UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Management

MANAGING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES IN SAUDI UNIVERSITIES:

STUDENTS, STAFF AND EMPLOYERS PERSPECTIVES

By

Mansour Alharbi

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ABSTRACT

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This study deals with quality of student services and proposes a framework for managing quality in student services in Saudi universities based on key quality service requirements identified by students, staff and employers. The proposed framework seeks to address differences in quality values between the three groups while it builds on similarities in their views.

This research used an inductive approach with qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods to examine the quality of services provided to students at four Saudi universities. Methodological triangulation was used, enabling discovery of different aspects through multiple methods of data collection which included focus groups, questionnaires to students and interviews.

The findings reveal strong similarity and dissimilarity on many criteria between student, staff and employers, including the importance of developing skills, student services and high academic standards. Responses indicate a lack of congruence on those criteria that focus on student services' processes. There are a number of criteria in which there is agreement between the three groups, most significantly, the importance of the teaching and learning function. Students' engagement with the learning process through the lecturers' ability to motivate students' interests, facilitate subject knowledge, stimulate thought and develop transferable skills are considered by all three groups to be critical issues in managing quality. Both students and employers see the development of vocational and transferable skills as a significant issue. Pre university communications with high schools and post university communications with employers represent an area of concern by all groups.

The study suggests that an approach to quality based on an understanding of key values of the main participants will facilitate shared understanding and quality consciousness within institutions

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Mansour Alharbi, declare that the thesis entitled '**MANAGING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES IN SAUDI UNIVERSITIES: STUDENTS, STAFF AND EMPLOYERS PERSPECTIVES**' and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

- parts of this work have been published as:

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Academic work resume

Conference presentations

Alharbi, Mansour (2008). 'Quality issues in Saudi Universities'. 15th April 2008. *School of Management Conference, University of Southampton,UK Presentation.*

Alharbi, Mansour (2005). 'Background to Saudi HE'.4th - 6th April 2006. Conference for research students held jointly with students from the Institute for Higher Education, University of Georgia, USA, *New College, University of Oxford, .UK Presentation.*

Alharbi, Mansour (2007). 'Measurement of quality in HE in Saudi Arabia'. LASS Conference. 17th May 2007. *Faculty of Law, Arts & Social Sciences, University of Southampton,UK. Presentation.*

Alharbi, M. (2008). 'Managing the Quality of Services in Saudi Universities: Students, Staff and Employers, Perspectives'. *Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at Southampton (CHEMPaS) Seminar, University of Southampton, UK. Presentation.*

Alharbi, M. (2008). *The International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities (ICoSSH). 18th- 20th June 2008. Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. Presentation.*

Alharbi, M. (2009). 'Evaluation of Quality: Student Perceptions of Quality'. *The Sixteenth International Conference on Learning. 1st-4th July 2009. University of Barcelona, Spain. Presentation.*

Publications

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Alharbi, M.and Taylor, J. (2009). 'Measurement of customer satisfaction in Saudi universities following the implementation of TQM'. International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management (IJCRMM). Awaiting publication.

ALHARBI. M (2000). 'The Retirement System in Saudi Universities'. King Abdulaziz University Press. Publication

Conferences attended

ULEP. 17th May 2006. Chilworth Manor. Southampton, UK

SRHE Conference. 12th – 14th December 2006. Brighton, UK.

The Postgraduate Workshop. 17th July 2007. Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, UK.

International Conference of Higher Education and Creative Economy. 22nd-23rd March 2010. University of Southampton, UK

Appendix V contains a complete list of my academic journey through my PhD studies

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed the integration of the world economy, which has created an intensively competitive environment among organisations to rapidly adapt and respond to changing scenarios (McGregor, 2002). Furthermore, as Pounder states (1999) organisations such as educational institutions that employ public funds are facing increasing pressure to demonstrate sufficient value in return for resources employed. Within these environments higher education institutions have to satisfy their customers, such as the students, in order to attract and retain them and cope with the global market. As identified by Grey (2004) the increasing expectations from beneficiaries has resulted in increasing calls for fundamental improvement in graduate business school education. In terms of facing increasing levels of competition, the higher education sector borrows strategies from the business sector for example quality as a concept was borrowed from the industrial sector and used in the higher education sector as an assessment indicator (Michael et al., 1997). Therefore, service quality in higher education (HE) has risen to the peak of the research programme with the focus on service satisfaction from the perspective of the student (Wright and O'Neill, 2002). Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) indicate that measures initiated by governments to improve quality is indication of the need of fundamental improvements in quality of the management in the HE sector.

HE institutions in Saudi Arabia are facing many challenges and have to respond to pressure created by social and economic national development and to show quality in their performance. However, studies show that the performance of Saudi HE is unsatisfactory (Alkarni, 1999, Khateeb, 1999); (Al-Hamidi et al., 1999); (Al-Aali and Ahmed, 1999). Others show that there are weaknesses in the practical side in many Saudi HE programmes (Abu-Baker, 1992); (Saegh et al., 1995); (Al-Kahtani, 1998). Al-Turkestani (1998), argues that deficiencies in students` training and their inadequate job related

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skills reflect the moderate standard of Saudi HE in comparison to Western systems. Alghafis (1992) states that the Saudi HE system is facing a critical situation, which clearly indicates that there is an urgent need to investigate the issues directly related to the quality of curricula together with their assessment with the particular aim of achieving an effective balance between input and output. Sofi (1998) illustrates that the lack of proper planning and the importance of allocating new sources for funding HE is a very important issue. However, Khateeb (2001) identifies the need for a clear system to evaluate the standard of services provided by the universities; there has been an increasing demand from the public and the government for accountability, a faculty appraisal system and appropriate procedures to govern it (Al-Thubaiti and Al-Qarni, 1993). There is a need to prepare Saudi students for global markets (Alkhodair, 2001). There is also a need to develop HE and to introduce a national evaluation system (Alzahrani, 1998). Alfaisal (2002) indicates a relatively small output of research production to faculty members and an issue of funding for educational research, while Maneea (2002) suggests the need for a comprehensive planning system for HE. Alkhazim (2003) summarises the issues suggesting that HE in Saudi Arabia faces many challenges, one of them being the setting up of quality measures. Another study recommended that performance in Saudi HE institutions should be evaluated in terms of outcome indicators (Saegh, 1999). It is clear from previous studies that the lack of quality in the performance of HE institutions indicates a need for management tools to help overcome the situation. Therefore, Alnassani (2003) suggests and Radwan et al. (1998) recommend that some strategies such as total quality management (TQM) should be implemented and evaluated in Saudi HE.

However, despite the amount of literature on HE topics, there is very little on the fundamental precept that highlights quality issues in HE in Saudi Arabia, such studies on quality focus on students' levels of satisfaction with services provided within institutions that implement quality strategies and as such TQM has not been examined. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to

investigate and examine factors that influence university services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Some will argue that teaching may not be 'a service', however this thesis takes the view that teaching is a service. In the Saudi context the researcher considers teaching to be a most significant and high cost based provision needing classrooms to be built and maintained; facilities provided within the classrooms; teaching manpower and resources. The researcher considers all of these to be sub-services to the main service which is teaching. Research using SERVQUAL in business schools (Rigotti and Pitt, 1992); curriculum requirements (Richardson, 1999); student academic development and satisfaction (Middlehurst and Gordon, 1995) demonstrates that teaching is considered as a service and consequently measurable using an instrument such as SERVQUAL. The rigorous development of the SERVQUAL instrument by Parasuraman et al., (1988) has led to its widespread acceptance in both business and academic research as a device for measuring service quality.

The justification for considering teaching as 'a service' is founded on Hill's (1995) view of education as a service which can be described as activities or processes with four essential characteristics, namely intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity and inseparability of production and consumption. Based on Hill's thinking, in this study the proposed definition of 'a service' is taken to be any *tangible or intangible action provided by universities to students and is considered to be something that effects a change on a subject from one state to another.* This definition is strengthened by Kothlers's (1987) view that a service is an intangible action offered from one to another and the outcome and the process of its production is not conditional on a physical product. In this way a student can be seen as the recipient of an action (a teaching service) provided by a service provider (a university) which may or may not depend on a physical product.

The concept of the role of the student in HE is debatable, particularly in the Saudi context. The HE system in Saudi Arabia is a centrally administered

hierarchical system with all roles monitored by the government, including the curricula and syllabi. The Higher Education Council regulates and supervises the HE system at the national level, consequently leaving no leeway for individual development in HE institutions. However a new realism is becoming evident which includes gradual internationalisation, competitiveness and a changing relationship between students and their universities. Consequently, the development of a new relationship between student satisfaction and service provision is discernable.

It is now commonly accepted that students are increasingly powerful stakeholders through their influence in the process and outcomes of HE (Johnson and Deem, 2003). Indicatively, terms for students in quality assurance literature show a changing role and include: customer, consumer, partner, participant and stakeholder. Consigning students to the role of passive consumers of education relegates their role as co-producers of their own education. Definitions of quality in HE consider students in two distinct categories:

- as customers buying a service in expectation of career enhancement;
- as human capital that will be enhanced by the process of HE into an individual with improved skills (Eriksen, 1995).

There needs to be critical interaction between students, as participant learners (customers) and the education provider (Cheng et al., 1997) to improve the quality of services and as a consequence achieve customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is accomplished through effective course delivery mechanisms, quality of courses and teaching and learning (Oldfield and Baron, 2000). Although teaching is the most significant service provided it cannot be achieved without administrative and academic support (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007).

1.2 Researcher's reasons
The reasons for being interested in this topic was that I worked in HE in Saudi Arabia as an administrator and then as a lecturer; I observed student dissatisfaction with the quality of services provided by universities. This was

supported by white papers published in Saudi Arabia that challenged the quality of HE in general. I considered this issue to be worth studying so I started to read about the subject in order to identify where the gaps are located. I found some research that indicated a lack of attention to quality in Saudi universities in general, and to the quality of the services provided to students specifically.

1.3 Research rationale

Quality management should be the responsibility of every individual in the university and it needs to involve the whole university; HE quality management in general and student services specifically are affected. Students may suffer more if the level of quality management is low. It is very important to improve quality in many aspects sooner rather than later. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Arab region and may influence other countries in many aspects. It is also one of the wealthiest, though money alone is not enough reason to improve quality. HE is expanding rapidly in Saudi Arabia; student numbers are increasing and new universities are being created. This has raised important questions about the assessment and assurance of quality. New approaches to quality are being considered, including TQM. TQM is a management strategy that focuses on appropriate action from the beginning. It is commonly implemented in public and private sector manufacturing and services. It has recently been used for performance measurement in HE in Saudi Arabia in order to meet current and future challenges. Evaluating the quality of services in Saudi universities is the current objective. This research offers a new and distinctive view of quality in HE in Saudi Arabia, identifying key issues and concerns among staff, students and employers and suggests possible ways in which these concerns can be addressed. As a result, this study should be useful for Saudi universities as they re-think their strategies and attempt to understand students' needs and seek improvement in the quality of services provided. The researcher, as a result of this study, was enabled to establish a framework for higher quality services to customers through local universities, HE policy making and agents who provide services to customers.

Furthermore, the research may also interest current or future students and stakeholders.

1.4 Research importance

1. Quality and TQM are management strategies for providing high-quality service at lower cost.
2. Quality education is important for achieving comprehensive national development.
3. Successful implementation of quality and TQM in universities is a pre-requisite for academic accreditation.
4. The cost of providing services to students is extremely high, and therefore it is vital to ensure that these services are of a high standard.
5. Upgrading the quality of services provided to students plays an important role in improving the quality of output.

1.5 Research aims

This research aims to assist in guiding policy and to guide HE institutions seeking to improve the quality of HE. The research aims are as follows:

1- To evaluate the quality of services provided to students at Saudi universities.

2- To identify gaps in the quality of services provided to students.

3- To understand and evaluate student needs.

4- To introduce a quality management framework to help Saudi universities to improve their student services.

1.6 Research questions

In order to meet the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated. The research questions are arranged into a main question and several sub-questions. The main question is:

How is the quality of services perceived in Saudi universities?

This question will be the driving force behind the developments to be presented later. Several sub-questions arose:

- *Are there differences in the perception of the quality of services between staff, students and employers?*
- *Are Saudi universities perceived to provide high quality services?*
- *What are the methods used to evaluate the quality of student services in Saudi universities?*
- *How have Saudi universities responded to the implementation of quality strategies such as TQM?*
- *Is the application of TQM perceived to be successful?*
- *How have Saudi universities responded to the labour market?*
- *What framework for managing quality can be proposed based on the findings of the research?*

1.7 Research methodology

This research uses an inductive approach with mixed qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods used to examine the quality of services provided to a sample of Saudi students. The methodology follows the post positivist paradigm of Lincoln and Guba (1985) which emphasises the importance of the phenomenological, inductive and contextual approach to enquiry into human experience. This research design is valuable for dealing with student issues focusing on quality of services preferences. The qualitative and interpretative approach has helped the researcher to organize and describe the subjective data in a systematic way (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992); the quantitative, positivist mode guided the researcher towards certainty and objectivity (Patton, 1999). Four Saudi universities were selected on a geographical basis to evaluate their quality of service. The data was collected through focus groups, questionnaires to students and interviews. This research involves methodological triangulation, enabling discovery of different aspects through multiple methods, thus strengthening the research.

1.8 Research limitations

One of the research limitations is that the interviews were conducted with the male gender only because it was difficult to interview females for cultural

reasons in Saudi society. In the future, research may be conducted with interviews with females whether by myself or by other researchers to study the female perspectives. The research focused on the undergraduate study level and the student services at the undergraduate level because the majority of students in Saudi universities are undergraduates.

1.9 Research structure

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research in Saudi Arabia

Chapter 2 presents a brief outline of education in Saudi Arabia and then discusses the existing literature on quality in general and quality in HE. It examines the various issues that comprise the complex, multifaceted concept of quality and its application to the HE sector in Saudi Arabia. It concludes with discussion about students as customers in higher education and the relationship between student satisfaction and the service received.

Chapter 3 discusses the research approach that underlines this study and presents the methodology that addresses the research questions that have been raised. It also addresses various issues regarding the validity and rigour of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the questionnaire conducted with a large sample of students and examines the differences and congruencies in quality values.

 Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings from the in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with a sample of students, staff and employers groups. It identifies the quality values of the three groups and their views on what is specifically relevant to the quality of the universities and their relations with the labour market.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the findings from the Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 7 sets out the conclusion, recommendations and proposed framework of quality, based on the results identified in Chapter 6. It concludes with the major findings and the contribution to knowledge made by this study. It also outlines the limitations of this study and the scope for further research.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains three parts. Part 1 presents a brief background to the Saudi education system and discusses each of the stages of general education concluding with a description of the HE system. Part 2 discusses existing literature relating to quality in HE and the variables that influence the issue. Initially, the work examines different perspectives and definitions of quality. It then identifies the various types of HE and goes on to explore existing models of quality management. It further discusses previous academic literature on technical and functional quality and examines input, process and output variables in HE and finally a few studies conducted on quality values are examined. Part 3 begins with a search of HE literature to discover trends in the way TQM and the customer metaphor have been written about in terms of practices, rationales, attitudes and theories. The advantages and disadvantages of perceiving students as customers are discussed.

Part 1
2.2 Vision for education in Saudi Arabia

The vision for the educational system in Saudi Arabia in 2013 aims to engender a new generation of male and female youth who embody Islamic values and are familiar with their religion, both in theory and practice, have knowledge and academic skills, the right orientations, the ability to respond positively and react to the latest developments, and deal with the latest technological innovations with ease and comfort. They should be able to internationally compete in scientific and technological domains and be able to meaningfully participate in overall growth and development (Alasmari, 2005).

The Minister of Higher Education, in his speech at the UNESCO conference stated that the nucleus of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was the establishment of the College of Jurisprudence (Sharia College or Islamic Law) in Makkah al-Mukarramah in 1949. He further adds that the Teachers' College followed three years after, in Makkah al-Mukarramah and other colleges in other cities of Saudi Arabia were to follow (Al-Ankary, 1998). Another view is that the real start of HE in Saudi Arabia was with the establishment in 1957 of the first university, the King Saud University and the first mention of HE was in Article 3 of its Charter (University, 1998). A view supported by The Minister for Higher Education, who states that when the first university was established in Riyadh, HE witnessed a turning point in its long march (Al-Ankary, 1998). All stages of HE came under the control of the Ministry of Higher Education from 1975. Table 1 summarises the important dates in the development of HE in Saudi Arabia:

Date	Event
1928	First lessons in the Holy Masjed
1929	First mission to Egypt
1949	College of Islamic law
1957	First university, King Saud University
1975	Ministry of Higher Education

Table 1 Important dates in the development of higher education in Saudi Arabia

2.3 Government efforts for human development as a public issue
Requirements have been fulfilled by the government to meet increasing demands in education, health and the social services (Ministry of Culture and Information, 2004) however, human development in general and education in particular are the top priorities. Consecutive Five Year Development plans have clarified the great care taken in this matter. Funding has been increased for education, with 3.5 percent of the national budget being allocated in the first development plan in 1970, increasing to

9.5 percent in 2001 (Alasmari, 2005). At the time of the First Development Plan there were 2,772 schools for boys and only 511 schools for girls, but the number increased to 12,285 schools for boys and 12,463 schools for girls in 2001. In addition, there are 68 centres and institutions for technical education and vocational training. The number of students has increased to more than 5 million. In 2004 university and secondary school students of both genders constituted 29.4% of the total working age population (Arabia , 2004). Appendix A provides a more detailed analysis of the Saudi population. Alongside the population statistics, Appendix B provides details about the development of the various phases of education prior to a student progressing to higher education. Within the last 50 years Government planning in education in Saudi Arabia has supported enormous development.

2.4 Higher education

This section provides information regarding the relationship between HE and the general community in Saudi Arabia. It reviews, briefly, its philosophy, policy and the aims of HE and sets out development reforms and the organization of the higher education system. The latest indicators regarding HE and its challenges are covered.

2.4.1 The relationship between higher education and the general community

The relationship between HE and the community and the state has been shaped by the increasingly significant and visible role that the education sector plays in the state and by the ways in which the state controls and influences the HE sector through its external quality assurance bureaucracy. The approach to evaluation in HE is highly dependent on this relationship (Henkel 2000).

2.4.2 The philosophy of Saudi higher education

The term 'higher education' in Saudi Arabia refers to all types of formal education that follows the twelve years of primary, intermediate and secondary education or its equivalent. The Islamic vision pervades and as

the Minister for Higher Education states in his speech (Al-Ankary, 1998) the Qur`an has a strong influence on higher education philosophy. The word Qur`an derives from the word resource and its first verse invites followers to read and write(Qur`an). Thus, the religious text values education and encourages learning and intellectual effort (Saleh, 1986).

2.4.3 Policy in higher education

HE is open to every student who meets the entry requirement (Al-Ankary, 1998) and is supposed to offer specialisation of all kinds. Saudi Arabia as a fast growing country stresses HE as a means of qualification to a high standard of living and full employment.

2.4.4 Higher education objectives

The concept of HE carries with it a set of traditions of medieval origin and an extensive vocabulary generated especially for it. HE is associated with values and general perceptions, which are summarised by Barnett:

- the pursuit of truth and projected knowledge
- research
- liberal education
- institutional autonomy
- academic freedom
- a neutral and open forum for debate
- rationality
- the development of student autonomy
- the development of critical abilities
- students as the critical centre within the nation
- character formation
- preserving intellectual culture (Barnett, 1997)

Certain factors influence HE objectives so that they are in line with the needs of the country, based on its culture and national development. These factors should be continuously borne in mind in a world of knowledge in which HE is the key to modernisation and full employment and contributes to manpower

needs. The objectives of HE are the responsibility of the Saudi Higher Education Council which sets strategies (Al-Shehri, 2003) and announces them in public documents published by the Ministry of Higher Education. The 1978 document established the following aims:

- collaboration among all universities
- free education and monthly assistance
- religious awareness civil responsibility
- graduate qualifications
- academic enhancement
- research and technology
- research in religious studies (Education, 1978)

As a result of the above aims, there emerged a number of guidelines:

1- Education should develop in accordance with the country's needs.

2- Islamic studies are to be a basic and integral part of the curriculum at all institutes with due regard for regional requirements.

3- Universities should be uniformly administered so that staff and students can be transferred from one institution to another; competition between institutions should be encouraged in the fields of scientific research and student services.

