include language barriers and the reluctance for companies to participate, share internal data and give case publication consent. To overcome language barriers, the platform could integrate a built-in translator to cater to different universities in the MENA region, especially the Gulf ones that use Arabic as their main language of instruction. As well, challenges that could be encountered involve an unstable Internet connection in the MENA countries, security and privacy concerns, lack of readiness by local business schools to adopt online software into their curricula, money constraints, and the reluctance of the faculty body to adapt to blended-learning. In fact, there is a big resistance to change in academia, especially by senior faculty members who are required to tailor their teaching style to the millennial generation. That's why trainings that combine blended learning with cloud technologies are mandatory. Committed partnerships and increased motivation to collaborate and participate in the promotion of case culture still present an obstacle.

## IV Conclusions

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that research has highlighted the importance of case studies in higher education in MENA. In fact, case studies have proven to be an effective medium used in classrooms to bridge theory and practice, as both are complementary in achieving a more effective learning outcome for students. Cases constitute a crucial and vital component as they bring practical market issues and business dilemmas tackling different industries in the region. In fact, cases help in the application of the already existing theoretical knowledge as well as in the development of new theories that suit best the culture studied. They also improve students' readiness to the job market and allow them to face the practical side of conducting business. These points were highly stressed by the different stakeholders interviewed who emphasized that nowadays, business cannot be only taught through theoretical concepts and traditional lectures, but more through real-life practical cases.

However, challenges remain in regards to the use of case studies in the MENA region. First, there is a lack of awareness on the importance of such cases by the majority of universities, which aren't yet at the adoption stage. In addition, there is a limited supply of relevant cases on the MENA region due to the lack of professional case writers, the difficulty of accessing companies' information and the lack of promotion and adoption of the "case culture" in the region. A case as an innovative pedagogical tool is a concept that isn't fully grasped on the regional level yet. The lack of case usage workshops for faculty makes the ability to use cases in the classroom extremely limited.

Furthermore, as illustrated by the conceptual model, the components of this study are case development, case publication, case usage and solving, and online community building. The results of the qualitative research conducted in the three countries, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, have generated sub-categories for each proposed model component. The expected outcome of the research therefore includes several dimensions to be considered. First, the proposed online platform is expected to significantly increase the output of quality cases on MENA businesses through joint-collaboration and writing across different universities. Consequently, through the delivery of workshops and tutorials, there will be an increase in the number of cases used in the classroom and an improvement of faculty's ability to effectively use cases. An enriched network across the MENA region will facilitate the publication of cross-disciplinary cases that can be locally applied and suit the needs of business education in the region.

## V Implementation Plan

In regards to the implementation plan of the proposed model across the MENA region, researchers have categorized as per *Table 6* universities into 3 levels. Level 1 includes universities that have good case usage practices and produce some local cases. This level also corresponds to the sampled business schools for this research. The key challenges relating to this category of universities are the precarious state of case production and the limited amount of high quality cases offered. Therefore, the main priority would be to focus on the case production aspect and conduct more case related competitions. In parallel, Level 2 universities have less case usage practices than Level 1; however they do not produce local internal cases. Their challenges include the limited use of business cases in the classroom; consequently they should focus their efforts toward the delivery of case usage workshops. On another note, Level 3 universities don't have case usage and production activities for their business schools. It can also be said that they lack the awareness of case usage as a pedagogical tool. They solely rely on the traditional lecture style teaching. The key objective would therefore be to raise awareness and promote the case teaching practice in those universities.