4- Universities should be developed to meet the country's manpower needs for qualified cadres capable of participating in national development plans.

5- Opportunities should be provided for gifted and talented students.

6- The universities should play a leading role in the area of scientific research.

7- They should support and encourage researchers to contribute towards the developing body of scientific writing from an Islamic perspective, to serve the nation in its growth alongside advanced countries worldwide.

8- To promote the translation of books and other information resources into the Arabic language and to add new expressions and terminologies related to all human endeavours.

9- To take on responsibility for providing adequate training and continuing education to graduate students to enable them to accomplish their goals and to participate effectively in the overall development of the country (Al-Shehri, 2003); (Saleh, 1986); (Al-Ankary, 1998).

2.5 Higher education and development plans in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has benefited from five year plans and from the economic boost. A centralised administrative structure has made the task of the universities in the country less onerous through funding and direction towards specific goals and centralised policies, which it is claimed have benefited the country, in terms of religious, moral, intellectual, social and economic development (Alkarni, 1990);(Khateeb, 1994);(Sultan, 1994); (Abdullah, 2002). According to the Sixth Development Plan (1995-2000) the expected role of the HE system is to continue the development of manpower, through the meticulous evaluation of educational curricula and training programmes in accordance with Islamic Shari'a and changing needs (Planning and Arabia, 1995). Appendix C provides more background information regarding education policy, objectives and skills. The Ministry of Planning is responsible for the preparation and co-ordination of government organisation plans (five-year plans from 1975 to date). HE is important in these plans and its objectives are embedded in the national development plans. The key issues are set out below.

2.5.1 Higher education in the First Development Plan (1970-1975)

In this plan, not all HE was covered, but the first plan looked at exact needs and gave guidelines for the future. It aimed to manage the capacity of existing institutions in order to accommodate all graduates holding secondary school certificates, which had increased, and to increase the number of teachers and relocate all departments and colleges in suitable buildings. Moreover, the first plan was not that precise being rather experimental in nature (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1970-1975).

2.5.2 Higher education in the Second Development Plan (1975-1980)

The Second Development Plan was more detailed in terms of analysing HE needs, and again looked at the needs of individual institutions and focused on the increasing number of secondary school graduates being admitted and the expanding college funding needs and number of human resources within the facilities (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1975-1980).

2.5.3 Higher education in the Third Development Plan (1980-1985)

The third plan evaluated all HE courses in terms of the quality of the curricula to make sure they were compatible with the country's needs. It also established new colleges to meet the still rapidly increasing number of graduates from secondary schools (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1980-1985).

2.5.4 Higher education in the Fourth Development Plan (1985-1990)

The fourth plan built on the outcomes of the previous plans and concentrated on the quality of the students rather than the quantity. Conditions for admission to HE tightened, students with lower grades were asked to complete their education in colleges providing two years programmes in specific subject (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1985-1990).

2.5.5 Higher education in the Fifth Development Plan (1990-1995)

The fifth development plan continued with the emphasis on the interaction between issues of social development and HE. It insisted on quality students taking the opportunity to pursue their scientific efforts (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1990-1995).

2.5.6 Higher education in the Sixth Development Plan (1995-2000)

The sixth development plan continued to focus on quality and the relationship between HE institutions and the other public and private organization (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1995-2000).

2.5.7 Higher education in the Seventh Development Plan (2000-2005)

The Seventh Development Plan concentrated on the private sector and the needs of this sector in terms of supplying qualified graduates to help lead the development in the country. It also emphasised the need for greater participation of the private sector in expanding educational opportunities for

the rapidly growing population and in providing technical and vocational training and re-qualification for education to match the needs of the labour market in order to ensure economic security and progress for the country (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 2000-2004); (UNDP, 2003b).

2.5.8 Higher education in the Eighth Development Plan (2005-2010)

The eighth plan intends to increase quality and quantity in HE especially in the field of research and development. It also explores challenges of two types: increased social demand for HE and increased demand for high quality professional cadres. There is a need to infuse practical expertise in theoretical subjects, to develop multi-specialization graduates and to find innovative forms of university education. The main issue remains; the partnership between HE and the community. Universities must develop a framework of participation in the community and in the business sector through the promotion of research and development programmes that serve the economy in a broad range of activities. It is also looking at new options, such as distance education, part-time study, evening school, parallel education, workshops and symposia, programmes and training courses in important areas. The focus remains on increasing capacity, developing systems, programmes and curricula, improving internal and external efficiency, applying on academic accreditation system, giving further attention to scientific and applied research, and developing cooperation and interaction with the private sector (Kingdom of Saudi, 2005-2009).

This last development plan has a significant relevance to this study in so far as it identifies the importance of the relationship between HE and the community and business needs and values. Practical expertise and development of multi-specialization of graduates is seen as a necessary improvement that needs to be addressed by the university sector.

2.6 Higher education agencies

The HE system in Saudi Arabia is administered centrally, so that all aspects are supervised by the government. Its policies are controlled by special councils and schools follow the curricula and syllabi approved centrally for

the whole country. In terms of administrative matters, there are also military and private agents, and responsibilities may be shared. The full list of agencies is set out below:

- Ministry of Higher Education (universities)
- Ministry of Education (teachers colleges and girls colleges)
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of the Interior
- Ministry of Health (health colleges and institutes)
- Agency of Learning and Training (telecom colleges and technical colleges)
- Yanbu and Jubail Oil Committee
- Ministry of Civil Services (administrative institute)
- Private bodies supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education

On the 21st of June, 2004 a decision was made by the ministers council regarding the status of colleges; all colleges would come under the umbrella of the Ministry of Higher Education (Alhamed, 2005).

2.7 The organizational structure of higher education in Saudi Arabia

HE was supervised by the Ministry of Education until 1975, when the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) was established. This Ministry is responsible for all HE, especially universities and the main responsibility for HE belongs to the former council established in 1974, apart from the financial responsibility, which derives from the Ministry of Finance. There is a hierarchy in the Higher Education Council as shown in Figure 1.

The main responsibility of the Council is to regulate and supervise the HE system at the national level, as well as to coordinate its policies and regulations within the context of national policies and strategies. The Council regulates several academic issues such as approving the establishment of or modification to any academic university programme, appointing the vice rectors for universities, approving collaboration agreements between Saudi universities and international universities, the establishment of unified HE

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regulations and policies, including for faculties, researchers, examinations and employment (Aljaber, 1998).

Higher Education Council

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                    ┌────────────────────┐
                    │    The king        │
                    │ (President of HEC) │
                    └─────────┬──────────┘
                              │
                    ┌─────────┴──────────┐
                    │   Minister of HE   │
                    │  (Vice-president)  │
                    └─────────┬──────────┘
  ┌──────────┬───────────┬────┴──────┬───────────┬───────────┐
┌─────┐   ┌─────┐    ┌─────┐    ┌─────┐    ┌─────┐    ┌─────┐
│Min. │   │Min. │    │Min. │    │Min. │    │Min. │    │Pres.│
│ of  │   │ of  │    │ of  │    │ of  │    │ of  │    │ of  │
│Educ.│   │Fin. │    │Labr.│    │Econ.│    │Civ. │    │Univ.│
└─────┘   └─────┘    └─────┘    └─────┘    └─────┘    └─────┘
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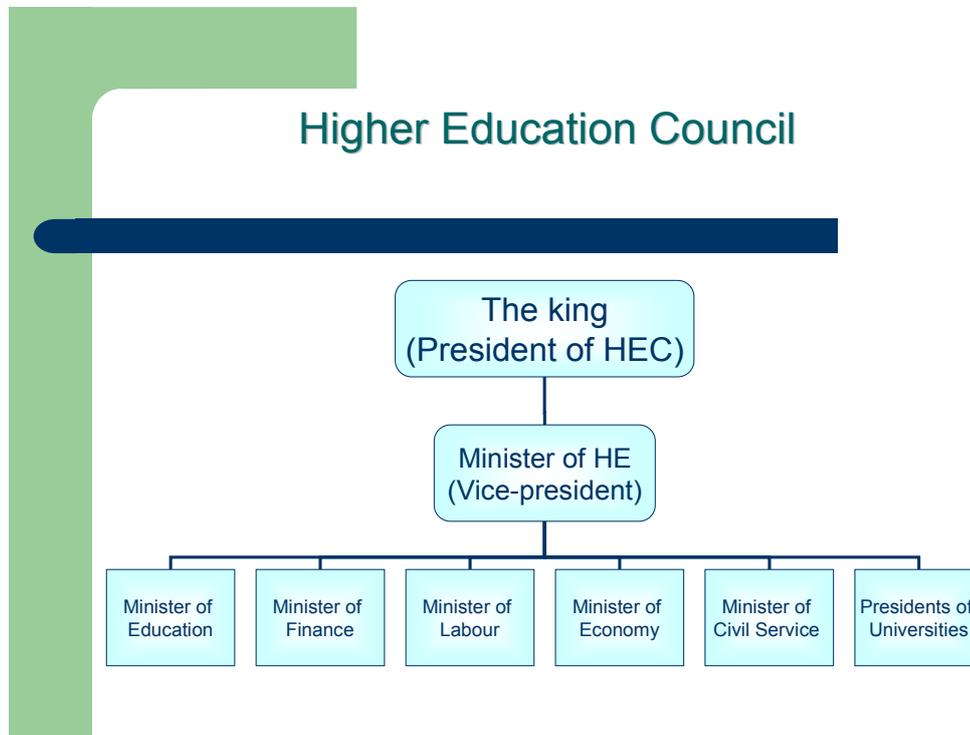
Figure 1 Higher Education Council

2.7.1 The Ministry of Higher Education

The MOHE was established in 1975 by royal decree number 1/236. Prior to this date all HE affairs, such as planning, supervising and co-coordinating, were the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (Aboulfaraj, 2004). One of the Ministry's responsibilities is to coordinate and supervise all HE institutions in Saudi Arabia. It also oversees all affairs pertaining to Saudi education missions worldwide and is responsible for all HE affairs in terms of state policy. The Minister is also chairman of the Council for each university. The Minister of Higher Education is the representative of HE, in the Ministers' Council. However in actual practice, the Minister of Higher Education supervises only the universities. The other colleges are managed directly by various governmental sectors. All these institutions are shown in Table 2.

Type of college	Number of colleges	Supervised by
Teachers` colleges	18	The Ministry of Higher Education
Girls` colleges	102	The Ministry of Higher Education
Technical colleges	28	The General organization for technical education and vocational training
Colleges of health	23	Ministry of Health
Institutes of health	18	Ministry of Health
Industrial colleges	2	The Royal Commission for Yanbu and Jubail
Institute of public administration	1	Ministry of Civil Service

Table 2 Higher education colleges and supervisory bodies

2.7.2 Higher education institutions

The HE sector in Saudi Arabia comprises state universities, which encompass colleges and departments offering HE degrees in various scientific and humanities specializations, as well as providing community services. Some of these colleges and departments also provide distance learning services. The HE sector also comprises private colleges, community colleges affiliated to universities and girls colleges, in addition to government agencies and institutions which provide specialist university level education.

State universities have been established in various locations throughout the regions. There are 20 state universities campuses and 303 colleges, with 400 different academic programmes. As gender segregation is applied in education in Saudi Arabia, all universities have separate sections for female

students, with the exception of the King Fahd University for Petroleum and Mineral Resources in Dahran, which admits male students only. There are 102 girls' colleges that offer mainly bachelor degrees in a variety of subjects. There are 18 teacher training colleges which cater for both male and female students and are managed by the Ministry of Higher Education, based on the Council of Ministers' Resolution No. (143) of 21/6/2004. The same resolution stipulated the annexation of the teacher colleges, as well as the girls' colleges affiliated to the Ministry of Education, to the Ministry of Higher Education (Kingdom of Saudi, 2005-2009). In addition, there are 28 technical colleges supervised by the General Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training. There are also 23 colleges and 18 institutes of health science operated by the Ministry of Health. The Royal Commission for Yanbu and Jubail has two industrial colleges and one institute which is operated by the Institute of Public Administration (Education, 2005a).

2.8 Universities

Saudi Arabia is currently considered to be one of the fastest growing economies among all the developing countries (Al-Farsy, 1991) and its HE system is expanding rapidly, in terms of size and diversity (Alkarni, 1999); (Planning, 2001). The HE system is one of the main sectors considered to be vital to economic growth (Addawood, 1996). The projected rate of growth for students numbers and academic and administrative sectors up to the year 2010 is of the order of 3% (Education, 1998);(Alkhodair, 1999). The extent of the HE system's diversity in Saudi Arabia is evidenced by the specialisation of its universities and colleges or departments (Al-salloom 1995, Al-salloom 1996, Planning and Arabia, 1995). (Al-Rashed, 1998) estimates the percentages of major disciplines offered to undergraduates students are as follows:

- education 34.6%
- humanities 21.7%
- Islamic studies 15.5%
- administration and economics 7.4%
- natural sciences 7.4%

- engineering 5.7%
- medicine and associated sciences 4.4%
- agriculture 1.2%
- social sciences 1.2%
- other 0.9%.

Saudi universities offer standard undergraduate and post graduate degrees. Employment status is graded accordingly. A PhD is entitled to grade 9, a master to grade 8 and a bachelor to grade 6 (Rugh, 2002).

University Council

Minister of HE
(President)

| President of the university | Vice-presidents Of the university | General Secretary | Deans of Colleges | Three other members |
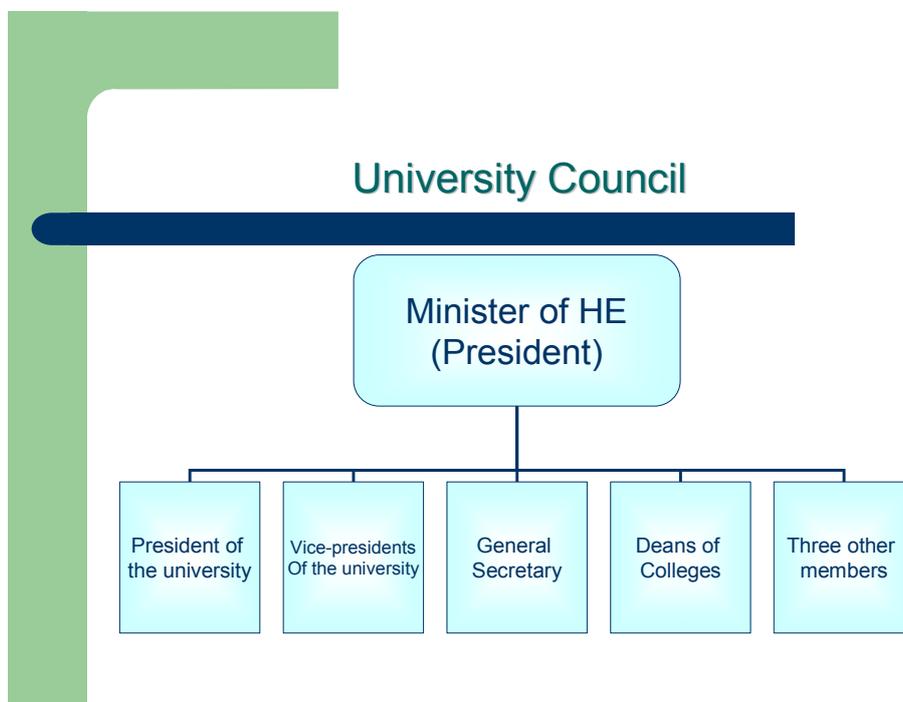
Figure 2 University Council Structure

2.8.1 University administration

Each university is governed by a university council, president and deputies. The university council is usually the major body in the university, meeting generally once a month to make decisions. The organisation of a university council is shown in Figure 2. The Minister of Higher Education is the chairperson of the council and the university president is the vice-chancellor. The members of the council consist of the secretary-general of the Higher Education Council for universities, deans of colleges and three expert members appointed by the Minister of Higher Education. The academic

board approves and co-ordinates the work of the faculties and is responsible
for research, teaching and discipline. It consists of the deputy for research
and postgraduate studies, the chairman, a professor from each college and
other members interested in research. The Minister of Higher Education,
who is the deputy for the Higher Education Council president, is the
chairperson for all higher councils of all universities. The Higher Council of
the University is responsible for supervising a wide range of issues, including
approving policies on admissions and graduations, appointing faculty,
textbooks, approving the curricula and approving scholarships.

The president of the university
The King of Saudi Arabia appoints the university's president for a 4-year
term, at the rank of Minister (the highest rank in the government employment
system). The Minister of Higher Education appoints the college/faculty dean
in any university for renewable 2-year terms. The University Rector appoints
heads of departments and academic committees for 2-year terms that are
also renewable.

 According to Article 23 on the HE council system in Saudi Arabia, the
president of a university is appointed or removed from office by royal decree,
according to the recommendation of the Minister of Higher Education. The
president's job is to manage the university and present an annual report to
the Minister of Higher Education.

The university deputies
According to Article 26 of the Higher Education Council system, each
university has one or more deputies; the number being subject to the Higher
Education Council, which appoints or removes from office according to the
president's nomination or recommendation. The term is for three years and
they assist the president of the university.

The Number of universities

In 1957 there was one governmental university, but by early 2007 there were 20 governmental universities, 4 private universities and 14 private colleges (Abalhassan, 2007). Further information about the universities that are fully funded by the Saudi government is set out Appendix D. Appendix E shows the distribution of HE colleges by geographical region across Saudi Arabia.

2.8.2 Admission requirement in Saudi universities

Admission to university is dependent on grades achieved in high school. Students who pass with 75% or higher may select the faculty of their choice. Those with lower marks are excluded from the medical and engineering faculties. Admission requirements changed in 2000, when the Higher Education Council decided to establish a national centre for evaluation in higher education. The centre designs exams to assess students' abilities to enter HE (Aribia, 2003).

2.8.3 Programmes in Saudi universities

Most undergraduate programmes last 4 years however medicine, veterinary studies and dentistry last 5 years. Literacy in 2003 for males was estimated at 82.4% and 64.4% for females which is a reflection of the history of access to education (UNDP, 2004). It was recognized that, in order to define the future of the country, it would be important to establish a modern and comprehensive educational system (Education, 2001). However, even though the education system was designed by consultants from different parts of the world, who were also involved in its implementation (Sayeg, 2001) it is currently suffering from relative stagnation associated with a lack of flexibility in keeping with the needs for continuous change and the emerging requirements of the national and international community (Mazi, 2002).

2.8.4 Classification of universities

According to Saudi higher education policy, all universities follow one system. However, some authors classify the universities according to three criteria.

Three universities specialize in religious studies. The Imam Muhammed Bin Saud Islamic University, the Islamic University and Umm A1-Qura (Saleh, 1986). Rugh found that four Saudi universities tended to offer courses with more secular or non-religious curricula: the King Abdul Aziz, Saud, Faisal and Fahd universities (Rugh, 2002). However, they all follow Saudi higher education policy based on Islam. Rugh acknowledges that most PhDs focus on Islamic studies, unlike in most Arab countries. He also adds that all universities have substantial Islamic content in their curricula and teach Islamic studies to all students (Rugh, 2002) . Three universities specialise in religious studies: the Imam Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University, the Islamic University and Umm Al-Qura University. King Fahd University for Petroleum and Minerals specialises in science. The other two universities offer a variety of subjects. Two universities do not offer courses for females. These are the Islamic University and the King Fahd University. Five of the universities are comprehensive in their programmes (Saud, Abdulaziz, Fisal, um Al-Qura, and Khaled) two of them are of Islamic orientation (Islamic and Imam Mohammed Bin Saud) and one of them specialises in petroleum and minerals (Fahd)

2.8.5 Academic language

All universities teach in the Arabic language usually, but some programmes in some universities are taught in English, particularly sciences programmes.

2.8.6 Academic staff

Saudi Arabian universities each have the right to appoint academic staff according to their own regulations. There are common regulations and procedures and all universities follow one system in terms of financial matters and recruitment. There are five grades of academic staff namely:

- Professor
- Associate professor
- Assistant professor
- Lecturer
- Teaching assistant

Each grade has different tasks, rights and financial terms.

2.8.7 Growth in student numbers

In 2000, 61,459 students graduated from Saudi universities. A greater number graduated in humanities compared to practical courses. Males were fewer than females (Alhamed, 2005). According to statistics, in 2005 the total number of colleges in higher education was 313, catering for 205,000 students, with a student teacher ratio of 29:1 (Alhamed, 2005). The number of students has increased rapidly at an average annual rate of 5.7% and the total number of students who enrolled in all HE institutions in 2007 was 214,572 (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 2007).