University Level	Case Usage	Case Production	Key Challenges	Priorities
1	GOOD	SOME	Limited Production & Low-Quality Usage	Case Production & Competitions
2	SOME	NONE	Limited Usage	Usage Workshops
3	NONE	NONE	No Awareness	Raise Awareness

*Table 6: Implementation Challenges and Priorities*

From the aforementioned points, researchers have divided the implementation plan into three phases as follows:

- **Phase 1** constitutes the launch of the online platform and the different software components that foster the model dimensions on the virtual level. The main focus would be targeted toward Level 1 universities to build the online communities comprising all stakeholders. The main target would be to increase high-quality case usage in those universities, as well as regional case publication. As well, efforts should be more geared towards building a solid foundation of case production along with networking opportunities across different groups.
- **Phase 2** includes the expansion process with a focus on the Level 2 universities to work on case usage in classrooms. Also, building capacity in case development is an essential element in this phase.

- **Phase 3** is essentially the building and development of the case culture on the virtual level. This is aimed at Level 3 universities by raising awareness on the practical use of cases and their benefits. In this phase, it is important to ally with policy makers and obtain funds to promote case usage in the higher education industry. Regional expansion and reach is among the core focus of the culture development.

## VI Recommendations and Next Steps

Recommendations have been developed according to each stakeholder studied in this research, as well as for policy makers and the business community. For the **administrators**, it is essential to invest money and efforts in the IT infrastructure of business schools. It is highly advisable to give faculty incentives to publish cases and encourage students to participate in case competitions and case writing activities along with other faculty members. Incentives for faculty could include prioritization of cases in their academic assessment and performance evaluation. Schools should also focus on organizing faculty development programs on case usage. For **faculty members**, it is recommended for them to attend various workshops related to the development and usage of cases. Also, faculty should be inclined to participate in market and community activities in order to network with professionals and cooperate with them in the delivery of workshops and competitions. Additionally, **students** are highly encouraged to participate in case competitions in order to broaden their horizons and have opportunities to network with other students from different academic backgrounds. Attending workshops is also a key recommendation in order for them to enhance their case writing and solving skills.

On another note, **policy makers** could provide incentives to public universities to use cases in their business curricula. Also, investments could be done for faculty development programs on the regional level. It is also extremely important to have funding for case translation in order to cater to the different universities' language of instruction. As well, the **business community** is responsible to encourage case writing and publication by providing case releases. Also, it is encouraged that the community participates and sponsors case competitions.

The next steps would be to first design the implementation process. Securing the involvement of several Level 1 universities is essential in this step as they will be the catalyst of the online platform's launch and the development of its technical design. Also, further activities that will be conducted in relation to the platform would be the design of the preliminary activities and workshops, as well as the development of a case writers and editors database. Afterwards comes the development of an expansion plan, which is targeted towards Level 2 universities. A research could be done to identify the key universities that fit Level 2; their faculty members and students could be invited to case workshops in order to disseminate the case teaching practice and built the awareness needed. Exploring potential support from policy makers to secure the funding necessary to the survival of the platform is required.

## VII Appendix

### 1 Questionnaire

#### Faculty Version:

#### **Objective 1: Validate the dimensions and variables**

##### *Dimension 1: Case Development*

1. Filter Question: Did you ever write a case?
  - a. If yes? How many cases did you write? Then go to question 2
  - b. If no, why? Are you interested in doing that?
    - i. If no, why?
2. What are the reasons that push you to write business cases?
3. From where do you collect information when writing cases?
4. Did you receive any formal training on case writing?
  - a. If yes, what training/workshops did you attend?
  - b. If no, how did you hear about and learn how to write cases?
5. Do you collaborate with faculty from your institution to write cases?
  - a. If no, why?
6. Do you collaborate with faculty from other institutions/countries to write cases?
  - a. If yes, what tools do you use to collaborate on writing cases?
  - b. If no, why?
7. Did you participate into a case writing competition before?
  - a. If yes, what benefits did you get from participating into this competition?
  - b. If no, why?

##### *Dimension 2: Online Community Building*

1. Do you think regular contacts (with other case writers and the business community) are important to produce good quality cases?
2. What would be the benefits of such contacts?
3. Would you be interested to participate in online discussion forums with other case writers?
  - a. If yes, what topics would you like to discuss on such forums?
  - b. If no, why?
4. Would you be interested to participate in online discussion forums with the business community?
  - a. If yes, what topics would you like to discuss on such forums?
  - b. If no, why?