Saudi students abroad

To build a human resources infrastructure, government scholarships are granted to Saudi nationals to pursue HE abroad, which is aimed at alleviating shortages of academics and professionals while improving educational and professional standards in the country, as well as broadening the perspectives of Saudi individuals. The Saudi government maintains 25 cultural missions in foreign countries, which are responsible for the administration of scholarship programmes awarded to Saudi students pursuing HE abroad. These missions serve and monitor all Saudis, including those who are self-financing (Education, 2002). In 2001, a total of 1,261 Saudis earned bachelor, master, or doctoral degrees abroad in several fields, ranging from medicine to engineering, social and natural sciences and the humanities (Education, 2002). According to Rugh (Rugh, 2002) 90% of doctoral candidates study abroad and in 2001 there were more than 5,000 Saudi students in the United States alone. Table 3 shows the distributions of levels of study.

Year	Degree	Number
2003	PhD	1,350
2003	Master	2,272
2003	Other	647
2003	High Diploma	281
2003	Bachelor	9,231
2003	Diploma	1,153
2003	Others	781
Total		**15,715**

Table 3 Distribution of levels of study (Education, 2005a)

2.8.8 Funding for higher education in Saudi Arabia

All universities are fully funded by the government. Students at post-secondary degree level receive a stipend. An annual budget is allocated to each university, based on a common budgetary system applied to all government sectors, regardless of their academic nature and performance. The government follows a policy of intensive funding of HE, amounting to 25% of the whole national budget in 2001 (Alhamed, 2005). There is a move by the government to encourage the private sector to invest in HE whilst also encouraging the universities to co-operate with the private sector and to become self-sufficient through industrial research. In addition, universities are able to accept donations (Alhamed, 2005).

There are two agencies responsible for funding HE, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economics. The two ministries send forms to each university individually to remind them of estimates, dates of submission and other routine instructions. The university subsequently takes, or is subject to, the following steps:

1. Preparation of a budget request and co-ordination with council.
2. Submission of the form to the Ministry of Higher Education for appropriation.
3. The minister counter signs the form.
4. The ministry forwards the form with a covering letter to the Ministry of Finance
5. University delegates meet with finance delegates to discuss the budget (Algaber, 1998). A decision is made at this stage and is dependent on the negotiating skills of the university delegates.

2.8.9 Growth in higher education funding

In 1975, the budget for HE was the equivalent of £133,000,000 and was growing rapidly. The full figures are shown in Table 4.

Year	Amount in million in Saudi Riyals
1970	75
1975	799
1980	5,539
1981	7,926
1982	9,354
1983	10,361
1984	9,305
1985	11,079
1986	7,135
1987	6,003
1995-2000	35 billion
2000-2005	51,266 billion
2005-2010	56,126.9 billion

Table 4 Growth of the budget allocation for higher education 1970 to 2010 (Sources: (Algaber, 1995); (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 2000-2004, Kingdom of Saudi, 2005-2009)

A student in HE costs between 30,000-40,000 Saudi Riyals (Alhamed, 2005) whilst it was 8,243 in 1970 and approximately 39,952 in 1986. All students in HE receive a monthly allowance of around 1,000 Saudi riyals (Algaber,

1995).

2.8.10 Stakeholders in higher education in Saudi Arabia

Many stakeholders influence Saudi HE issues, the most important being the following:

- teaching staff
- undergraduate students
- managers
- graduates
- professional committees
- government committees
- religious sector
- employers (AL-Ajmi, 2003)

Religious groups are included because many studies have indicated that HE issues cannot be separated from the organised system of the Muslim faith and worship (Niblock, 1982); (Asad, 1996); (Abdullah, 2002). Islam remains a component of every Saudi curricula as either a compulsory or optional subject taught in Arabic (Education, 1980);(Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 2000-2004); (University, 1999); (University, 2001); (Alkhodair, 1999).

2.8.11 Challenges to higher education

The HE system in Saudi Arabia is facing many challenges as a result of globalization, political and social changes as well as ideological and economic changes (Economist, 2003). Universities are finding it difficult to cope with the many factors affecting the HE system inside and outside the country and to secure an adequate position in the international field (prokop, 2003). They have to respond to the strong pressure created by national, social and economic development, and take on board global progress in science and technology and the internationalisation of HE policy.

In the UK, Dearing (1997) and Harris (2001) reported that HE should aspire to be world class in both teaching and research, through collaboration between staff, students, government, employers and the community. The Dearing Report, for example, showed evidence from employers that intellectual development in single honours degrees is valued. They see the advantage of graduates being able to study within a broad context. They support students being able to choose between different types of HE programmes. It is interesting to note that in Japan, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and several Western European countries, universities have already begun to reform their undergraduate programmes in this manner. Figures indicate low rates of graduate unemployment for both men and women even during the first year following graduation, the rates being within the range of 3.5-10.5% (OECD, 1998); (OECD, 2000). In contrast, graduate employment rates were falling in Saudi Arabia. Hafez (1998) pointed out that the number of Saudi graduates in certain fields (teaching, Islamic studies and social sciences) was already in excess of what was required by the national development plan. This situation was expected to extend to other fields, and perhaps worsen, unless a solution was found in the near future (Kamel, 1998). Alkhodair (2001) indicates the need to prepare Saudi students for the global market while Alfaisal (2002) criticises the relatively small output of research production from faculty members and the issue of funding for educational research.

Alkhazim (2003) argues that HE in Saudi Arabia faces three challenges namely, limitation of places, depletion of resources and quality measures. He also, adds that the major problem facing institutions of HE in Saudi Arabia is the connection with other governmental sectors. For example, universities do not have full control of their employment system; instead, they adhere to the government central employment system, supervised by the Ministry of Employment. This means that any position created, promotion, or salary has to be approved first by the Ministry of Employment and must be based on the unified rules of employment and faculties developed by the Higher Education Council and other governmental agencies. Such rules limit

the university's ability to develop its own academic policies, staffing, budgeting, and investing regulations, which minimises the independence of, and competition among, institutions. The HE system in Saudi Arabia does not have an independent accredited or academic evaluation system that accredits, monitors, and/or approves academic programmes. Saudi Arabia does not have a scientific or professional association for HE. Any degree obtained outside the country has to be approved by the Ministry of Higher Education (Alkhazim, 2003).

2.8.12 Higher education institutes (private universities and colleges)

Saudi universities are state universities, wholly funded and regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education. However, King Abdulaziz University was initially founded as a private institution funded by private investors from the western region of the country. It became nationalised in 1982 (Alghafis, 1992). Since then and until recently, the government has not allowed any private HE institution to be established. However, in anticipation of such a prospect, in the mid 1990s, the Ministry of Higher Education released its compendium of rules and regulations for proposed private colleges, which are now operational, and these offer bachelor degrees for fee-paying students (Education, 2001).

These colleges are privately administered and ownership of them is by non-profit making charity organisations regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education. It undertakes their supervision and ensures that they are effectively managed and that they conform to the administrative and academic standards that are stipulated by the Ministry, which also carries out reviews and enforces the rules and regulations that govern various aspects of the administration of the degree programmes through regular inspection visits. These universities and colleges are shown in Appendix F. Approximately 70 applications are in process at the Ministry of Higher Education for more private institutions.

2.9 What higher education offers?

In recent years, Saudi HE has witnessed many changes including structure and economic change, the introduction of new information and communication technologies and the development of a new knowledge based culture. HE has become competitive and debates over the role of education, human capital and scientific research have emerged (Fram and Camp, 1995). As institutions that provide services, a new reality is developing in Saudi universities, including the gradual internationalisation of the system, growing competitiveness and an increase in relationships between universities and their students. Consequently, the development of a new relationship between student satisfaction and service provision is emerging. Almost all Saudi universities currently offer a wide range of services which endeavour to respond competitively to new demands. Essentially, HE offers bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees, and other courses. Research and community services also feature, and adaptations are made to in-course design to suit the particular needs of students. Student satisfaction should bring loyalty with interpersonal communication and feedback helping to maintain improvements.

2.10 Summary of Part 1

Part 1 reviewed HE in Saudi Arabia. It concentrated on policy, philosophy and the aims of HE. It also described the development, reforms to and the organization of the HE system. The challenges were also discussed; several major issues were outlined. Having obtained on overview of HE in Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to discuss quality management in HE in general and total quality management in HE more specifically in practice as a tool for universities to work with.

Part 2

2.11 Defining quality in higher education

Hill (1995) views education as a service which can be described as activities or processes with four essential characteristics:

- intangibility

- perishability,
- heterogeneity
- inseparability of production and consumption.

However, Harvey and Green(1993) suggest that services are, by definition, behavioural rather than physical entities and this is particularly pertinent in the case of HE, which is frequently described as a transformative process that involves analytical and critical development of students. Furthermore, HE is an individual and personal commodity resulting from a complex service delivery and post-purchase experience (Wright and O'Neill, 2002) which involves students, faculties, employers and ultimately the community making it extremely difficult to evaluate.

Yorke (1999) suggests that a quality educational experience provides the student with a set of knowledge and skills which reflect the quality of the education received. A major issue in quality management is the lack of agreement on the definition of what quality is, although people may believe they can recognise quality when they see it. Although HE may be defined by the quality of its educational provision; the measurement of quality is subject to various interpretations and problems.

In order to achieve an effective system of quality management; a clear statement of the meaning of the term quality is necessary (Doherty, 1997). A key issue here is whether quality is a preferred condition or whether it is a function which meets the changing needs of industry/market and stakeholder (Saad and Siha, 2000). When applied to HE, quality concepts present limitations, and must be considered to be inconclusive (Cheng and Tam, 1997). A debate exists regarding the appropriateness of re-defining business concepts in order to relate them to HE (Harvey and Green, 1993); (Campell and Rozsnyani, 2002) and as a result a tendency to criticise market-led approaches to HE quality has been blamed for increasing emphasis on consumer orientation (Gibbs and Iacovidou, 2004). Perceptions of the quality of HE have developed in recent years, ranging from experience to process and have been allocated the following definitions:

- being exceptional or distinctive (excellence)
- achieving consistency particularly in process
- being fit for purpose (conformity to specified objectives or standards)
- being accountable, effective and efficient (providing value for money)
- being transformative - education is considered as an ongoing process of transformation including the empowerment and enhancement of all involved (Campell and Rozsnyani, 2002); (Watty, 2005).

Consistency in process may be criticised as it is an insufficient but necessary goal of quality management, however it may lead to bureaucracy interrupting progress (Doherty, 1997), which may be considered a negative influence on progress. Efficiency and effectiveness can be considered to be complementary. Efficiency relates to the conversion of input into output and effectiveness is the extent to which desired outcomes are achieved. However, in terms of HE efficiency and effectiveness can be difficult to measure as many important functional aspects are intangible and vary between groups of students and tutors. According to Lomas (2004) the term fitness for purpose is used widely in business and is also quite popular in HE. Indeed, Watty (2005) found that fitness for purpose is the widespread definition of quality amongst academics in Australia. In reality, the complexity of HE makes defining its purpose difficult and may weaken the product or outcome. This approach is useful if the indicators used to judge quality are transparent and widely accepted (Cheng and Tam, 1997).

It can be argued that few of these definitions are applicable to students who ought to be the main focus of HE, however the transformative definition of Harvey et al. (1997a) is an exception as it focuses on enhancing capabilities and empowerment of participants. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) propose that the ability to transform learners by developing their ability to think independently can be viewed as the ultimate goal in HE. Becket and Brookes (2005) view transformation as the critical ability to foster knowledge which they consider to be more influential to internal stakeholders. The conclusion that can be drawn from these views is that HE is more to do with

gaining knowledge rather than developing independent thinkers, however to achieve either of these transformations requires active and joint participation between students and HE (Hill, 1995); (Williams, 1993).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education according to Eagle and Brennan (2007) defines academic quality in terms of '…*how well the learning opportunities provided to students enables them to achieve their award'*. Eagle and Brennan (2007) are critical of this definition suggesting that it may be too general to be easily implemented. However, Cheng and Tam's (1997) definition of quality is more universally applicable, but remains generic and encompasses the entire process of education as well as stakeholders; it states:

> *'The character of the set of elements in the input, process, and output of the education system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations' (p. 23).*

Yorke (1999) states that quality represents the totality of all aspects that influence students' experiences. Academic standards are concerned with study programmes which are always linked to outcomes and warrant that a certain level of knowledge or skills from graduates is achieved. Lomas and Tomlinson (2000) point out that standards measure outcome and allow for transparent judgments to be reached about their quality. However a number of authors (Clayson and Haley (2005); Lomas and Tomlinson(2000) indicate that increasing focus on student satisfaction together with the massification of HE, has brought about the view that standards have fallen and grades have inflated. Rolfe (2002) claims that standards are not necessarily a priority for students and evidence shows that students consider HE as a route to a career. Whereas Carlson and Fleisher (2002) claim that students tend to look for the easiest courses with the highest grades. However, academics such as Marsh and Roche (2000) refute these claims, as in their opinion students do not value lecturers who give them lighter workloads. They suggest there is a positive correlation between student evaluation of

teaching and grades because students believe that they have learned more when they obtain good grades.

2.12 Stakeholders in higher education

Stakeholders in HE include, in addition to students and teaching staff, non-teaching staff, management, government and other funding agencies, supervisory bodies and the general public, each with their own priorities and perspectives (Telford and Masson, 2005). The more important stakeholders amongst these are those who either have an active effect on the provision or consumption of the service or are otherwise directly affected by it. The primary internal stakeholders, therefore, would be students, teachers and management, as they receive, deliver or are responsible for the process of education. Employers of graduates, for example, are external stakeholders who are directly affected by the quality of HE and, therefore, must be considered as a key stakeholder (Hewitt and Clayton, 1999) and will be a focus of this study. Even if the primary internal and external stakeholders considered the role of HE as only to support the economy by preparing graduates for jobs, this should not devalue the legitimate purposes of HE. As Eagle and Brennan (2007), p. 48) state:

> '…the community which contributes to higher education through general taxation, may reasonably suppose that it is the purpose of higher education to produce well-rounded citizens who are sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups and who may be prepared to sacrifice some self-interest for the common good'.

Heyneman (2006) emphasises the role of HE in facilitating social cohesion and in ensuring that graduates meet the expectations of the wider community. The more a university exhibits good behaviour and professional standards, it is more likely that its students will demonstrate shared values, understand diversity and will work for a common good. Government agencies and funding bodies as stakeholders are also influential, as they

have a direct or indirect effect on funding, licensing and approvals. However as their main role is more supervisory in nature, they are not considered here to be in the same category as students, staff and employers.

Terms for students in quality assurance literature include: customer, consumer, partner, participant and stakeholder, and it is now commonly accepted that students are increasingly powerful stakeholders through their influence in the process and outcomes of HE (Johnson and Deem, 2003). Definitions of quality in HE consider students in two distinct categories:

- as customers buying a service in expectation of career enhancement
- as human capital that will be enhanced by the process of HE into an individual with improved skills (Eriksen, 1995).

In the latter view, the human capital is the student who is transformed by the value added process of HE. A distinctive feature of many services is that customers are partial employees because they are involved in both the production and delivery of the service (Hill, 1995) as typified by post-graduates who are processors of information (Williams, 1993) and co-producers (Hill, 1995).

A definition of a customer made *by* Mahatma Ghandi in his famous (1890) speech is still pertinent to students as customers today:

> *"A customer is the most important visitor in our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption of our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider on our business. He is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. In fact, he is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so"* (Metha, 1999), pp. 647-652).

Many attempts have been made to define the terms 'customer'. The American Marketing Association holds the view that the customer is the actual or prospective purchaser of products and services. Customers can be

classified as internal or external customers with buying or bargaining power and even according to how demanding they might be. Johnson and Deem (2003) observe that any attempt to present students as customers must involve careful identification of their needs, which becomes the framework of students' identity, rights and status in relation to the customer concept. This however may result in tension between management and academic staff. Guidelines for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards (1993) emphasised the close link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Dale, 2001). Assessment of an organization should take into account customer volume and frequency of satisfaction; however Hartman and Schmidt (1995) suggest that satisfaction is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. An organization should concentrate on customer satisfaction in the long term by provide complete and accurate information, but also through promptness, reliability, accuracy and courtesy, tactfulness, information and listening to complaints. This concept may be applied to HE services. Marzo-Navarro et al.(2005) suggest that it is difficult to measure perceptions and satisfaction. Other researchers wish to analyse the overall satisfaction of the students with the totality of services that the universities offer (Hill, 1995); (Joseph and Joseph, 1997); (LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1997); (Kwan and Ng, 1999). Some researchers seek only to analyse the teaching efforts as the determinants of quality. However the term quality encompasses a broad number of concepts which require investigation of students' perceptions. These should include teaching, facilities, support services and other issues. To understand customer expectations and perceptions five key questions were developed, by Zeithaml et al.(1990), to provide a foundation for improvement of quality of service. They are:

- How exactly do customers evaluate the quality of service?
- Do they directly make a general evaluation or do they assess specific facets of a service in arriving at an overall evaluation?
- If the latter, what are the multiple facets, or dimensions on which they evaluate the service?
- Do those segments vary across services and different segments?

- If customer expectations play a crucial role in the assessment of service quality, which factors shape and influence those expectations?

These questions indicate the importance of understanding the characteristics of individual customer requirements in detail to provide flexibility and creativity to meet customer needs. Dale (2001) explains that incorporating customers' opinions can result in quality service adjusting to customer needs and requirements.

The issue here is that in an environment where student expectations are made paramount there is a significant risk that learning, curriculum and programme quality may be devalued. In 1997 Barnet argued that HE was becoming a major service industry accepting the concept of customer care, despite opposition and debate with regard to customer-centred approaches and traditional academic methods (Barnett, 1997). More recently Eagle and Brennan (2007) point out that while students may consider career advantages to be a potential indicator of quality, they may not consider academic excellence in the same way. While HE should meet the needs of all stakeholders they point out that there is some value in the *'…notion that students are simply in the HE system to acquire a qualification and that any education picked up along the way is incidental to this primary aim*' (p.44).

The idea of the student-customer concept may give rise to concerns that HE will have to satisfy any and all student demands, even if they are not fully in the academic interests of the learners themselves. Wright and O'Neill (2002)discuss evidence of a direct link between student satisfaction and retention. They recommended that students should to be involved in all stages of HE design and implementation so that their priorities and changing needs can be effectively met.

Therefore, identifying and managing student expectations have now become a significant part of HE management. Students are no more homogeneous

than any other stakeholder group and have a range of requirements of HE services, a fact which is under recognised by the mechanisms of HE (Eagle and Brennan (2007). Education may be the only service where it is difficult for a customer to assess the quality and relevance to the individual who may not fully realise the value until later (Dickson et al., 1995). For instance, new HE students might only wish to study in order to get a good job without realising the importance of developing the skills required for personal and professional development. Although it is necessary for students to understand their role in learning and the role of academic staff in facilitating such learning (Lammers et al., 2005) it is clearly inappropriate to apply the idea that the customer is always right in the sphere of HE. A justification of this view can be that students may not have the maturity to consider fully and rationally the future benefits that may arise from their HE experience (Amaral, 2007).

The increasing demand by employers for employees with university degrees has increased the value placed on HE as a vital antecedent to career success (Wright and O'Neill, 2002). However, Gibbs and Lacovidou (2004) are critical of attempts to include employers and skills in the process of HE, which they considered as unnecessary or even dangerous as it may threaten academic independence and credibility. They consider that HE should be grounded in critical thinking, tolerance and self-development, rather than the vocational requirements of employers; reinforcing the view that education and the market place are not compatible when it comes to defining services. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that employers can greatly influence the future of HE and their graduates through recruitment procedures. Macfarlane and Lomas (1995) highlight a growing tendency of graduate employers to negotiate with HE in order to provide programmes that focus on meeting their specific needs and demands. The primacy of financial rewards that these arrangements may raise concerns that the quality of teaching experience and academic values may be overlooked. More significantly intellectual freedom and the development of students' critical abilities and autonomy are at risk.

Jameson and Holden (2000) emphasise that being a graduate will become meaningless unless employers are able to understand how graduates can contribute to the workplace. Morley and Aynsley (2007) assert that UK recruiters can undermine equity and narrow participation initiatives in HE by restricting recruitment to elite HE. They attribute a part of the cause for increasing emphasis placed upon league tables to demand for elite academic credentials by employers. Evidence suggests that employers are expressing increasing dissatisfaction with the skills of graduates (Johnson and Spicer, 2006b). Thomas (2007) highlights an article in the Economist (2006), which indicates employer dissatisfaction with the quality of recruits and the time taken to find suitable job candidates. Rhodes and Shiel (2007) observe that to address the deficit in graduate skills in the UK, establishing links between HE and employers should be given high priority by the government. As a result of growing frustration with the standards of HE, graduate employers now depend on their in-house training facilities (which are defined as corporate universities) to provide for their strategic human resource development needs (Holland and Pyman, 2006). The scope of graduate jobs has now been broadened and may be too ambitious for fresh graduates to aspire to. In the present economic climate this may limit their ability to obtain permanent professional employment (Jameson and Holden, 2000). This in turn has had a major impact on employers' relationship with HE, and it may be that HE can no longer ignore such expectations as a highly important reason for students seeking HE.

Quality management theory stresses staff commitment and motivation; characteristics which play a major role in the workings of HE. In addition to the mix of factors such as curriculum and classroom configuration, the enthusiasm, expertise and teaching style of teachers are vital to learning, as they play a role in motivation and learning (Hill et al., 2003) and determining the outcome and overall experiences of students. High levels of staff motivation also seem to facilitate professional satisfaction and the overall standards of services (Konidari and Abernot, 2006). Hence, in order to be effective, HE staff must use judgement and rationality rather than routine only (Hill et al., 1996). It would be logical that an appropriate model for

quality management in HE considers the perspectives and quality requirements of students, staff and employers as the three main stakeholder bases.

2.13 Relevance of existing quality management models to HE

A significant proportion of quality management models are related to manufacturing and general services and there is general agreement that concepts derived from commerce are not appropriate for HE. The central argument focuses on the public sector orientation of most HE and the commercial orientation of business organisations (Cuthbert, 1996). Since HE is traditionally public sector it is usually considered to have a moral dimension to its services, providing benefits to society that are not rooted in economic benefits (Drucker, 1994); (Roffe, 1998). More recently, Eagle and Brennan (2007) emphasise that HE is to a large extent for private good with the benefits mainly for students through enhanced earnings. Nevertheless, they note that HE cannot function only on the premise that HE is entirely a purely private good, as graduates have a vital impact on the wider community and economy.

Other constraints in applying such quality management models to HE include:

- the difficulty in considering students as customers who ought to be satisfied (Chua, 2004)
- the interactive, multidimensional, varied and lengthy process of education that is essentially different to a commercial process (Tribus, 1996) and cannot facilitate meaningful measurement (Harvey et al., 1997a)
- the difficult and inappropriate nature of reducing variation in educational processes and outcomes (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007)
- specific challenges may include problems that stem from over-regulation and control of intellectual freedom

- applying quality management models to HE is the difficulty of identifying appropriate management structures that do not restrict the diversity, innovation and creativity of HE institutions (Saunders and Walker, 1991).

However, these constraints do not present insurmountable reasons for the application of industry-based models to HE, as HE institutions are essentially business entities even if they are established to serve the public and are subject to the requirements of efficiency and accountability.In 1997 Doherty (1997) suggests that HE had begun to successfully and constructively apply ideas taken from business, including manufacturing and service industries. Emiliani (2005), considers that HE continues to pursue processes that consume resources and do not create value whereas businesses seek steady improvement in their activities to eliminate waste and increase value.

There are numerous industry-based models of quality management such as TQM, ISO 9000 and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model, which have all been applied to HE with what appear to be inconclusive results (Sahney et al., 2006). Some academic bodies have developed TQM strategies by introducing quality circles involving various members of staff to facilitate continuous improvement (Lomas, 2004) while others have applied EFQM to achieve excellence (Pupius, 2001).

Doherty (1997) points out that the term TQM is often used to describe one or more approaches and include some that might emphasise different aspects of quality improvement. According to Hoyle (1996) TQM is a combination of quality control and assurance and improvement. Rad (2005) suggests that despite its theoretical promise, application of TQM has limitations which include difficulty of implementation and benefits that are hard to achieve. The application of TQM to HE institutions is frequently criticised, usually on the grounds that information is claimed by focusing on non-academic support functions alone, such as admissions, administration and fund management (Sohail et al., 2003). The implication is that academic quality and provision to the student in not being evaluated. Silvestro, (2001)

describes education as a complex service and suggested that quality models developed for manufacturing and mass services are difficult to apply to education. Specifically, applying TQM to HE may be inappropriate as it is based on customer satisfaction, while HE does not function to satisfy the students who are its primary customers (Chua, 2004).

The most successful TQM programmes begin by defining quality from the perspective of the customer. A practical way of defining *'the customer'* in HE is to treat it as a wider concept that encompasses all stakeholders. That '*the customer comes first'* and '*the customer is always right'* are clichés of the business world. Organizations using TQM believe that performance can always be improved by satisfying customers' needs and requirements (Zairi, 1991) therefore customer satisfaction is the main indicator in determining performance.

Implementing quality management across all operations of HE is considered by some to be ineffective due to the complexity of the processes involved in teaching and learning. A significant weakness of applying industry models is the undue focus on measurement, as teaching and learning are not measurable concepts (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007). A further criticism is that the focus of such approaches is on reducing costs through reducing errors rather than enhancing quality, which becomes merely a secondary function. So product control, standardisation and avoidance of error which are key aspects of industry models, cannot be satisfactorily applied to HE with its varied functions. However, what should be considered is whether the application of these models can help to develop a sense of ownership and standards among employees towards working towards solving problems that may affect the workings of the organisation. In an HE setting this requires learning opportunities that are of benefit to both students and employees (Hsieh, 2005). Collaboration between staff and students is vital however Gouthro et al. (2006) suggest that much of the literature on learning organisations fails to take into account the critical role of students' participation.

Lomas (2004) emphasises that for quality initiatives to be successful the selected strategy must be right for the organisation and its unique structure and communication channels must allow quality initiative to be disseminated in an effective manner. According to Colling and Harvey (1996)TQM approaches require HE to adopt key principles for procedures and team approaches. Individual autonomy is often paramount in academic course teams leading to inefficient and ineffective management and outcomes of teaching and learning. Deem and Brehony's (2005) view is that managers outside education frequently receive large amounts of training, to facilitate their roles as managers. However this in not usually the case with academic managers whose legitimisation is usually based on their academic status.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) suggest that models for managing various aspects of quality in HE have looked at one of two things; improving teaching and learning or providing a more beneficial management methodology. They argue that both the pedagogical and service aspects of HE should be addressed and propose "holistic" models for quality, which address *'…service areas as well as the core of teaching and learning and make the transformation of learners their priority, as well as proactive collaboration at learning interface and commitment, supported by management'* (p. 266). The core elements of a Quality Management system in Education (QME) include transformation of learners' institutions, synergistic collaboration at the learning interface and significant commitment by all stakeholders.

The differing views of quality require different evaluation methods and a range of performance indicators (Cullen et al., 2003). The prevalence of performance indicators is normal in HE but according to Soutar and McNeil (1996), they are more measures of activity than accurate measures of the quality of educational service. In the United States the accreditation system includes a range of PIs:

- access,

- productivity and efficiency,
- learning,
- HE degree completion,
- economic returns (Schray, 2006).

In the UK, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) provides performance indicators, which examine: access to HE, non-continuation rates, completion rates and research outputs. Performance indicators may reflect past activity without actually identifying the causes of negative change (Pursglove and Simpson, 2007). League tables and rankings can provide an additional basis of comparison of quality between HE institutions for external stakeholders. University rankings generate a great amount of interest and while the media feels that the rankings have added positive value, academia, on balance, tends to believe the opposite (Policnao, 2007). Doherty (1997) believes that academics usually view such tables as being based on statistical indicators which endeavour to reduce complex human interaction and experiences into mere numbers. One effect of rankings has been to influence applicants to place a greater amount of emphasis on variables such as "…*perceived prestige rather than on variables like the quality and relevance of the curriculum*" (Policnao, 2007).

According to Telford and Masson (2005) the increasingly competitive HE environment has witnessed the emergence of external quality assurance regimes. In the UK these are based on externally set standards. Pounder (Pounder, 1999) highlights the difficulty of producing valid and reliable scales of effectiveness for quality as a standard for the comparative assessment of performance by institutions. Becket and Brookes (2005) go some way to defining key elements for an analytical quality framework in order to assess quality management, these include:
- the degree to which inputs, processes and outputs in HE are assessed
- the degree to which different stakeholder perspectives are considered
- the extent to which different quality dimensions are considered

- the balance of quality assurance versus quality enhancement practices and processes.

There are currently two aspects to quality management in HE: assurance and enhancement (Lomas, 2004). Williams (2002) argues that quality assurance and enhancement should not to be considered as two distinct functions but as two integral parts to quality management. Quality assurance concerns the monitoring, evaluation and conformance aspects of quality facilitation that is best aligned with the fitness for purpose quality definition (West-Burnham and Davies, 1994). However it has a number of shortcomings including its reliance on auditable thorough documentation and the need for a hard managerialist approach (Hargreaves, 1998)). A more serious criticism is that it does not give sufficient emphasis to teaching and learning. Essentially there is pressure for measurable quality assurance processes in HE, however Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) emphasise the need for quality enhancement with accountability. Becket and Brookes (2005) suggest that HE institutions are increasingly required to have quality assurance procedures that serve the rigorous and transparent requirements of stakeholders.

Quality practices are seen largely as a method of control reliant on documentation and evidence for external bodies with the resulting disruption to activity having a tendency to threaten the enthusiasm and commitment of staff (Colling and Harvey, 1996); (Westerheijden, 2000). The control approach is essentially ineffective when considering the principles of quality management, which relate the idea of service quality in processes and ultimately to morale and management (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003). HE educators are engaged in the predominantly individual activity of teaching (Senge, 2000), therefore sufficient leverage must be acquired to facilitate changes in such a complex system. In this situation quality management should be seen as a normal, integral and continuous function of all connected activities, rather than a bureaucratic, over-documented, time controlled requirement.

2.14 Functional quality versus technical quality

Managing quality in HE can be focussed on three areas input, process and output which can be outlined as follows (Sahney et al., 2006):

- *Input*: student intake and characteristics, programme and curriculum, experience and qualifications of teaching staff and support staff, physical infrastructure and resources including library and teaching and learning facilities.
- *Process*: teaching and learning methods and environment, design (class sizes, schedules) research activities, assessment and evaluation activities, extracurricular activities.
- *Output*: academic achievement in terms of marks/degrees awarded, graduation, dropouts, acquisition of transferable skills and employment.

Given such complexities, time period and the level and intricacy of interaction involved in HE, the process of education or functional quality can be viewed as the most critical aspect of quality management. Difficulties exist in evaluating the quality of both the process and outcome in HE. Harvey and Green (1993) suggest that the ongoing mutability of HE does not lend itself to a simple, discernible product or outcome, as the impact of such transformation may be felt years after the experience. Also, the intangibility of the educational process and lack of physical evidence presents difficulties in analysing and evaluating perceptions of process quality (Mahapatra and Khan, 2007) and students' views of process quality during the actual process itself may not necessarily function as valid indicators.

The student is the input which provides the raw material of change through HE and therefore, the standard of the input provided must determine the nature of the process and the output. Students may also have important influences over each other (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1996). HE as a process is

reliant on interpersonal relationships, between students and between students and teaching staff, which makes the management of process quality increasingly problematic and difficult to separate from the input and output elements. Additionally, the value that stakeholders attribute to the input, process and output areas of HE may differ. For example, when examining quality, students may attach greater importance to what is given to them, while overlooking intangible aspects of the process such as the extent to which they felt themselves to have been encouraged to think for themselves or to take responsibility for their own learning actions (Yorke, 1999). For employers, the skills of graduates (output) may be of greater value than the totality of the learning experience, which is of high value to both academics and students. Hence, an initial step for quality management should be to identify the various values that stakeholders put on HE input, process and output. This would aid the determination of the necessary balance between the three dimensions, which are described in Tables 5, 6 and 8 below.

2.14.1 Input

Student	Factors that lead to HE success	Development of students' knowledge, skills and understanding
• the major focus of the educational system (Muller, 1992)	• high quality of student intake (Cheng and Tam, 1997) • admissions criteria (Lawrence and Pharr, 2003)	• quality of the education process contributes to the excellence of outcomes (Yorke, 1999)
• primary input undergoing transformation, via three roles - input, consumer, processor (Williams, 1993)	• positive correlation between entry requirements of HE institutions • admission standards need to have a highly related quality control role (Pursglove and Simpson, (2007)	• relating entry and exit qualifications can be difficult (Yorke, 1999) • monitoring additional progress students make above what they would be expected to achieve (Gorard, 2006). • monitoring additional progress is conducted (Government, 2007). • the curriculum, teaching, assessment, support and guidance are required in order to achieve defined objectives (Lawrence and Pharr, (2003).
• being exposed to a value-added services (Eriksen(1995)	• introduction of a level of competition to student recruitment (Srikanthan	• the curriculum can encourage or discourage the development of various forms of knowledge, the

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	students consider academic staff to have the most impact on their outcomes (Cook,(1997)	and Dalrymple, 2007) • expertise, educational styles, commitment and enthusiasm of teaching staff (Hill et al., (2003).	development of core transferable skills, choice of educational methods and assessment strategies (Nabi and Bagley, 1999). • curriculum development needs to meet the ever-changing needs of both students and potential employers (Anon, 2005). • the curriculum needs to be accessible and acknowledges the diversity in background and ability of students (Stefani, 2009). • the curriculum offers adequate scope for students to develop practical interactive skills for understanding theoretical concepts that enhance a critical mind-set (Paloniemi, 2006). • the context in which the content is learned is vital and the curriculum is essential in providing this balance between content and context preparing students for employment (Bowden and Marton, 1998)

Table 5 Input dimension

2.14.2 Process

Service provider	Customer satisfaction	Participation, expectations, motivations
• critical interaction between students, as participant learners (customers) and the education provider (Cheng et al.,(1997)	• effectiveness of course delivery mechanisms, quality of courses and teaching and learning (Oldfield and Baron, 2000) • administrative and academic support and effective teaching and learning functions (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007). • significant relationship between the teaching and learning processes (Cuthbert (1996). • tutors need to build up a different ability set involving seeking, analysing and evaluating information (Stefani (2009) • tutors have to provide clear guidance about what is necessary and provide feedback (Harvey, 2005). • students' learning depends on their individual attitude as	• motivation, maturity and talent or aptitudes are decisive factors that have a bearing on the transformative process of HE (Eriksen (1995) • persuading the student of the need to put in the essential effort required in order to benefit from the educational experience (Hewitt and Clayton, 1999). • developing autonomous learning and involvement (Mattick and Knight, (2007) • managing student participation, expectations, motivations, values and aspirations are significant contributory considerations required to achieve a mutually beneficial result (Telford and Masson, 2005) • students' expectations of HE should influence their motivations and resulting behaviours (Bridger(2007) • students should also be

	co-producers of their personal learning (Cuthbert (1996); (Hennig-Thrau et al., 2001)
	• students' analytical and critical skills need to be developed through the transformative process of HE and the collaboration between students and academics to achieve their objectives (Harvey, 2005).
	• managing student expectations and quality requirements which may change over the time that the student is in the institution. (Tan and Kek, 2004).
		encouraged to reflect on their past learning experiences so that they will be able to build on positive approaches and unlearn unhelpful ones (Hill et al., 1996).
		• curriculum balance between content and understanding, and a range of evaluation methods (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007).
		• competitive job markets can result in students avoiding the complex demands of independent or critical learning; therefore, they are tempted to focus on learning for assessments or superficial rather than multifaceted learning (Chadwick, 1995)
		• emphasis on innovation in teaching and learning and student-centred approaches and addressing complicated factors such as:
		    growth in student numbers,
		    mixed ability students in the same classes,
		    increasing demands of students awareness about their rights,
		    pressure from regulatory authorities (Narasimhan, (1997)
		• universities should change from delivering teaching formulaically to commitment to delivering learning (Srikanthan and Dalrymple(2007)
		• professional growth of staff in terms of appropriate curriculum development, innovative teaching methods, student enthusiasm and the development of core skills (Stefani, 2009).
		• the level of commitment within the organisation to quality and its continuous development (Lomas (2004).
		• staff should be encouraged to change both attitude and behaviour by transormative leadership which positively stimulates a culture that seeks steady improvement (Fullan, 1999).
		• transformative management commitment to quality ought to be visible, permanent and present at all levels and must translate into clear principles that are disseminated throughout the institution (Calvo-Mora et al., 2006).

		• the need for rewarding and recognising excellence in teaching in an atmosphere where there is inadequate emphasis placed on the teaching function (Lomas, 2004). • appropriateness of educational quality to the learner to achieve the intended outcomes (Yorke, (1999) • personal communication between student and staff in the form of pastoral support and understanding of student needs(Hill, 1995).

Table 6 Process dimension

Related to the process dimension is the question of how HE can manage student perceptions and expectations over time, which is an elementary requirement of managing service quality as described in Table 7.

Student's learning influences (Struyven et al., 2002)	Student's use of the situation	Student's perceptions of quality (Telford and Masson, 2005)
• course organisation and resources	• self-management	• ability to contribute
• teaching and learning activities	• enthusiasm and needs	• role clarity
• evaluation	• understanding	• constructive perceptions of the organisational climate in which the facility takes place
	• need for supervision.	• the extent of contentment

Table 7 Influences on behaviours and perceptions of students in HE

2.14.3 Output

HE institutions	Student needs

• meeting the requirements of industry (Emery et al. (2003)	• success in obtaining employment and become independent learners (Bourner, 1998).
• productivity and degree achievement, and economic returns from HE (Schray, 2006)	• entrance to the world of work requires much more than the inert reproduction of subject knowledge (Eagle and Brennan, 2007).
• predefined learning outcomes have been achieved (Lomas, 2004)	• graduate attributes, which are important to employers:
• student learning outcomes (Welsh and Dey, 2002)	• knowledge
• accreditation procedures assuring values in student learning outcomes (Schray, (2006)	• intellectual capacity
• increased efficiency and more accountability (Williams, (1993)	• an ability to work in modern organisations
• value added by the teaching process in developing specific learning (Amin and Amin, 2003)	• interpersonal skills
• the multiple nature of learning is preserved (Barnett, (1997)	• interaction (Harvey and Green (1993)
• the quality and integrity of the learning surroundings (process) which requires students to be proactive partners in the overall understanding (Hewitt and Clayton (1999)	• transferable skills that are relevant for employment (Yorke, 1999) e.g. problem solving, team communication, exchange of ideas etc., are highly prized as these are skills are transferable across domains (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2004).
• ease of measurement of outcomes (Lomas, 2004).	• enhancement of student awareness of the importance of core transferable skills and personal and behavioural growth and societal needs (Morley and Aynsley(2007)
• ability to justify variation according to the subject (Yorke, 1997).	• assessment of student learning is thought to be the most significant factor affecting transformation (Stefani, (2009); Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007(Struyven et al., 2002).
• Long term effectiveness and development of life skills (Yorke, 1999).	• an integrated view where teaching, learning and appraisal are considered to correspond and directly relate to each other (Stefani, (2009)
• ability to teach as university teaching is professional and professionalized activity also life in institutions is largely dominated by corporate leaders(Brew and Lucas,2009)	• standards are enhanced when assessments improve student learning rather than simply measuring limited learning (Gibbs and Simpson, (2005)
	• understand the relevance of non-traditional inventive methods of assessment (McHardy and Allen, (2000)
	• matching assessment with high quality learning (Mattick and Knight(2007)

Table 8 Output dimension

2.15 Studies on quality values

Joseph and Joseph (1997) suggest that most studies in HE deal with the

extent of student approval of the quality of teaching and learning, facilities

and other related aspects, whereas Hill et al. (2003) note that there is very little empirical research into student views of quality in HE. Wright and O'Neill (2002) assert that quantitative studies on HE quality seek to investigate the differences between students' pre-purchase potential and their perceptions of actual service performance.