##### *Dimension 3: Case Publication*

1. Which publication venues do you use to publish your cases? Why?
2. Which publication venues do you choose when you want to have access to business cases?

3. Would you recommend other publication venues to promote case publications and usage in the MENA region?

#### *Dimension 4: Case Usage & Solving*

1. Filter Question: Do you use teaching cases in class?
  - a. If yes, go to question 2
  - b. If no, why?
2. What criteria do you use when choosing which cases to teach?
3. How do you use cases in class? (Students presentations? Small group discussions? Plenary discussion?...)
4. How do students respond to the use of cases in class?
5. Do you feel students are benefiting from the experience of solving cases? How so?
6. Did you attend formal training/workshops on the use of case studies in teaching?
  - a. If yes, which ones?
  - b. If no, how did you hear about and learn how to use cases in teaching?
7. Would you be interested to join an online forum with other instructors to discuss case teaching and solving issues?
  - a. If yes, what topics would you like to discuss on such forums?
  - b. If no, why?

#### **Objective 2: Add variables if needed**

1. What do you think of having a cloud/online platform for knowledge sharing on case writing and usage?
2. Would you be interested in joining such platform?
3. What main features would you like to see in such platform?
4. Is there any factor that you consider important to promote case writing and usage in MENA that was not covered in our questions?

#### **Objective 3: Constraints in the implementation**

1. According to you, what would be the main obstacles for writing good quality cases?
2. What would be the main obstacles for using cases in class in your institution/MENA?

#### **Students Version:**

#### **Objective 1: Validate the dimensions and variables**

#### *Dimension 4: Case Usage & Solving*

1. Have you ever attended courses where cases were used as teaching tool?
  - a. If no, go to question 2

- b. If yes:
  - i. How did you find the experience? Was it better than courses that did not use cases? Explain
  - ii. Did you receive any training on case solving before attending these courses?
  - iii. What challenges did you encounter?
- 2. Have you ever participated in case solving workshops and competitions?
  - a. If no, go to next question
  - b. If yes,
    - i. How many times did you participate in these workshops/competitions?
    - ii. How did you know about these workshops/competitions?
    - iii. What factors push you to enter case competitions and workshops?
    - iv. How did you find the experience?
    - v. What did you like the most?
    - vi. What you did not like?

### *Dimension 2: Online Community Building*

1. How do you feel about the idea of creating an online platform where students in MENA can share their knowledge and experiences on case writing and solving?
2. Would you be interested in joining such platform?
  - a. If yes, what topics would you like to discuss on such forums?
  - b. If no, why?
3. Do you think regular contacts with other case writers are important to produce good quality cases?
4. What would be the benefits of such contacts?
5. Would you be interested to participate in online discussion forums with other case writers?
  - a. If yes, what topics would you like to discuss on such forums?
  - b. If no, why?

### *Dimension 1: Case Development*

1. Filter Question: Did you ever contribute to writing a case?
  - a. If yes? How many cases did you contribute to? Then go to question 2
  - b. If no, why? Are you interested in doing that?
    - i. If no, why?
2. What are the reasons that push you to write business cases?
3. From where do you collect information when writing cases?
4. Did you receive any formal training on case writing?
  - a. If yes, what training/workshops did you attend?
  - b. If no, how did you hear about and learn how to write cases?
5. Did you participate into a case writing competition before?
  - a. If yes, what benefits did you get from participating into this competition?
  - b. If no, why?

### **Objective 2: Add variables if needed**

1. Is there any factor that you consider important to promote case solving and usage in teaching that

was not covered in our questions?

### **Objective 3: Constraints in the implementation**

1. According to you, what would be the main factors that may discourage students from actively embarking in and benefiting from a case solving experience?