The use of '*disconfirmation models'* such as SERVQUAL (survey the connection between students' pre and post-service experience) and SERVPERF (measures actual perception of customers about service quality and does not contrast it to pre- service expectations) in HE has been criticised, predominantly as they have been constructed for defining client values and expectations in the general service sector and hence, overlook a number of key areas exclusive to HE (Telford and Masson, 2005). Consequently the HEdPERF was developed as a more comprehensive, performance-based scale of quality constructs within HE (Abdullah, 2006); (Pears, 2010). However, even though all the service quality measurement models are supposed to be wide-ranging, there is little evidence that the service elements assessed by these models as well as HEdPERF, measure what students actually consider as relevant. Cuthbert (1996) observes that many studies have been conducted on student learning using well-validated instruments such as the classroom environment scale (CES), the individualized classroom environment questionnaire (ICEQ) and the student experiences questionnaire (CSEQ). Nonetheless, after evaluating these instruments, he concludes that there is considerable miscellany in the range of constructs used and that none of these instruments would provide a suitable tool for evaluation as part of a quality assurance system. However, such studies can aid HE in monitoring student perceptions of the teaching and learning process, which is a significant step in controlling their expectations and requirements.

A number of studies as keynoted in Table 9 identifies that various stakeholders may view the concept of quality in HE in different terms. The literature also lends support to the premise that any model for quality

management would be ineffective unless it was to be based on an understanding of how stakeholder expectations can be met. However, in order to meet such requirements HE may need to focus on different aspects of the system of teaching and learning, an approach which may not necessarily be effective unless there is a greater amount of understanding regarding how these expectations and quality values differ. When combined these expectations and values contribute a significant element of TQM which has been implemented successfully in many universities. However, treating students as customers gives mixed results. Students can be understood as customers in some contexts, but customers seek gratification and administrators tend to pander to them rather than offer the more worthwhile challenge of intellectual independence.

Table 6 Studies on quality values in HE

Study	Study focus	Research instrument	Findings	Study conclusions
(Hewitt and Clayton, 1999)	Quality perception of students and staff (UK)	semi-structured interviews	Students' views • being taught rather than pro-active learning • direct support from staff Staff views • process quality reliability of learning environment rather than outcomes	A quality model that focuses on education as an bilateral process and allows diversity of purpose and individual freedom of action
(Hill et al., 2003)	Students' view of quality of HE	focus groups	Students' views • quality of lecturers • student engagement with learning influenced by proficiency of lecturers • student support units • collective experiences with other motivated students	A positive atmosphere between student/student and student/ faculty determines standard of the learning experience
(Lagrosen et al., 2004)	Dimensions that make up quality in HE, from the students' viewpoint (Austria, Sweden, UK)	32-statement questionnaire after conducting 29 in-depth interviews	Students' views • understanding of quality as excellence best matches student's view of quality, while specific quality dimensions comprise among others, library resources, information and responsiveness, corporate partnership, courses offered, teaching practices and campus facilities •	A single stakeholder viewpoint provides only a limited view. Such studies must be complemented with other points of view.
(Chua, 2004)	How quality is viewed by different stakeholder groups such as students,	survey questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL dimensions of Parasuraman	Students', parents', faculty members' and employers' views • both students and employers view the process and output as the	Different customer groups have different views of quality and, therefore, an integrated quality model which is able to address these

			most important category in relation to quality • the faculty's perspective of quality is wider than the others, which indicates that focus should be on all activities (i.e. input, process and output)	different perspectives is recommended.
(Lomas, 2004)	Views of senior managers and academics regarding most influential factors in effectively embedding quality in an HEP	Semi-structured in-depth interviews	<u>Senior managers and academics' views</u> • Need for a quality culture, training for new teaching staff and continuing development and peer review as the most important factors in quality.	The importance of trans-formational leadership in implementing adequate change management strategies
(Morley and Aynsley, 2007)	Employers' requirements for information on UK HE quality and standards. (UK)	Interviews	<u>Employers' views</u> • employer recruitment practices seem to reinforce the notion of graduate elite that could potentially undermine equity and widening participation initiatives • placed the least amount of emphasis on information regarding quality and standards • emphasised the importance of graduates' interpersonal and communication skills • importance of institutional reputation and league tables were paramount in decision making	
(Telford and Masson, 2005)	The effect of congruence in perceptions of quality values between students and staff in terms of student satisfaction on a single learning programme. (Napier University)	Focus groups to initially generate data for the construction of the research questionnaire	<u>Staff and students' views</u> • different views, which will not necessarily lead to student dissatisfaction • shared values is important for the management of the quality • many issues that are shared by staff and students <u>Students' views</u> • students tend to be dissatisfied with issues such as lack of resources or factors other than the actual learning experience e.g. the manner in which the academic qualifications are perceived after students have graduated • interested above all in vocational courses that have the ability to help their career	These findings may not be generalisable as the research was conducted in a vocational establishment

			• consider academic staff's commitment to be more important than actual teaching experiences • did not consider their own commitment to learning as important even despite their being fundamental to the learning Staff views • commitment of staff as most important and commitment of students and well as the vocational impact of the course as being second.	

Table 9 Studies on quality values in HE

2.16 Summary of Part 2

The literature surveyed establishes the inherent difficulty in the description and the evaluation of quality dimensions in HE despite increasing demands for greater accountability and increasing stakeholder expectations. There is a distinct lack of conceptual models of quality management that it might be possible to successfully apply to HE. Evidence also suggests that the external assessment of quality through accreditation and quality auditing are not currently considered to be satisfactory and are often viewed as bureaucratic and diverting important resources from the core activities of HE. Such approaches will not be effective in contributing to the development and implementation of sustainable quality improvement since this requires empowerment and mutual recognition, rather than external control. Furthermore, most studies of quality in HE focus primarily on the expectations of students and levels of their satisfaction with the academic institution they attended. While the expectations of learners as direct customers and co-participants are vital, it is surprising that the views of academics as one of the key stakeholders of HE, and the views of employers as a key external stakeholder are not sufficiently explored by academic studies that have been previously conducted. It must also be noted that there are almost no studies that deal specifically with quality in HE which are relevant to the Middle-East or Arab countries and therefore, the

applicability of the literature which has been conducted to HE in this region may be limited.

Part 3

2.17 The student as consumer/ partner/customer in the higher education literature

Studies have been carried in some countries, such as the UK, and as a consequence these countries have strengthened their consumerist forces within HE. The mechanism of student as consumer can be found in the context of quasi-market and new managerial frameworks and is being applied in the development of academic programmes (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005). Governments have their own policies on how to introduce new managerialism into HE, indicating that consumerism will have to operate under a policy structure (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005).

There is an assumption that any effort to reshuffle educational culture to meet the terms of the consumerist structure could lead to a lowering of academic standards and support passive learning as academics would have pressure on them to be responsive to external demands from consumerist mechanisms. There are also assumptions that the professional practices of academic staff will receive a positive impact from the consumerist lever as they would have to respond to competition from other institutions. The result of a consumerist structure would be that the lecturer can be seen as a marketer of the service whilst the student can be seen as a consumer. Therefore the consumerist mechanism can be described as a tool that can change academic ethics. So that any effort to reshuffle professional culture to go with the consumerist structure may force passive learning attitudes (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005)

The term 'student as customer' is widely debated within HE. There are two opposing views, one which supports the concept of students as customers and one against. First the researcher will present the argument against students as customers.

If institutions see students as customers this can mean that they will concentrate and plan for the short-term and not the long-term, indicating a narrowing of student satisfaction. Some believe that students should be treated as partners and not as customers. From an economic point of view the difference between teaching and business should be taken into account. Treating students as customers will negatively affect the students' learning and the decision making of the university and its performance and activities. It will also mean that the students will assume that they know what is best for them and therefore places the student in a more influential position. Just because universities treat students as customers does not mean that the service is of a higher level and neither does students paying tuition fees mean they will get the desired grades, like a customer (Albanese, 1999). Funding and goals differ between businesses and universities; treating students as customers will also affect the other stakeholders of the university. When a student is considered as a customer they will expect the teaching services to be of a high level. If a university considers a student as a customer they will create value for the student, however the value which is expected to be created by the student for the university will be disregard by the university decision makers (Albanese, 1999).

Some see that it is better to use the business terminology of 'student as partner' not because students act in a different way to business customers but because of the fact that some academics do not like the term 'customers' and some see it as reducing the power of academics. However, the fact that 'student as partner' is more important and universal than 'customer' as it takes in a wider field in the relationship and therefore makes the students improve their skills and personal knowledge instead of the university doing it for them. Viewing students as collaborative partners emphasizes the overall nature of an institution's relationship with the students and the high quality services offered to students stresses the mutuality of the relationship, consequently both parties should benefit and value should be created for both parties (Bay and Daniel, 2001). The

customer metaphor casts students into passive roles and places instructors into adversarial relationships with their students (Franz, 1998).

Secondly the researcher will now present the debate supporting the term student as customer. Elliot and Shin (2002) stated that successful efforts have been made to apply the precepts of TQM in service areas where the student is truly the customer. Browne et al. (1998) see that universities are becoming more aware of the importance of student satisfaction as studies have shown student satisfaction to have a positive Influence on student motivation, student retention, recruiting efforts and fundraising. As a result, universities have exhibited their commitment to student satisfaction through mission statements, goals/objectives, marketing strategies, and promotional themes. Universities can best attract and retain quality students through identifying and meeting students' needs and expectations. It is imperative for universities to identify and deliver what is important to students. The goal of most universities engaged in TQM is to improve their accountability to their public through streamlining processes and improving services to students. When student are asked about best indicators of top quality they focus on academic dimensions and to provide services that meet customer requirements and expectations. Universities committed to TQM must develop a deep understanding of their central customer group. Furthermore, HE is increasingly recognizing that it is a service industry and is placing greater emphasis on meeting the expectations and needs of students. Focusing on students' satisfaction not only enables universities to re-engineer their organizations to adapt to student needs, but also allows them to develop a system for continuously monitoring how effectively they meet or exceed student needs (Browne et al., 1998).

Since the 1990s HE, specifically in the USA, has focused on borrowing management techniques from the corporate sector as a way of overcoming financial difficulties and justifying funding. An important idea brought from corporate business is customer targeting and quality service. In a consumer market, it is important to define how or why students can be considered as

customers. The metaphor of the student as a customer in an organisation run on the basis of TQM goes back to the 1970s. Thompson (1992) states that *'…colleges should consider students as customers and provide them with sufficient information to confirm the marketability of every degree programme'* (p. 23). Consequently the marketing of such degree programmes could encourage students to undertake an education needed in order to obtain a professional career (H.E.U.S.A). Treating students as customers may give them a new perception which may have consequences. According to an article in The Guardian (2007), an example of which was presented by MacLeod and Bamber of the Griffith Business School, Australia, who suggested that an *'underclass'* of academics on short-term contracts may result from the development of flexibly delivered courses to student customers. The implication here is that if students are viewed as customers, their wishes become paramount. The idea of the student as a customer was debated at a recent British Academy of Management conference, by Bamber and Sappey who considered that students are increasingly seeking to dictate their 'purchasing' of academic credentials and influence academics. As student-customers they are trying to negotiate everything from course content to assignment deadlines. Bamber warned that while universities are trying to improve their research performance students are demanding more time being spent on student-focused matters (MacLeod, 2007). The trend is most evident in business schools and newer universities, where student evaluation of teaching has considerable influence, which gives student-customers indirect control over academics and the ability to set agendas for management (ibid.). Consequently, the response is towards self-censorship and increased responsiveness to student-customer demands by staff, mainly to avoid conflict and career consequences. It was indicated that younger academics are more supportive of the student as a customer, where as part of the teaching ethos, a student as a customer always comes first in a customer driven strategy. Bamber concluded that flexible delivery is a new dimension in the modern world.

In summary, after evaluating the pros and cons of considering the concept of student as consumer, the researcher believes that this will lead to the lowering of standards and students becoming passive participants in their learning. The argument against the concept of student as customer is underpinned by the view that they will be in an influential position and will expect the teaching services to be of a high level. The researcher rejects the view of student as consumer and adopts the position that students will be viewed as customers in this study. In his view students have the right to evaluate the teaching they receive and influence decision making in their universities. People who argue against the concept of student as customer are rejecting the positive outcomes that can be achieved when the university and student work together.

2.18 The distinction between internal and external customers in HE

Sallis (2002) defines internal customers as those who receive products or services provided by other members of the same organization. An example of such is that of a professor of advanced public speaking as a customer of the professor who teaches basic public speaking. In other words the latter supplies students to the former. External customers are end users of a product or service (Fenwick, 1992); (Lomas and Tomlinson, 2000). Students may be considered as human resource products passed from a provider to a customer (Rinehart, 1992). There is also the point of view of Lozier and Teeter (1996) who raise questions about those who receive education, those who pay for it and those affected by it. Depending on the context, the definition of the customer shifts. The roles that members of an educational institution assume are intertwined, making everyone in the organization a supplier and a customer.

Even proponents of TQM recognize that several parties may qualify as customers in educational settings. Complex interactions are normal in everyday relationships, however management requirements to satisfy the customer are difficult to meet when there are multiple customers with differing needs and wants. Prioritisation then becomes important (Cornesky,

1992). Parker and Slaughter (1994) suggest that if there is no clearly defined method for prioritising needs among different types of customers and as a result TQM could continue to maintain the status quo. In the opinion of Cornesky (1992) the question of prioritisation is not easy to resolve. Beaver (1994) refers to the increasing diversity of the student population and the increasing probability that some groups of students may have desires, needs or interests that conflict with others. Obtaining mutually agreed definitions of quality may go some way to resolving the shortcomings of quality methods in this area.

2.19 Identifying students as customers

Seymour (1993) believe that the identification of students as customers is complicated by the fact that education affects large communities of local nationals but also caters for international clients. Therefore prior to satisfying customers, it is necessary to determine who qualifies as a customer. Rinehart (1992) states that there are difficulties in identifying which customers should be satisfied and what might count as satisfaction. For example, Schwartzman (1995) uses the concept of students as library users as influencing the manner of teaching them as information literate individuals. The implication here is that students are considered as customers of two differing services; teaching and library. It is interesting to see the effect of the *'student as customer'* metaphor on library service provision in the context of TQM.

Baldwin (1994) states that the conceptualisation of students as customers is extending management terminology to education. Schwartzman (1995) identifies a number of reasons for students to be considered as customers as summarised in Table10.

Activity	Reasons

Increased student involvement	• students are given a definite role as important members of the institution by administrators • students should be the main focus (not "become more involved"). • the institution is secondary in importance and the administration is third • the student is young, still almost a child to be nurtured. • administrators and institutions are old and need to tune in • the words "institution" and "administrator" should be played down • develop closer relationships with their professors • learn to work with them as a team
Focusing on measurement and evaluation	• potential benefits to colleges and universities
Benefits of using TQM	• assessing student performance constantly, rather than just at the end of a course. Encourages students who perform poorly to improve throughout the semester
Evaluations by students	• evaluation of their teachers – these often only happen at the end of a course, and are only considered when a faculty member is up for tenure • if teachers and administrators paid more attention to student evaluations, students would be likely to take them more seriously • frequent evaluations can be useful in challenging potential complacency in higher education

Table 10 Reasons for students to be considered as customers

(Schwartzman, 1995)

Weaver (1992) suggests that treating students as customers will lead to institution having to be more accountable for the service they provide. There are a number of potential benefits to the use of the student as customer metaphor in HE as Aliff (1998) pointed out. Many universities use TQM to manage student services as a way of placing emphasis on the students and their needs (ibid.) thus placing students at the centre of the educational process

However, some authors highlight disadvantages to treating students as customers. Beaver (1994) claims that the majority of students in HE are not prepared to make significant decisions about the design of their education. Schwartzman (1999) considers that it is not reasonable to expect most

undergraduates to have the insight and maturity to make recommendations about the design or content of courses or the curriculum. This may not be the case for more advanced students. Students as customers are rarely the driving force behind educational improvement because many would be only too happy with a less demanding curriculum (ibid). This identifies a flaw in the use of TQM in HE; little if any distinction is made between the needs and desires of students as customers. Schwartzman (1995) uses the term *'hedonistic fallacy'*, which he describes as a false equivalence between satisfied desires and quality, which he believes only works if the customer's perception of quality is mature and consistent with the goals of education. Students' wants do not necessarily equate to providing them with quality education, therefore basing quality on the satisfaction of student-customer needs is problematic. The meeting of needs implies a minimum to retain a student, rather than achieving high quality education for that student.

A further criticism of the student as customer metaphor is that business models do not fit comfortably with the academic world. Students may be the focus of HE, however it may be a mistake to think of them as customers as they are complete participants in the learning process. There are a number of issues that should be considered which identify the problems of a definitive measurement of quality:

- when evaluating the quality of teaching, it is a mistake to assume that every student will benefit equally from a single professor. No matter how effective a professor is, no matter how high the quality of his performance, there is no guarantee that students' grades will improve. According to Welsh (2002) learning can take place in the absence of good teaching. It cannot take place in the absence of student effort because they do not simply receive something for payment, they participate in a creative process (Beaver, 1994)
- by treating students like customers, they may consider that education is something that is received for payment, rather than something that must be worked for. In other words *'…when we tell students that*

knowledge is a commodity, we tell them that learning requires no effort beyond paying for it' (wa Mwachofi et al., 1995a)

- commodifying education runs the double risk of encouraging students to be lazy or passive, while at the same time implying that education is for the sole purpose of finding a job. *'Colleges should consider students as their customers and provide them with reasonable projections and data to verify the marketability of every degree program'*" (Thompson, 1992), p. 23). This view is potentially dangerous; the implication being that education is only valuable when it comes to helping students find a job

- treating education as a commodity also raises the fear that the customer metaphor will become an obstacle to giving students a sense of social responsibility. Thinking of education as a commodity devalues it to the point where it is seen only as a way to promote personal career goals. This implies that education is an economic transaction for immediate personal gain, rather than individual transformation of the self and ultimately for the community (wa Mwachofi et al., 1995b)

- institutions can become diploma factories where academic credentials are often little more than financial receipts and academic rigour is marginalized and degraded with vocational training replacing true education (Cutting, 2008).

A view of the 'purity' of an academic institution and its function is outlined by Evans (2003) who states that the term 'university' indicates a place to learn universal knowledge upon which a student can build further training and skills.   In addition activities such as recruitment, registration, food services, facilities, marketing and housing are 'auxiliary' to the main purpose of a university. They do not have educational value however they exist 'to serve' the educational core of the university and should not be operated exactly like a business.

Evans further believes that tuition fees should not be seen as a payment for a product, and teachers' salaries should be thought of and termed honoraria. Students are neither customers nor products, in that they do not purchase education or are either bought or sold themselves. Universities are not by their nature part of the free enterprise system but should be supported by government, foundations, and alumni. Applying business aims, principles, or terms to a university's entire operation runs the risk of putting profit before students (Evans, 2003) . Laskey (1998) suggests that a university is different from a consumer business as the responsibility of a university is to educate students to be critical thinkers and responsible citizens, not for turning out happy customers.

2.20 Customers in higher education

MBNQA 2000 Education Criteria provided clear guidelines for HE institutions to work towards excellent performance (NIST, 2003). Evaluation includes identifying and understanding customers. The guidelines for identifying students and other stakeholder requirements consider two aspects of satisfaction:

- short term and long term expectations by universities of appropriate support services, to develop new educational service opportunities and to create an overall climate conducive to learning and development
- how the university may build relationships in order to retain students, enhance their performance and plan for the future.

In quality initiatives it is essential to understand the needs of the customer base (Spanbauer, 1995);(Kanji, 2001) . However Owlia (1996) suggests that the HE environment is complex and accepting the customer orientated definition of quality may not solve all quality issues. Customer focus is part of the basic philosophy of TQM. In the context of HE quality initiatives should be planned strategically. According to the Deming principle, HE institutions should focus on improving relationships with customers, and put serious efforts into producing quality outcomes (Motwani, 1994). This includes

quality screening of students coming into the system. Relationships with students must be based on learning and the key criteria that determine the success of their careers upon leaving college or university. Customer focus, customer orientation and customer satisfaction are terms that have been used to identify and validate customer satisfaction focus (CSF) in TQM implementation. Management must design and plan quality programmes that cater for customers needs to gain quality results in assessments for services provided.

Beaver (1994) argues that students and their future employers are the two principal customer groups however this should not exclude others e.g. state government, graduates, sponsors, and even the community at large as not being customers of the institution. Additionally, Fenwick (1992) claims that a customer may be considered as an individual student or any future employer, consequently institutions must provide top quality products and services as perceived by the customer. According to Milbank (1992) the student becomes a customer when TQM is applied in the classroom.