#### **Administrators Version:**

### **Objective 1: Validate the dimensions and variables**

#### *Dimension 4: Case Usage & Solving*

1. Are you encouraging the use of cases in teaching?
  - a. If yes, what concrete actions did you take to do so?
  - b. If no, why?
2. Are you encouraging case solving competitions? How?

#### *Dimension 2: Online Community Building*

1. Are you encouraging investments in virtual communities? How so?
2. Do you feel that research and case writing centers contribute to business knowledge? How so?
3. How could students and faculty be trained for the case development and solving?

#### *Dimension 1: Case Development*

1. Do you think it's important to write cases specific to the MENA region vs using international cases?
  - a. If yes, what would be the benefits?
  - b. If no, why?
2. Do you encourage your faculty and students to write cases?
  - a. If yes, how do you do that?
  - b. If no, why?
3. How is the editors and writers' database created and handled?
4. Do you have plans to promote case writing in the future?
  - a. If yes, what main actions are you planning to take to do so?
  - b. If no, why?

#### *Dimension 3: Case Publication*

1. Are you encouraging case publications? If yes, how?
2. What are the benefits of having a platform for case and research material?



**Objective 2: Add variables if needed**

1. What are your thoughts about the cloud sharing technology?
2. Give us recommendations for enhancing the cloud platform.

**Objective 3: Constraints in the implementation**

1. What are the different obstacles that you think are present for the implementation of the cloud technology and its readiness (motivation)?

## 2 Results of the Interviews and Focus Groups

### Case Development Dimension

<p>Online case writing workshops</p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “KCC provides faculty members writing workshops; students are coached and given feedback.”</i></p> <p><i>“We need to have more workshops and exposure to different writing styles as well as capacity building exercises. We have to encourage students, promote in-house workshops to develop analytical skills. This can take 10 years to see the end results.”</i></p> <p><i>“We already use the writing center and make use of existing resources like editing companies.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We are starting, right now to develop career progression of faculties, we agree that case writing is a criteria to be counted as a requirement for faculty to be promoted. Trainings are not yet formalized, we need to get more structured.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “Yes, each year there is a list of faculty coached by ImaneGhazali. It’s more of a collective work (editors, writers, translators). We need trainings for faculty in order for them to develop pedagogical materials (teaching notes). We are encouraged also to work with students. Our weakness is in the writing, that’s why we have plans for faculty training, qualifications and management.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, we want to do workshops on the local level.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Students are requested to write case due to resources constraints. Faculty members would structure the case and its uses, name the incentives, and then encourage students to write. We have a lack of professional case writers and a quality problem. IMTA (training for faculty) was really important and beneficial because it changed the mindset of faculty.”</i></p> <p><i>“In most situations, I have written cases with graduate students and senior undergraduate students. I attended a workshop in 2007, at AUC.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “I received my training to write through my former professors and mentors.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “Yes, we do have workshops once or twice a year in ESCA. We get together and brainstorm and look at a case from a different perspective (marketing, finance...) Practice makes perfect.”</i></p>
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	<p><b>Students</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: "I want to put a clear-cut business problem on paper, translate the business concepts into stories. Benefits include mentoring, gaining research skills and business knowledge."</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: "We don't know when the case has the potential to be good. We need to match mentors and students, as there is no clear-cut system for case writing."</i></p>
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<p><i>Editors and writers database</i></p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “We want to make sure that good editors are available and accessible. The challenge faced is that they are expensive and we do not have the budget.”</i></p> <p><i>“Of course, an online database of editors can make a huge difference.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our stakeholder’s database is created by announcing vacancies, having several freelance writers that have good business background and English, and training students to be case writers.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Yes I would love to when possible to exchange ideas and perfect the case. In most situations, I have written cases with graduate students and senior undergraduate students.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “In the future, it’s about sharing and being cooperative and transferring knowledge.”</i></p> <p><i>“I would like to write cases with cross-disciplinary ideas and in collaboration with researchers from different countries, like the case of academic papers. We can work through Skype.”</i></p>
<p><i>Online writing competitions</i></p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Connections between faculty and market through competitions. The business school needs to have an initiative to link faculty members to the market players.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “Companies need to help in writing cases.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Yes, I participated before. It provided me with great insight and helped the organization of my thoughts to write cases.”</i></p> <p><i>“Never, I was always working on my own deadline and like to have a specific case that is relevant to my own focus.”</i></p> <p><i>“No. I didn’t have much incentive comparable to research publications.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “Yes, one time in EFMD and it was my first time to participate.”</i></p> <p><i>“My case was in the EFMD competition and I won. I would like to do that in the future.”</i></p>

Case Publication Dimension

<p>Online casebook</p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “KCC has an annual casebook with an international publisher.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s all about sharing the knowledge. We would be focusing on different sectors and the more diversity the better.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We can filter our searches within the MENA region and then have access to cases.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “It will be great, to have a regional case center publishing our cases. We can categorize the cases by subjects.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, we can encourage our faculty to publish the Arab cases on the platform, and they can submit cases in any language, which would be translated according to each school’s language of instruction.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “To publish, I go through KCC. For one case, I sent an outline, which was later accepted and published as a book chapter.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “One of my cases was adapted for a book chapter. I also do slide sharing.”</i></p>
<p>Online database</p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “We have agreements with international database, such as Emerald and the case center, to publish our cases.”</i></p> <p><i>“The database can be divided according to interests or stakeholder. We can have synergies once we have contacts, case writing resources across the regional level.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We can have an online search engine or website, associated with known publishers.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We can find contacts in other countries to develop a comparative analysis and more data access for the business community.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “I would like to see more outlets for publications, and filter a database</i></p>

	<p><i>based on a topic.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “It’s obvious to include in the database the companies tackled and have their contact information.”</i></p>
<p><i>Online journal</i></p>	<p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “I publish through KCC, regional and international casebooks, as well as case journals. I would be interested in online workshops, webinars, conferences.”</i></p>

Case Usage & Solving Dimension

<p><i>Online case solving workshops</i></p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “I totally believe in experiential learning and bridging the gap between theory and practice through cases.”</i></p> <p><i>“CFCC provides workshops and trainings to students. We need those workshops to show them how to do the technical part of the case and enhance students’ presentation skills.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We do small workshops for students.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “Cases are a suitable tool for students to have a practical perspective about business and to prepare graduates for the job market.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “Students need to have the technical knowledge first in order for them to solve cases properly.”</i></p> <p><b>Students</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “I wish we had trainings before we are exposed to cases in class. The challenge is that we are not fully prepared to deal with cases.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “The problem is that we had no formal training to solve cases. We definitely think that we need more trainings, in order for us to know what to look for, how to read the cases critically... Lots of workshops are desirable.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We have a methodology course on how to answer case studies. This is a very good preparation for case solving, though it takes time and effort in order to get maximum benefit.”</i></p>
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<p>Online students competitions</p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “We encourage students to participate in international competitions in Concordia, Copenhagen... We are trying to build students’ capacities, as students are the ones who are more comfortable with jumping out of the comfort zone.”</i></p> <p><i>“As a director of the KCC we organize at least 2 case solving competitions per year and we encourage students from different majors to participate.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We are planning of sending students to international case solving competitions or inviting institutions in and hold a 2-days case competition. We didn’t send students to international competitions, as there is no capacity of faculty to coach students.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We have plans to launch a competition at ESCA, but we didn’t still achieve the maturity to do so. As well, we sent some students in the Bangkok case competition.”</i></p> <p><b>Students</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “I tried the Aspen competition. We needed to be more prepared to solve advanced cases, so I would say it was extremely challenging to know how to approach the case.”</i></p> <p><i>“I was a participant for 2 times. Case competitions are a new thing, and I have the curiosity to participate with my fellow colleagues. Benefits include: gaining experience from colleagues, connections, brainstorming with a group, and an added value on one’s resume.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We are not up to that level yet (to participate in competitions).”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We never participated in international case solving competitions.”</i></p>
<p>Online case usage workshops for faculty</p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Case solving is absolutely important and the best way to learn. We are encouraging faculty to do it, by providing trainings, as well as faculty development programs on how to use cases in the classrooms.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “For faculty, we are starting to train some of them with Darden. We want people to come to MSB and train our faculty. We are planning to train faculty to teach through cases.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We had a trainings in Paris with “La Centrale des Cas”. However, we</i></p>