The concept of students as customers is discussed by McGuigan (2005) who points out that the mere substitution of one term (student) for another (customer) is inappropriate as the concept of customers and students intersect in some ways, but diverge in others. Gerhart and Russell (1994) suggest that metaphors involve more than terminological borrowings but also represent a change in meanings as metaphors affect our understanding and behaviour. The description of students as customers has significant consequences for how all interpersonal relationships in education are conceived. Sederberg (1984) states that the metaphor of student as customer gains significance from its association with TQM philosophy and raises questions about the future of educational practice. Transferring the metaphors of some business principles to education may enhance educational processes especially if improving these services takes the needs of students into account. However, the business approach provides a

service, but perhaps not guaranteed results, if students feel that they can be treated as customers without exerting any effort.

2.21 Customer-focused learning organizations

Universities should not be turned into degree factories just to please customers. However, not accepting the customer metaphor has the potential of returning universities to the ivory tower status of being unresponsive to the real needs of students. HE should position itself and its products in the marketplace, influencing and educating its customers. Some markets cater for the short-term, destructive impulses of immature or uneducated customers for example airlines do not allow their customers to dictate safety standards. In the same way a responsible university should not let students determine curricula or grading policy. However, students do need to be treated with dignity as they are individuals and often from different backgrounds and cultures and with different learning styles. Nowadays students must take responsibility for their own learning so hostility towards customer orientation by universities may send a wrong message; that there is nothing to learn from students about their learning needs.

Another source of confusion is that students are both customers and products, which could lead to conflicting recommendations for improving quality. This confusion does actually occur in discussions on quality improvement in education. It is the kind of confusion that other institutions, devoted to improvement, share for example social welfare organizations, psycho-therapy practices and religious organizations. Among these examples, education is unique in that it can identify not only a student as customer and student as product, but also an employer as a customer.

An educational institution can take at least three views of its mission of educating students:

- to produce a citizen-as-product for community-as-customer
- to produce a worker-as-product for an employer-as-customer

- to provide self-improvement services-as-product for student-as-customer

Recognising these views removes the need to have a single objective, when several objects of varying weight are available for balancing the role of student-as-customer with the role of student-as-product.

2.22 TQM model and student satisfaction

The TQM model identifies students as stakeholders in educational decisions. On the other hand, they are not the only stakeholders, and sometimes the interests of students must take second place to the needs of the community. Under the TQM framework, students operate as a market force to which educational institutions must adapt in order to survive. Driving the market may mislead students into thinking that they have more influence than they do.

Implementing TQM in any sector indicates customer satisfaction. Any HE institution which 'advertises' TQM as its vision, mission and aims, in a service context, implies that the institution is providing a service which in turn satisfies the customers. The concept is of a customer satisfaction model of quality linked with student satisfaction, situated within a TQM framework. TQM should provide a match between customer expectation and experience. Customers access service quality by comparing what they want or expect to what they actually get or perceive they get (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Billing (1996) argues that quality affects students in university; where students feel empowered to fulfil their responsibilities as part of the complete team involving the whole university. To explicate this point, if knowledge is just imparted in a one-way process the student is not and will not consider themselves as a participant in the service provided by the university.
A goal of this study is to develop a framework for managing the quality of services in Saudi universities based on the concept of quality of services according to three groups: students, staff and employers. The concept of quality that operates within this study is defined as the intrinsic and extrinsic

value of actions provided by universities to meet the perceived expectations of their student customers. In the context of this study students are being asked to assess the service provided by their university against their expectations and the staff (teachers, administrators and upper management) are being asked to consider the services they provide against the students' views. Finally the employers as stakeholders are asked to assess the graduates' skills being introduced to the labour market and the quality of the communication between themselves, as representatives of the labour market, and the universities.

2.23 Terminology shifts between customer wants and customer needs

TQM in an educational setting presents the dilemma of the shifting terminology between customer needs and wants. Seymour (1993) observes that these concepts are not interchangeable as the central concept of quality is providing customers with what they want. But occasionally this sometimes shifts to an argument about what customers need. Sallis (2002) notes differences in TQM guidebooks. Some focus on the needs and views of learners, whereas others state that quality is what the customer wants and not what the institution decides is best for them. Marchese (1991) supports this by suggesting that TQM in educational settings implies organizing work around the needs and preferences of customers and assuming that desires and requirements always match. If quality is solely defined in terms of student customer wants, the vision of quality is short, because students often have very short-term and self-serving goals. These may include: passing a course, learning new concepts and techniques of immediate applicability to employment. Peters (1988) claims that customer perceptions of quality can be contradictory. Most college classes have at least some students who identify quality as an intellectually challenging goal, yet refuse it when offered (Beaver, 1994). Sallis (2002) suggests that by catering only to what the students want at the particular moment presumes that they can express it and their desires in an informed and unequivocal way. He further claimed that the TQM literature recognizes that students' perceptions of

quality change as they progress and as their experience and confidence grows.

Rinehart (1992) disagrees with the notion that students seek an education to clarify their needs and desires or to establish their priorities because as their judgement is not yet mature, students cannot be considered the primary consumers of education for the purpose of judging educational quality as they have no proper conception of what they must learn. It could be argued that if the perceptions of more mature students are used as benchmarks, then one group of customers is beholden to the educational vision of a different group that may continually change. That students have not yet clarified their needs and desires, by no means renders their concerns unimportant. The problem is that even the most serious students may have insufficient frames of reference to determine their educational preferences in relation to larger issues. They certainly have the competence to recognize degrees of courtesy, promptness, and reliability that generalize across disciplines.

Students want many things that may not be in their long-term best interest. Despite the problems associated with giving customers what they want, the fulfilment of needs requires more discussion. Needs, in the educational context consist of minimum necessaries that must be satisfied to retain the student. If student needs are not satisfied, then they do not return or drop out. Not coincidentally, student service TQM programmes are deemed successful if they increase student retention. Need satisfaction, therefore, is oriented towards baseline performance, providing students with what they cannot do without. Fulfilment of wants, on the other hand, guides educational practice to best case scenarios as defined by the students. While needs take the form of bare necessities, wants have the character of higher standards or ideals. If needs are the basic essentials, then they can be identified not only by the students but by other specific stakeholders. Recognized needs tend to be long-term and relatively static requirements. In educational policy, need satisfaction often has taken the form of emphasizing basic skills that students might not initially consider important,

despite their later recognition of needing the skills. Fulfilment of needs however, raises serious questions regarding the relationship between quality and excellence. Gearing education to needs, emphasises fundamental requirements that may be essential for learning, but may appear as minimal requirements rather than ultimate objectives. Such requirements both for students and institutions, provides a basic benchmark rather than identifying outstanding achievement. Meeting a student's needs, which could be defined simply as a level of self-preservation in the Maslow hierarchy, is necessary but not sufficient for assuring quality (Horton, 1980); (Sallis, 2002).

2.24 Is the customer always right?

Baldwin (1994) argues that the phrase *'the customer is always right'* is more adapted to the marketplace as it cannot be defined in any terms other than what will sell. While such a categorical definition might be an overstatement, it does highlight the interchangeability of popularity with merit. According to Sallis (2002) statements like '*delighting the customer'* creates confusion between short-term pleasure and long-term good. TQM uncritically accepts the single customer's subjective perception of quality as unassailable (Seymour, 1993). The educational system therefore is in danger of adapting to perceptions that may be unrealistic, irrelevant, or underdeveloped.

2.25 Measuring customer satisfaction

The functionality and performance of universities, an increase in expectations about performance, and an increase in the demands of the various users of services has resulted in a desire to improve the quality of teaching, research and all university services (Capelleras, 2005). This desire has resulted in the examination of two aspects: quality and satisfaction. Management trends show special interest in initiating management systems that will, among other objectives, improve the quality of services provided to customers in order to increase their satisfaction. Increased competition in the HE sector, the existence of other educational alternatives, and increased mobility among the student population means that knowledge about the effect of satisfaction has become essential for universities.

HE institutions face new demands, reflecting changes in lifestyle and also the tasks assigned to universities by others. A growing number of professionals are returning to university in order to update their knowledge, representing a different type of student with specific needs (Coccari and Javalgi, 1995);(Tavernier, 1991); (Dill, 1997); (Chevaillier, 2002). A study in the Department of Economics and Business Management, in the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences, at the University of Zaragoza (Spain) showed that teaching staff, ease of enrolment and course organisation are the elements that have an impact on student satisfaction, and they show that this satisfaction is what, to a large extent, helps to identify the reputation of the faculty (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2005).

According to Giese and Cote (1999) '*Satisfaction is the final state of a psychological process, involving affective response of variable intensity centred on specific aspects of acquisition and consumption'.* The study of the relationships between perceived quality and satisfaction is relatively new in the university sector (Athiayaman, 1997), but the important purpose of services is user satisfaction. Perceived quality is an antecedent of satisfaction in HE, (Browne et al., 1998); (Guolla, 1999, Owlia, 1996). The student has a key role in evaluating the teaching received and satisfaction with it. The student is the consumer who acts as both the receiver and subsequent user of education. This study endeavours to analyse student satisfaction with the services that universities offer. In the Saudi case, these services are offered by state universities. The services cover a broad range of subjects and the recipients are diverse. Saudi universities offer services in order to increase the value of total product; it is their job to satisfy students and analyse existing levels of satisfaction in order to determine outcomes and future recommendations.

2.26 Summary of Part 3

Although fostering quality in education should be incontestable, transferring management conceptions of quality to educational environments poses

serious problems. Difficulties with transposing terminology from business to education run deeper than the words themselves. The student as customer metaphor was recognized at universities as not just a change in semantics, but a change in culture. Resistance to the culture was countered by a simple semantic switch (Coate, 1993). If the client metaphor substantially differs from the customer orientation, then that terminological change deserves attention. If not, then the alteration has no significance, since it retains the management connotations that run counter to the goals and processes of education.

2.27 Conclusion

In Saudi Arabia, a key question is whether universities consider students to be customers. One of the aims of this research is to describe and analyse students' perceptions in order to measure their satisfaction of services provided in universities. In the Saudi case, these services are offered by state universities. The services cover a broad range of subjects and the recipients are diverse. Saudi universities offer services in order to increase the value of total product; it is their job to satisfy students and analyse existing levels of satisfaction in order to determine outcomes and future recommendations.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate and explain the research methodology used in this study. The chapter includes an overview of the qualitative and quantitative methods and the process that has led to the selection of the research design for this study. Additional topics addressed in this chapter include: populations, data collection methods and analysis, and group interviews. The chapter also presents a literature review of research methodologies, research philosophies and the selected methodology for this research.

3.2 Research philosophy

The research philosophy is an important part of any social science study, as it guides the researcher towards the selection of subjectivist, humanistic, interpretative approach procedures. Its importance stems from the fact that it determines the methodology used in the research. There are two main research philosophies: interpretivism and positivism. These approaches can be used individually or conjointly. In the following subsection, the two main research philosophies are reviewed. Brief outlines of other research philosophies are presented as well.

3.2.1 Positivism

Social science researchers have developed a range of quantitative and qualitative paradigms and methods. Choices are based on philosophies and assumptions as well as research topics. One has to acknowledge that sometimes there clearly may not be a definite answer. Positivism assumes that there is one reality that the researcher can explain, control or predict. The positivism approach offers breadth because it allows the researcher to collect data from many sources for a number of well defined questions. It strives to be unbiased, reliable and rational. Now, it is assumed that there are multiple realities in the world, for this reason; the positivist approach may lack depth and richness. Much student development research is grounded in

positivism (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); (Patton, 1999); (Strauss et al., 1990); (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

Post-positivist researchers developed an interactive process in which the researcher and the participant learned from each other. This process resulted in a practical understanding that is interpreted through the social and cultural context of life (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In-depth, detailed, rich data is produced from individual personal perspectives and experiences. Post-positivist enquiry is based on an inductive reasoning process, where the questions to be asked and the data to be collected emerge and evolve during the course of the research. The post-positivist paradigm allows different approaches to emerge, encouraging insights that extended beyond measurable, discoverable facts.

3.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a social science research philosophy involving principles different from those in the natural sciences. This philosophy employs organized analysis of socially meaningful activities based on direct observations of actors, with a view to understanding and interpreting their actions in their natural context. Phenomena are observed by the researcher, but they are difficult to measure and cannot usually be generalized. Individuals can explain and interpret events from their own perspectives offering completely different interpretations. Explanation and interpretation of events remain subjective. In some cases, researchers may be engaged and have an influence on events, as they are a part of what is being observed and are linked to the research. This may cause bias in the interpretation of events. It may be that participants who share the same environment and work with the same system may have similar behaviour, and researchers should interpret their behaviour accordingly (Collis et al., 2003). In other words, social phenomena are highly complex and interpretivism is merely a reflection of our knowledge and beliefs about the world. Researchers need to understand the complexity of social phenomena. The interpretation of human behaviour and actions and the development of knowledge and ideas

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require time. Thus objective observation is rather impractical in the social world. Interpretation remains largely subjective, though it is possible to seek realities and provide meaningful explanations to participants. The researcher's participation and close cooperation with the concerned participants is more visible, as specific problems are investigated.

The interpretivist approach discards the thought that research can be value free and views human interests as important issues. Thus, the interpretivist approach guides researchers to examine the world and to build their knowledge, taking into consideration a reality that is socially constructed while reflecting aims and beliefs and other social phenomena (Blumberg et al., 2005).

The researcher has reviewed positivism and interpretivism as philosophical research approaches and found that interpretivism views reality as subjective and evidence of knowledge as not independent, so the researcher needs interaction by being engaged and involved with people. Whereas positivists see reality as objective and evidence of knowledge is independent and there is no need for interaction with people and the researcher is not involved. Hence, in this study, positivism is not considered the appropriate philosophical approach as it sees reality as objective and knowledge construction depends on one method which is quantitative, however this was not sufficient for my research as both qualitative and quantitative data were required. The philosophical perspective most fitting my approach is that of post-positivism as the research requires a mix of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from multiple categories of source.

Post-positivist researchers developed an interactive process in which the researcher and the participant learn from each other. This process resulted in a practical understanding that is interpreted through the social and cultural context of life (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Probing individuals' personal perspectives and experiences can produce in-depth, detailed, rich data. Post-positivist enquiry is based on an inductive reasoning process, where the questions to be asked and the data to be collected emerge and evolve

during the course of the research. The post-positivist research allows different views to emerge, encouraging insights that extend beyond measurable, discoverable facts.

There is an argument as to whether post-positivist research should be qualitative and quantitative. It is also argued that positivism and quantitative methods go together, and that post-positivism and qualitative methods are the same thing (Ryan, 2006). In addition to this argument it appears that qualitative researchers tend to favour post-positivism and use qualitative research to complement or extend quantitative findings (Crotty, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003); the present research adopted mixed methods to do just this.

Quantitative empirical research, in the process, loses it privileged claim among modes of inquiry. While it remains an important component of theory construction, it no longer offers the crucial test. For post-positivists, the empirical data of a neo-positivist consensus is turned into knowledge through interpretative interaction with other perspectives (Ryan, 2006). Toulmin (1983) argues that post-positivist coherence theory seeks to bring to bear the range and scope of interpretive standpoints.

To understand more about these principles one could state that quantitative methods have been largely underpinned by positivist principles, and they have contributed more than anything else to the over-simplification or reduction of human experience and the objectification of the human person within social research. Sometimes, however, they are appropriate, and this depends very much on the question one wants answered (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

To conclude, quantitative research attempts to link variables, test theories, predict and seek to define categories before the research starts and then tries to determine the relationship between them. Whereas qualitative research tries to offer an in depth picture and explain historically significant incidents, qualitative research can also be used to flesh out quantitative data,

it also seeks to illuminate aspects of people's everyday lives and it usually relies on people as the primary data source

3.2.3 Mixed methods

Exploratory research is undertaken when few or no previous studies have been conducted in the area. It aims to find patterns, postulate hypotheses to be tested and form the basis for future research. As for this study, there are no antecedents in the Saudi context. The developed hypothesis behind this study is that there might be a level of dissatisfaction with services among the students in Saudi universities. The author started with a focus group to find out elements of quality from the students' point of view. Interviews were also used to investigate these elements from different perspectives including students, staff and employers. These elements were developed later to be used as items in the research questionnaire. It means that the author did not impose the questionnaire items from previous studies to assess the quality of services provided by universities. Alternatively these items were developed from discussions of the target population. Using the focus group to identify the basic elements of quality reflects the adoption of the qualitative approach. However using the questionnaire survey to measure the quality of services provided by Saudi Universities reflects the adoption of the quantitative approach. Both approaches were necessary to shape the research methodology adopted in this study.

Descriptive research can be used to identify and classify elements or characteristics within the subject. This study used literature and focus groups to identify the elements and items of interest to students when evaluating the quality in general and quality of student services that are offered at Saudi universities. The data was collected; summarised and analysed using mixed methods as Newman et al. (2003) argued that both research methods (qualitative and quantitative) are different in a lot of aspects, like as in the assumptions of social life and different objectives and the nature of the data. Even though they differ they also complement each other and are inextricably intertwined at the level of the specific sets and

study design and analysis. Therefore neither qualitative nor quantitative methods are better than each other. After determining the strengths and weaknesses of the two research methods this study makes use of both methods. This combination of research methods is called the mixed research approach as Creswell (2009) stated. Creswell also added that the mixed research approach focuses on collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. The collection of data involves numeric and text information, therefore the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information.

The study was able to gain, by using mixed methods, the advantage of triangulation so that the researcher in order obtained fuller and more comprehensive data and was able to collect data from different angles (Newman et al., 2003).Triangulation also helps the results form one method to develop or inform the results of the other (Greene et al., 1989) it also assists the researcher to expand an understanding from one method to another and to confirm findings from different sources within a single study (Creswell, 2009). According to Silverman (2005) who argued that adopting quantitative methods enables researchers to document the details of how people interact in one situation and adopting qualitative ones to identify differences, thus the mixed method is beneficial because it can result in well confirmed and verified findings.

3.3 The research questions

This study aims to evaluate the quality of services at Saudi universities, to identify the gaps, if any, and to develop an understanding of students' needs

A further goal of this study is to develop a framework for managing the quality of services in Saudi universities based on the concept of quality of services according to the three groups: students, staff and employers. Developing a shared vision, commitment and collective understanding of the participants is very important for the successful implementation of quality strategies such as total quality management (TQM). TQM is an approach

often used to assure that any strategy for managing quality at universities can succeed, only if it addresses and satisfies the three groups:

- students as participants, producers and customers of the universities,
- staff who are primarily responsible for the quality and the delivery of programmes at universities,
- employers who employ graduates from the universities and are concerned about the quality at universities since they are the main source of their employees.

Based on the above and in order to meet the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated and are arranged into a main question and sub-questions. The main question is:

How is the quality of services perceived in Saudi universities?

This question will be the driving force behind the developments to be presented later.

Several sub-questions arose:

- Are there differences in the perception of the quality of services between staff, students and employers?
- Are Saudi universities perceived to provide high quality services?
- What are the methods used by universities to evaluate the quality of student services in Saudi universities?
- How have Saudi universities responded to the implementation of quality strategies such as TQM?
- Is the application of TQM perceived to be successful?
- How have Saudi universities responded to the labour market?
- What framework for managing quality can be proposed based on the findings of the research?

These questions treated individually in the context of this study, however before doing so the research philosophy used to conduct this research is laid out.

3.4 The research design

This research expands the knowledge of management at Saudi universities by studying the quality of services provided to students. This work is the first research effort of its kind as far as the researcher knows. Its uniqueness is that it deals with students, staff and employers' perceptions, whereas previous research studies have dealt with curricula or teaching. First, an extensive literature review was conducted; research possibilities were identified and tailored in order to gain new insights or perspectives. This helped in justifying the choice of the research topic and selecting an appropriate research methodology.

3.4.1 The research phases

This research work was conducted in four main phases which are outlined below.

Phase 1

First, a review of the literature on quality strategies, criteria, expectations in HE especially at Saudi universities was performed. Preliminary background reading on the subject helped to discover what is already known and to suggest an appropriate research methodology. The literature review also helped in the development of the research questions presented in section3.3.

Phase 2

Forming a focus group can be a useful way to identify the main issues and gather data. The researcher collected the opinions of selected groups of students on a pre-determined topic in each selected university. The researcher had a good opportunity and took notes on some points that were discussed.