	<i>try to apply the learning to our own discipline, time frame and course objectives.”</i>
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Online Community Building Dimension

<p><i>Platform for cases and recent business issues</i></p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “We need to have a stream of cases available on the MENA region, reach a critical mass, and collaborate with other institutions.”</i></p> <p><i>“I totally believe in the virtual community and I am developing an interactive database for the KCC to help in disseminating the cases regionally and internationally.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “This allows for collaboration in case writing, exchange of ideas and business issues, learning from others’ experiences in writing and using cases.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We could have access to teaching notes and simulations, how to apply the case study to the course, and look at the learning objectives. Filtering the database based on a topic is an option.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “Yes, we can have a big databank of case studies filtered by countries.”</i></p> <p><b>Students</b></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We can read the articles and share the case studies with other students in the MENA region. This could save costs because we pay for each case study. We can have access to a big range of case studies(not just the ones given by our school).”</i></p>
<p><i>Interaction with the business community</i></p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Through the platform, we can get different communities in touch, make sure the cases are disseminated and link the corporate with the academic.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s a very good idea to have a dynamic place for people to interact, have connections. It’s crucial to build the network.”</i></p> <p><i>Tunisia: “We need to develop the culture of networking. It’s really important and there is a clear added value. This could help in building connections, sharing of information and broadening the scope of school.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “I would like to get an insight on case usage challenges, which cases are used in certain courses, what companies we can write future cases on, what</i></p>



*business issues are interesting to explore, what business topics are current and trendy at a specific time.”*

*“Business community is a must; you can invite a guest speaker virtually to engage with students.”*

*Tunisia: “It would be good to discuss a specific case and share experience on teaching an original case in different countries.”*

*Morocco: “We could do a blog or a forum of discussion. We can learn from others, give recommendations and have students and companies participate. This is especially good to bridge the gap between business community and students.”*

### **Students**

*Egypt: “The platform can serve us to looking for solutions, guidance and feedback. It’s a very good place to share information, enhance our learning experience, and achieve synergy. Other students can have fresh solutions.”*

*Tunisia: “We would like it for guidance on how to write cases, how to have a good methodology and how to link between the different parts of the cases. It would break geographical barriers if we have different students writing cases and sharing their expertise.”*

*Morocco: “Yes, that would be interesting; we can network with people from the company itself or meet the authors of the case.”*

<p><i>Business knowledge building through blogs, online communities, etc</i></p>	<p><b>Administrators</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Researchers can monitor the blogs and discussions. It’s a place where we can formalize the case experience. The platform would help us identify potential for cases, generate more traffic and interaction.”</i></p> <p><i>“We can directly contribute to the business knowledge by bridging the gap between theory and practice and helping the companies to enter the classrooms.”</i></p> <p><b>Faculty</b></p> <p><i>Egypt: “Platform could be an opportunity for joint help &amp; research.”</i></p> <p><i>Morocco: “Peer-to-peer sharing on the platform would make huge leaps in knowledge and advocate for good business practices in the MENA region.”</i></p> <p><b>Students</b></p> <p><i>Morocco: “We see the way they use case studies in class, and the way their business program is structured. This could help us develop our learning methods and have access to different methodologies.”</i></p>
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