Phase 3

Students were surveyed using a questionnaire that was developed based on the criteria identified from the literature review and the focus groups. The survey sought to determine the perspectives in quality-among the wider population.

Phase 4

A series of interviews were conducted with a sample of each of the three groups. All the groups were formed of males (students, staff and employer) because it was difficult to interview females because of cultural reasons in Saudi Society as stated in the research limitations. Figure 3 illustrates the four phases. These phases are explained in detail in this chapter
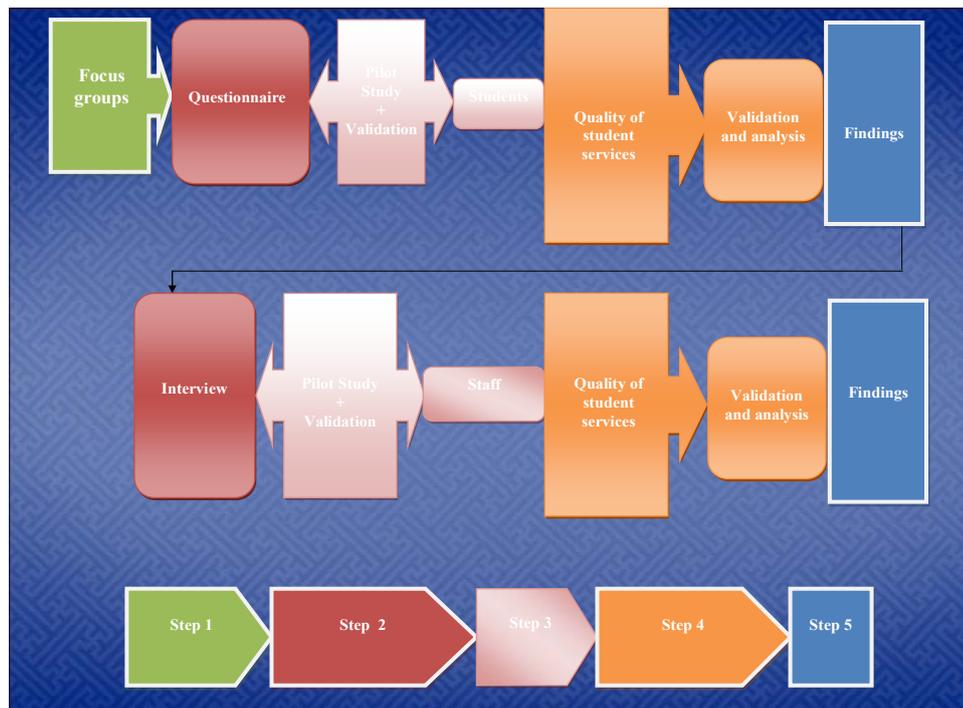
Figure 3 Research phases

3.4.1.1 Focus groups

Within the focus groups framework, groups are brought together to discuss issues relating to the research problem of interest. The analysis of the information gathered from the focus groups can then be utilised to determine trends and patterns that have evolved from the discussion(Higginbotham and Cox, 1979). This method has several advantages. First, the focus group assists the researcher in designing the questionnaire (ibid.). Secondly, questions regarding new programmes can be investigated in a relatively effective way.

The focus group as a qualitative research method is suitable for discovering information about human perceptions, feelings, opinions and thoughts. Morgan (1998) defines a focus group as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. As

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Stokes and Bergin (2006) observe, the process of group dynamics which is responsible for many of the advantages of focus groups can be a double-edged sword, as it may inhibit participants in a group situation. For instance, social pressures may cause over-claiming or can influence some participants to publicly agree with others' views while privately disagreeing. They find that such group pressures can obscure the identification of a range of beliefs, attitudes and motivations thus producing a consensus view which lacks validity. On the other hand Stokes and Bergin (2006) also found that focus groups are unable to match the depth and detail relating to issues that individual interviews were able to provide.

For the purposes of this research, the focus group sessions were held at the four different universities identified in this research as A, B, C and D to ensure and maintain their anonymity.

The meetings proceedings were recorded by hand and the researcher was utilised to monitor and make notes of the meeting during the chosen sessions. The researcher explained the use of the notes and distributed consent forms to be signed for permission to use the data collected.

Each focus group met for a maximum of 2 hours. Twenty questions that address the objectives of the research study were given to the participants (Appendix G). Each participant was asked to respond to each question. The initial questions were answered in the order they were mentioned. Some questions were open to spontaneous response. The interviewer's role was solely to clarify some points, ask the questions, and close the interviews. The interviewer refrained from leading the discussion.

The researcher encouraged free discussion, but was ready to intervene if necessary to resolve group problems. This helped to develop interview strategies and themes. The focus groups brought to the surface issues that the researcher had to control. As a result, the researcher was at times obliged to intervene. These issues can be summarised as follows

- One focus group member dominated the discussion. This lead to some attendees minimising their contribution or even influencing their opinions.
- The focus group strayed from the topic question and become side tracked.
- Some of the group did not contribute to the discussion and the researcher had to try to encourage them.
- There were conflicts of opinions among the groups, and the researcher had to try to resolve them.
- Sometimes, it was found that the free flow resulted in loss of focus, but the researcher tried to facilitate the discussion while maintaining focus.
- It was found that there were multiple views and many key ideas, so it was sometimes difficult to control or evaluate the groups' thinking.

The notes of each session were transcribed in a narrative written form with a code corresponding to each student. A detailed transcript from each focus group was prepared and confidentiality was ascertained. The researcher identified recurring topics in the summary (See Appendix H). The reported results in narrative form included interpretations, judgements and recommendations. A number of questions were derived from the review of the literature addressing quality and services. Additional questions were developed from the focus group discussions.

3.5 Research methods

Most studies on quality in HE are quantitative in nature, aimed at measuring the levels of satisfaction and service quality at universities. The majority of studies on service quality and on quality in HE are carried out through surveys using questionnaires aimed at measuring customer satisfaction, levels of service quality and quality dimensions Madu (1998). Studies on other aspects in HE frequently use quantitative surveys or a combination of interviews, focus groups and quantitative surveys. Many studies employ these methods within a case-study approach focused on particular institutions. An example of this approach is the work of Hewitt and Clayton (1999), Chua (2004) and Telford and Masson (2005). This research used a design that utilises both quantitative and qualitative methods which is

considered ideal for exploring and contrasting the complexities of the different groups on a multi-dimensional issue such as the management of quality.

In this research, the three groups of interest were: students, staff and employers. The approach followed here is based on the belief that the three groups may not share common perspectives on the quality of services in Saudi universities and probably members of the same group may have differing expectations and priorities. It was therefore concluded that the study should use focus groups in the first phase of this research. In the second phase, quantitative methods were used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the students' perspectives since they are the major beneficiaries from university services. This was accomplished through a quantitative survey using a closed, structured questionnaire, which is normally associated with the positivist paradigm. Finally, in the third phase, the study also used interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the interpretative paradigm and qualitative methods.

A multi-faceted methodology that combines the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods can greatly enhance the quality of knowledge created, allowing corroboration through triangulation leading to a richer and more elaborate analysis. When findings from different sources or via different methods can be corroborated, confidence is enhanced. This is the case, even if the findings are conflicting; this enhanced knowledge enables the researcher to interpret the results accordingly (Johnson and Spicer, 2006a). By combining the most appropriate methods, inferences can then be drawn and conclusions reached. Consider such an approach a pragmatist position that calls for using the most appropriate methodological approach for the particular research problem. The researcher must be very clear about the combined methods, how they interact with each other with reference to the phenomenon under study (LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1997). The disadvantages of such a combination mainly include practical constraints such as time and the much wider scope of the research(Yin, 2009). Saunders et al. (2009)

observe that research is qualified as inductive when the researcher develops a theory from the data collected whereas Hyde (2000) illustrates inductive reasoning as a theory building process which starts with observations of specific instances thereby seeking to establish generalisations about the phenomenon under examination.

Therefore, this research is inductive as the quantitative methods provided the information that is used in the qualitative methods. Based on the details obtained from the quantitative and qualitative methods, the researcher developed a framework for obtaining and managing data. The study sought to first identify gaps in the quality of services provided by universities and define criteria for quality services as they emerged from the research. Moreover, the study sought to explore the reasons for their importance through the three groups. Using these processes, the categories, variables and interpretation helped explain the participants' views about quality services in Saudi universities emerged from the study.

So, in summary, different methods can be used according to the nature of the research to collect data and answer the research questions in order to achieve the research objectives. This study used a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches as research into strategic issues requires the collection of complex evidence concerning 'how', 'why', and 'what' type of questions. Furthermore, since the researcher is a native of Saudi Arabia, he found that using conjoint methods is the most appropriate approach for addressing the research questions at hand.

3.6 Quantitative approach

The quantitative approach places considerable emphasis on the statistical generalisation of findings. It seeks to explain and predict situations in the social context by searching for regularities and causal relationships between constituent variables. Quantitative research takes perspectives on social processes and focuses on social structure, isolating problems from their setting (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). However, Eisner (1991) points out that

all knowledge, including that gained through quantitative research, is referenced in qualities and that there are many ways to represent our understanding of the world.

3.6.1 Quantitative pilot study

The draft questionnaire was prepared in Arabic Language and piloted with 50 students. It was designed to be self-administered and was structured so that all aspects of the questionnaire were clearly specified and the purpose of each question was made clear to the respondent. The respondents were asked to comment on any perceived ambiguities, omissions or errors. This pilot study provided valuable feedback on whether the respondents ascribed the same meaning to the topics of interest. Based on the feedback received some changes were made. For instance, three statements were rephrased so that the meaning of the sentence and their context was clearer. The revised questionnaire was then submitted for feedback before being administered for the full-scale questionnaire.

3.6.2 Questionnaire

One of the goals here was to explore the differences or similarities in the students' perception of the quality of services in Saudi Universities. This was accomplished through a quantitative survey including a wider sample of the population using structured a questionnaire. The intention to find what percentage of respondents in the population respond in a particular way and establish laws based on that is often a main criticism of the use of quantitative methods in the study of social phenomenon (Maggs Rapport, 2001).

The weakness of a highly structured survey method involving a large sample is that although it may provide the required breadth to the study, it may not provide the necessary depth and understanding of all the issues involved. Although the emphasis in large scale surveys is generally on quantitative data, the possibility of designing the questionnaire to collect only quantitative data was considered. The limitations of using closed-ended or fixed

response items are that they may oversimplify the complexity of some opinions and limit the choices to the pre-determined frame. Further, closed-ended questions tend to exaggerate the satisfaction or positive reactions of the respondents (Bernard, 2000). Nevertheless, they are generally easier for respondents to answer and have fewer missing data than open-ended questions (Fowler 1995).

The issues involved in this particular study are multifaceted and complex therefore it was felt that it may be over ambitious to ask a large sample of respondents to construct their own individual reflections. Although descriptive data could have been obtained from a larger sample, the analysis of the data and its interpretation would have been problematic given the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Data from open-ended questions also would not provide the necessary evaluative information nor provide adequate consistency in responses which is necessary for identifying differences and similarities in values between the students.

The main advantage provided by using questionnaire in the first stage of this study, was the standardisation and uniformity in the data-gathering process which was considered important in order to be able to interpret and contrast the findings. To meet these requirements, the researcher developed a detailed questionnaire consisting of fixed-response items based on the various criteria that underpin each quality dimension. All of these quality dimensions were identified from the focus groups and these were considered to be ideal and in line with the objectives of the study. The challenge was in creating a standardised questionnaire that did not oversimplify the complexities and interdependencies of the concept of quality. The following themes were identified from the focus group discussions and the items in the questionnaire were developed in relation to these themes are shown below:

- Quality of teaching - 8, 9, 10, 21, 32.

- Curriculum - 11, 19, 20, 30, 31.

- Student evaluation systems (for and of) -12, 22, 23, 25, 27, 33, 69.

- Time management -7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 28, 29, 42, 55.

- Student/staff relationship - 16, 17, 18, 28, 41, 56, 58, 62.

- Non-academic services - 26, 36, 38, 45, 46, 47, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67.

- Associated academic services - 23, 26, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 42, 44, 56, 67,

- Administration procedures -1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 24, 26, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 70.

- Concept of student as customer - 3, 63, 67, 68.

Additionally the researcher was influenced by other sources, when developing the questionnaire, such as university visits, expert consultancy and universities' guidelines.

3.6.3 Variable measurement

A total of 86 items divided into sections was compiled for inclusion in the final version of the questionnaire. As Nunally and Bernstein (1978) note, it is very unlikely that single-items can measure any complex theoretical concept and therefore, as a number of related items were included under each section the likelihood of getting consistent answers and reducing random ones was improved. The criteria derived from the focus groups' data were categorised each with a range of pertinent statements that asked respondents to rate the importance they attach to various criteria on a five-point Likert scale anchored at: least important (1) to most important (5). A three on this scale was considered as the middle ground opinion, representing neutrality. The questionnaire focused on six groups of services comprising 86-items (Appendix I shows the English and Arabic versions) and it was arranged into 3 sections. The first section (questions 1-6) requested demographic information. This section furnished the researcher with the respondents' age, gender, organisation, level of study programme of

study/teaching. Section 2, listed 10 services and requested participants to rank their importance (questions 7-16). Section 3, evaluated services in six categories: admission and registration services (seven sub-services, questions 17-23), teaching services (26 sub-services, questions 24-49), library services (11 sub-services, questions 50-60), student affairs (14 sub-services, questions 61-74), medical services (4 sub services, questions 75-78),and general services (8 sub-services, questions 79 – 86). Questions 17-86 related to respondents' satisfaction. As mentioned previously, a five-point Likert scale was used for each question and these were correlated with other results. In total, 2,500 questionnaires were distributed with a covering letter explaining the study (Appendix J). Classrooms were the best place to distribute the questionnaire with help from the teachers and the team who helped the researcher.

The questionnaire covered 10 kinds of services to be prioritised by students in order to investigate how satisfied the students were with the quality of services provided to them by the universities. The number of returned questionnaires with valid answers was 1,501. The researcher used SPSS software to analyse the collected data.

3.6.4 Sample location

Four Saudi universities were selected on a geographical basis to evaluate their quality of services. The data was collected through official documentation, focus groups, questionnaires directed to students and interviews with relevant personnel. Current views on quality were gathered in these universities to establish a framework for assessing management quality in Saudi Arabia's HE institutes. The four universities are shown on the map in Appendix K. Key facts about each university are provided below:

King Saud University (KSU): is the first university to be established in Saudi Arabia (1957). KSU comprises 31 colleges, including two female centres. It also has 13 research centres and two hospitals. KSU's student population is near 40,000 students.

King Faisal University (KFU): was founded in 1975 in the eastern area of Saudi Arabia. It has 16 colleges, two hospitals, seven deanships, six research centres. The student population is near 20,000 students.

King Abdulaziz University (KAU): was established as a private institution in the western area of Saudi Arabia (Jeddah) in 1967. The university inaugurated its first college (Economics and Management), then in the following year the college of Arts and Human Sciences was established. In 1974, it became a governmental university. Currently, KAU has 19 colleges, nine deanships, ten research centres and around 30,000 students.

King Khalid University (KKU): This is one of the new universities in Saudi Arabia. It was established in 1998 when two branches of the Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University and KSU were merged in the southwest region (Abha) of Saudi Arabia. The university has 16 colleges, 6 deanships, 7 research centres and around 20,000 students.

3.6.5 Determination of sample selection

The samples selected represented most of the regions of Saudi Arabia. They included the largest and oldest universities. Furthermore, there is formal clarity of the application of TQM at these universities. The sample selection was also based on the number of registered students, according to official statistics. A proportional sample was taken according to percentages of the total sample (Bartlett et al., 2001), as indicated in **Table**11 below:

University	Males	Females
KSU	(2200) (40,000)/110,000 = 800	(800) (12500)/400,000 = 250
KKU	(2200) (30,000)/110,000 = 600	(600) (10,000)/30,000 = 200
KAU	(2200) (30,000)/110,000 = 600	(400)(5,000)/20,000 = 100
KFU	(2200) (20,000)/110,000 = 400	(400) (6,000)/20,000 = 120

Table 11 Male and female samples from each university

The student sample size at KSU was 2,200. This number was multiplied by the population of students at the university (40,000) and the result was divided by the whole population of the students in the four universities under study (110,000) to find the actual number of students to be covered by the study (800). The same applies for figuring the sample size in each of the remaining universities, and for the female gender.

3.6.6 Validity

The concept of validity refers to the appropriateness between the solution provided by the research and reality (Amaratunga and Baldry, 2001). Validity also refers to the basic trustworthiness of the whole research process: the instruments used, the data collected and ultimately the findings(Bernard, 2000). It is concerned with establishing correct measures for the concepts under study the accuracy of the findings and the extent to which the findings can be generalized (Miles and Huberman, 1994). There is a cycle here where the validity of the data is entirely dependent upon validity of the tools used for collecting the data. If the instruments and the collected data are valid, then the findings and conclusions must obviously arise from the data.

External validity refers to the extent to which findings of a particular research are applicable beyond the direct sample or outside the specific research setting in which the study was carried out (Riege, 2003b). This requires the sample to be representative of the entire population being researched (Stenbacka, 2001). Accordingly, the selected sample for the survey included students of four of the Saudi public universities so the findings are applicable to other universities that offer the relevant services. However, as argued by Bernard (2000) the whole concept of validity is never completely resolved when considering that the "truth is never final" and that validity itself depends on the collective view of researchers and can never be proven absolutely. The range of the sample in this study has been a deliberate choice in order to enhance the validity and generalizability of the findings within similar subject disciplines. Depth of understanding and knowledge of the nuances

involved is vital in order to provide a theoretical explanation of a general phenomenon (Hyde, 2000).

All surveys require the researcher to decide on a range of critical issues concerning sampling, non-response, questionnaire design and administration. These factors will influence the ultimate accuracy of the results (Fowler 1995). The validity of an account depends on the accuracy with which it represents those features of the phenomena to be described, explained or theorised(Hammersley, 1987). Internal validity is concerned with two issues: the accuracy and suitability of the measure. For this study, it was vital that a questionnaire dealing with the multidimensional concept of quality captured the relevant dimensions, complexity and interdependence. Content validity was enhanced by further investigating the preliminary concepts that were initially identified from the literature and focus groups. Within the positivist research philosophy, reliability is emphasised, wherein the tool or technique consistently produces the same result when applied repeatedly to the same topic. Stenbacka (2001) argues that the issue of validity in qualitative research is useless as the purpose in qualitative research is never to measure anything. She contends that validity refers to the extent to which the qualitative researcher has understood the respondents' views on the specified area of study.

Furthermore, the interaction between the respondent and the interviewer must provide improved possibilities for collecting 'good' data, where the aspects which are important to the respondent can be pursued in depth. Indeed, in-depth exploration of quality values and criteria that are specially considered relevant to managing quality in Saudi universities by each group were given careful attention by the researcher during the initial exploratory interviews. The nature of the particular concept under study may also have its own potential issues of concern. For instance, according to Madu (1998) most studies on quality deal with perceptions rather than the actual experience which makes it difficult to translate these perceptions to actual feelings and can potentially further aggravate the issue of misperceptions. In

this study, however, the objective is to identify the views of the respondents on what they consider to be most important for managing quality rather than determining the respondents' perceptions of their actual experiences within a particular institution. Thus, the potential problem of equating perceptions to actual experience does not even arise.

3.6.7 Reliability

Reliability indicates that the outcomes are replicable but does not indicate that the results are right. The extent to which the results are true depends on the extent to which the technique satisfies the requirements of construct validity. Hence, it is important that the respondents' answers do not reflect differences resulting from the design of the questionnaire but rather indicate actual differences in the respondents' views, attitudes, perceptions(Fowler 1995) . A key factor that influences reliability of a survey is the phrasing of the questions (Madu, 1998). Given the complexities of social phenomena, it is erroneous to assume that the meanings of such phenomena are unambiguous. Marzo-Navarro et al.(2005) argued that the transparency and generality postulates of positivism make the assumption that words or linguistic expressions used in a study have unambiguous meanings that denote objective realities and that these meanings are known by all the subjects of that study or the overwhelming majority of subjects. In the questionnaires in this study there were some differences in terminology of some itemes. In an attempt to clarify the terminology used in the questionnaire, the researcher discussed it with some of the respondents who participated in the pilot study; these issues were particularly explored during the focus group, which helped the researcher to treat these concepts carefully so that the statements framed in the questionnaire were as clear as possible to the students. Vital issues that were given due emphasis by the researcher especially when piloting the questionnaire include clarity and consistency so that questions conveyed the same meaning as much a possible to the respondents. The use of an Arabic questionnaire also ensured that the chances of misinterpretation of statements due to language problems was minimised.

The 86-item instrument (questionnaire) was assessed by a panel of experts. Five experts in quality at King Abdul-Aziz University were asked to review the tool to determine if it adequately measured the objectives of the research study. Recommendations by the panel were incorporated in the revisions and unclear or inappropriate items were deleted from the final version. An 86-item questionnaire emerged from the instrument development process.

In order to assess reliability, the survey data was statistically analysed to establish internal consistency of the instrument. This was accomplished by estimating how consistently individuals respond to the items within a scale. Cronbach's Alpha Scale is a measure of internal consistency. Its value indicates how well a set of items measure a single construct. High inter-correlations indicate that the items are indeed measuring the same underlying construct. The minimum standard for these measures in the social sciences is 0.71 (Bryman and Cramer, 1995).

In this study, the instruments' stability was examined for test-retest reliability to determine if the same results were obtained from the same subjects over a 2-week time period. Fifty students were asked to complete the questionnaire. The pilot population of fifty was a sample of the census population. The pilot study had given a reliability rate of 0.923 on Cronbach's Alpha Scale. This scale was used as recommended by Nunally and Bernstein (1978). The questionnaire and a letter of explanation were distributed using the same process as planned for the actual study. Each questionnaire was labelled with a student number and all fifty were returned. Two weeks later, the questionnaire was distributed again to the group for test-retest reliability. The responses to each item were compared. Matching was assigned a score of zero. All items were summed and the proportion of the matches was calculated to give a reliability coefficient for each item. The items within each group of questions were also individually calculated and their coefficients averaged to yield a reliability coefficient for the test-retest group. These coefficients are given in Table 12.

3.6.8 Questionnaire data analysis

Due to the high response rate (60%), it was decided to review all the material before starting computer processing. Invalid questionnaires or ones with missing data were eliminated at this stage. Then, responses to the survey items were entered into SPSS-PC+ for Windows database. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each question. Higher scores correspond to variables with greater influence. Also, higher numbers indicated greater variable effect on the satisfaction with quality of services.

Moreover, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were produced for each of the categorical items. Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to determine the amount and direction of any relationships among the metric data. Point-biserial correlations were used to determine the relationships between categorical and interval variables. Each research objective was addressed in the following way:

Section 1: Frequencies and percentages were calculated to identify and describe the personal characteristics of students at the four universities. The six variables were correlated with other items in the data.

Section 2: The reasons why students preferred some services were treated. Ten questions (7-16) addressed services that influenced individual preferences. To obtain a total value, a group score was calculated and the mean reported. Verbal comments from the questions on the survey were taken into account.

Section 3: The satisfaction of students regarding the quality of services was evaluated. Seventy questions (17-86) assessed the quality of the services. Frequencies and percentages were computed and reported. These seventy variables were summed and the total quality of service value was determined.

3.7 The analysis process

This section provides an overview of how the analysis process was carried out. There were three main objectives in this process:

1. To examine the respondents and the distribution of responses on the research question.

2. To test the reliability of data using by item-to-total correlation and Cronbach's Alpha Scale statistical measures.

3. To answer the questions using different statistical techniques.

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), after collecting the data, researchers must undertake several steps in order to obtain meaningful results from the analysis stage. The following sections discuss these steps in detail.

3.7.1 Data preparation

The first step in preparing the data for analysis was the process of data editing, coding and data entry to the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 14.1, software. Firstly, raw data was edited for the purpose of detecting any errors and omissions, correct them where possible, and certify that minimum data quality standards were achieved.

Secondly, the study variables were coded into formats for SPSS that were used in data analysis. The variables were given unique labels, this step helped in setting up the computer software to analyse the data.

Finally, SPSS was used to enter the data. Each questionnaire received was first checked for errors and omissions, then answers were entered manually into the computer and the data became ready for analysis.

3.7.2 Purification of measures

After the entry and recording processes had been completed, all measures were then purified by assessing their reliability and validity. There are a number of reasons for the emphasis on the validity and reliability of the measurements. One, a reliable and valid measuring instrument enhances the methodological rigour of the research. Two, it permits a co-operative research effort and provides support for triangulation of results and three, it

provides a more meaningful explanation of the phenomena that are being investigated.

However, in this study the validity and reliability measurement was undertaken using the item-to-total correlation. The aim was to remove items if they had a low correlation unless they represent an additional domain of interest. This method is considered as the most common procedure used by researchers in guaranteeing the reliability of a multi-item scale (Churchill, 1979). The purpose of item-to-total correlation measure is to determine the relationship of a particular item to the rest of the items in that dimension. The process helps to ensure the items making up that dimension share a common core (Churchill, 1979). In this purification process, the items should have item-to-total correlation scores of 0.30 and above to be retained for further analysis because they are considered to have high reliability (Edgett and Jones, 1991).

Additionally, the estimation of reliability is also based on the average correlation among items within a dimension, which is concerned with *"internal consistency"* (Nunally and Bernstein, 1978) . The basic formula for determining the reliability based on this internal consistency is called coefficient alpha (Cronbach's Alpha). This technique has proved to be a good estimate of reliability in most research situations. Nunally and Bernstein (1978) suggested that the reliability of 0.5 to 0.6 would be sufficient.

3.8 Qualitative approach

Collis et al. (2003) state that qualitative research is an approach rooted in the phenomenological paradigm, and involves a type of interaction between the researcher, the respondents, the situations and events that are being researched.

3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are a qualitative method suitable for uncovering information about human "perceptions, feelings, opinions, and thoughts". This method has

several advantages. When conducting interviews, themes are generated on a topic about which little is known (Higginbotham and Cox, 1979). Issues regarding new programmes or proposals could be investigated in a relatively quick and cost effective manner(Krueger, 1994); (Morgan et al., 1998).

For this research, a group of interviewees were invited to discuss issues relevant to quality of services in Saudi universities. The intention was to draw a range of issues that the members of the three groups felt were especially relevant to quality in HE and the contexts and reasons why such criteria become particularly influential. The analysis of information gathered from the interviews helped to determine trends and patterns. A series of interview questions (Appendix L) were developed by the researcher to guide the interview process. The interview questions were designed to identify and evaluate the quality of student services and total quality management strategies at Saudi universities. The interview questions were reviewed by experts in quality research and interviewing techniques at university C and were modified after according to the feedback of the experts. The Systematic Notification Process was utilized to maximize the number of participants who consented to be part of the research (Krueger, 1994).

This process included:

The researcher sent a letter from the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London to each participating university and each university provided an approval letter for the researcher to conduct research at that university (Appendix M). After full disclosure of the process, the individuals were given the opportunity to participate. Prior contact by telephone was made with chairpersons at each university to ensure support for the research.

> A letter of confirmation was sent to the participants after acceptance of the invitation (Appendix N).
> A telephone call was made as a reminder 24 hours in advance of the interview.
> A written note of appreciation was extended to interview participants following the visit (Appendix O).

Interviews were conducted with students, staff and employers to identify their positions and place of work. All males at the four universities were invited to participate in the interviews: 39 out of 45 accepted the invitation. It should be stated that Saudi culture does not allow interviews with the opposite gender unless a relative also attends the session, which is difficult. The age of the 39 participants ranged from 20 years to 60 years and their experience ranged from 1 year to 45 years. Their qualifications ranged from 1 to 4 (Diploma to PhD.) and the staff occupied 12 different positions within 11 different specialisations, as indicated in Table 27. All interviews were conducted within four months (September-December 2007), at the four universities.

3.8.2 Interview format

The first stages of an interview are very important. Collis et al. (2003) recommend thanking the interviewee for attending the meeting, outlining the purpose of it, how it is funded and progress to date. The interviewee's right not to answer questions or to terminate the interview at any time should be emphasised by the interviewer. The interviewee should be briefed on how the data will be used. The interviewer should describe the process of the interview, including process and details about the approximate number and range of questions to be asked and the time likely to be taken.

The interviews consisted of open-ended conversational type questions designed to allow sufficient opportunity for the respondents to provide the researcher with their own views, thereby ensuring that they were not influenced by a predetermined list of factors. After being given an overview of the research and the purpose of the interview, the respondents were asked whether they would like to participate in the interviews as the last decision to them. Care was taken to ensure that the interviews were conducted during quieter periods and ample time was given to each interview.

The descriptive analysis thus generated provided vital information to the survey that followed, and reduced the degree of researcher bias when identifying relevant criteria, which can be a major limitation of many previous studies on quality management. In doing so, the claim that large sample studies using pre-structured questionnaires only include the researcher's own decisions as to what is important and do not allow the respondents to voice their opinions, does not apply to the current study.

In comparison, individual in-depth interviews, although semi-structured to an extent, allowed the researcher sufficient opportunity to get respondents from the three groups to express their feelings on quality services in Saudi universities in detail and to explore why this was so. However, individual in-depth interviews have been criticised as being more difficult to interpret because of the sequential nature of data gathering which may cover up any consensus views (Greenbaum, 1998). Since the objective at this stage of the study was not to obtain a consensus view, this was not considered a limitation. Interviews with students and staff were conducted at their respective universities, whereas interviews with employers were conducted at their offices after prior appointments were made.

3.8.3 Qualitative pilot study

Four interviews were first conducted as a pilot study with two students and one with a member from each of the other groups. These interviews were not included in the sample and this allowed the researcher to refine and develop a relevant line of questioning.

3.8.4 Qualitative sample

The interview sample of 49 consisted of three categories: 17 staff (8 teachers, 6 administrators and 3 top management members), 26 students and 6 employers. Due to some absences the sample was reduced to 39. Each university holds information including a list containing the names and qualification and the type of work of either the teachers or administrators or the top management of the university. This information can be found on the

websites of each university. Using this freely available information the researcher created his own list randomly.

Teachers

The sample was chosen based on the following criteria:

1- Gender - they had to be male as the researcher cannot interview females due to cultural and religious reasons.

2- PhD holders - the reason to choosing PhD holders was that the assistants and lecturers within the staff do not interact with the students as much as the PhD holders.

3- Active teachers - the reason for choosing active teachers that they are able to analyse the students' problems because they deal with the students on a daily basis.

If any teacher declined to take part in the interview, the researchers went back to the original list and chose a substitute who met the criteria. Initially there were 8 teachers in the sample, however 1 teacher withdrew, consequently the researcher started the interview with 7.

Administrators

The administrators were chosen using specific criteria:

1- They had to be administrators.

2- They had to work in the departments that provide some of the services chosen in the study.

3- Seniority- in Saudi society the longer an employee is in post indicates they will have more experience.

4- Gender - they had to be male as the researcher cannot interview females due to cultural and religious reasons.

After creating the list of names the researcher had to make arrangements to conduct the interviews. These arrangements took many approaches such as writing a letter or making a phone call and sometimes visiting the work place and explaining the targets of the research and introducing myself. These approaches were used with all the interviewees. Initially there were 6 administrators in the sample, however 2 withdrew, consequently the administrator interviewees numbered 4.

Top management members

Here there was no random sampling but after the researcher reviewed the original list, he chose the males and then sent a letter to them and whoever accepted to be involved in the research was interviewed.

Students

The criteria for selecting the students were as follows:

1- The interviewee had to be a university student.

2- They had to be a full time undergraduate student and not part time students because the full time students are able to judge the services due to the fact they benefit from them more than the part time students.

3- They had to be beneficiaries of one or more of the services provided by the university to students.

4- Gender - they had to be male as the researcher cannot interview females due to cultural and religious reasons.

The researcher went to where the students were; in their classrooms and their rest places and canteens inside the university and also in their university residences.

After the researcher explained to the students the research subject and asked them to participate and arrangement were made to conduct the interview. The researcher made sure that he had more than one way of contacting the students due to the difficulty of finding the students compared with teachers and employees who are in easy to find places. Twenty two students agreed to take part, however 1 withdrew.

Employers

The employers were chosen in co-ordination with the universities. Each university holds a careers day which employers attend and they are interested in university graduates. Every university keeps a list containing the names and addresses of the employers' companies and after arranging with the university the researcher was provided with this list. Random sampling was applied based upon the following criteria:

1. Company location - in the same area as the university.

The researcher contacted the employers and arrangements were made with those who accepted to take part. If some declined the researcher went back to the original list and chose a substitute. There was great difficulty in convincing the employers of the importance of the research and contributing to it, and due to the short available time of the employers, the researcher chose an employer interested in university graduates from each university area from the four universities.

As the researcher I had to decide at what point I had interviewed a sufficient number of participants to ensure that I had obtained rich, quality data to work with. When issues and comments were being repeated the decision was made that saturation had been reached.

A total of 39 participants from the three groups were interviewed. The sample included 21 students, 14 staff and 4 employers. This number was considered sufficient to generate the descriptive analysis required to identify relevant quality criteria for each group. Strauss et al. (1990) suggest that decisions regarding the number of interviews and observations depend upon access, resources and research objectives. The available time and original decisions regarding sample size may also be modified as the theory evolves. The quality and range of information gathered, rather than the number of interviews, was considered more important. After 39 in-depth interviews it was felt that enough data, which gave an adequately extensive reflection of the views of the three groups, had been collected. The sample included students, lecturers, administrators, Heads of Faculties/Departments, and academics with leadership responsibilities in four Saudi universities. The 4 employers selected work for the largest private organisations in terms of staff and activities. They included leaders, senior managers, human resource administrators and training managers.

3.8.5 Qualitative data collection and analysis

All interviews were conducted in the Arabic language, which was not an issue as the interviewees were either teaching, studying or working in environments where Arabic was the main medium of communication or

instruction. Likely areas of misunderstanding and misperception due to different experiences were explored. The general understanding of all group members in terms of the terminology and expressions was closely monitored and this further helped identify the areas/terms which had to be dealt with to avoid ambiguity. What had to be carefully considered is whether or not the majority of individuals would ascribe the same meanings to those topics as intended by the researcher. The interviews started with a general introduction to reinforce the purpose of the study. During the interviews, the key criteria, expectations and issues that considerably influenced the respondents' view of quality of services in Saudi universities were elucidated.

The interviews were semi-structured: certain primary questions were identified initially, but the conversations were conducted in an open-ended manner designed to promote a free flow of discussion so as to access the perspectives of the interviewee in depth. The interviews, as recommended by Ratcliffe (2002), were not just used as a means of data gathering but involved active interactions aimed at arriving at contextually-based findings by examining the 'how', the 'why' as well as the 'what'. Such an emergent approach is typical of qualitative research, as it seeks to observe and interpret meanings in context and, therefore, it is neither possible nor appropriate to complete questions before data collection has begun (Hoepfl, 1997). To an extent, convergent interviewing was adopted to allow the researcher to refine the questions after each interview. In convergent interviewing, the researcher asks questions about issues raised in previous interviews, to find differences between the interviewees with explanations for any disagreements (Rao and Perry, 2003). Hence, a few questions identified in each interview were developed for subsequent interviews so that agreements and disagreements among the interviewees and the reasons were examined. The probe questions were introduced only towards the end of the interviews so as not to lead the interviewees. Some of the questions were intended to clarify understandings and perceptions of each group regarding the different criteria and variables and the reasons behind such perceptions.

The researcher was an active participant in the interviews by seeking clarifications or asking for further amplification; however care was taken to be non-directive and to not use leading questions. The respondents were encouraged to be reflective and this helped to shape the research from the beginning. The main themes put forward by the interviewees were explored and the semi-structured nature of the interviews provided latitude in further exploring the range of issues identified by the interviewees, which allowed their own perspectives and reasons to emerge. Questions such as "Can you give an example?" and "Can you elaborate?" were used in the interviews. The rich qualitative data from the interviews helped to gain deeper insights into the dimensions of quality in universities and also helped to further refine the components of quality identified from the literature.

Creswell (1998) advocates no single correct method of qualitative data analysis and suggests that researchers first identify themes and categories, a process called decontextualization, through data reduction and interpretation. The researcher can then interpret the data to reveal a larger picture, which is called recontextualization.

As a first step, the cases in this study were divided on the basis of the groups. The transcriptions were then reviewed several times so that data could be categorised according to basic subjects that surfaced from each group. Labels were assigned to each subject, without making connections among them in the first instance. Ten main subjects or dimensions initially surfaced from the data: teaching and learning, curriculum, resources and outcomes. Next, the data was organised as sub-subjects under these main subjects. The sub-subjects were categorised using the criterion of best fit. However, due to the complexity and interrelatedness of the universities, there were many variables that could be categorized under more than one subject. For instance, the subject of knowledge could be categorized under curriculum, teaching and assessment. Here, the responses to explore questions helped to clarify which aspects were of relevance to the

respondent. Cases which did not seem to fit in anywhere in the first instance were placed separately. This category was again carefully scrutinised at the end and several of these variables were then placed under the main subjects. Most of the variables that did not fit under the main subjects identified so far dealt mainly with broader generic institutional issues and were placed under a new subject. All the variables that were identified were then analysed further so as to locate patterns, similarities and differences, particularly within and between each group.

A content analysis of the data also focused on differentiating between actual experiences, expectations, values, and practices. This process also allowed the information to be compared with the secondary data from the literature review. Qualitative researchers debate the applicability of the notions of validity and reality to interpretative research as these terms refer to the evaluation of positivist research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that the interpretative tradition must instead aim for 'credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability'. Credibility deals with the problem of reality being interpreted differently by different individuals and is parallel to the concept of internal validity. It involves the approval of the research findings by peers or other interviewees. Transferability is similar to external validity and Riege (2003a) argues that if research findings are to satisfy the notion of transferability, adequate descriptions must be provided to determine whether the findings are applicable or transferable to their settings. By its very nature, the small size and inductive approach of qualitative research is criticised for its lack of external validity (Stenbacka, 2001). Creswell (1998) argues that repetitiveness of results or external validity has no place in inductive research as the objective is not to generalise findings but to form a unique interpretation of events. The solution is for qualitative researchers to be very careful, systematic and reflective in making the research process clear for them in order to describe it for others who can then judge its applicability to their needs. This requires the researcher to be explicit about the methods used so that the reader obtains a complete picture of the context and processes involved. Dependability is analogous to reliability and considers

whether the procedures and techniques used in the inquiry process are consistent and requires compatibility between the research question and the research design. Finally, conformability is similar to objectivity in positivism and refers to whether the interpretation of the data is logical and unprejudiced, i.e., whether the conclusions drawn are appropriate to the data. By interweaving the quotes of the respondents under each group and differentiating the conclusions that can be drawn from the actual findings as supported by the data, careful consideration has been given to provide a clear and accurate description of the context and processes followed.

A qualitative researcher becomes the instrument of data collection and thus results may vary greatly depending on who conducts the research. Strauss et al. (1990) emphasise the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher which refers to the researcher's personal trait whereby he/she is aware of subtleties in data, has the capacity to understand and give meaning to data and is able to separate the pertinent from that which is not . The qualitative researcher requires a great degree of accuracy in reporting events, points of view and interpretations that are attributed to the people who they study. (Richards, 2003)Therefore, qualitative researchers must go beyond description in order to arrive at the meanings and concepts that are understood by the participants (Gregory, 1995). Richards (2003) asserts that contrary to the general perception, qualitative inquiry demands rigour, precision, systematicity and careful attention to detail. This becomes even more complicated given the fact that people are often not sure of exact meanings and may provide at best vague, inconsistent interpretations and may frequently change their minds. It would be difficult for all such interpretations to converge into one consistent picture (Riege, 2003a). In this case, it is the researcher's task to report the indecisions of the subjects involved rather than implying a stability not provided by the subjects.

3.9 Triangulation of data

Triangulation is a process where different data collection methods are used for the same research purpose (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). According to

Guion (2002), data triangulation involves the use of different sources of data/information and both qualitative and quantitative methods.

In this study, three data sources were triangulated. These correspond to university students, university staff and employers. The purpose of the quantitative method was to reach more participants in universities in order to establish a link between the factors identified in the literature and the initial data analysis output. The methods to achieve the above purpose included an in-depth literature review and the survey results. Therefore, an intensive field study was conducted at the different universities. Sample triangulation was achieved by conducting multiple interviews with each group and an extensive survey with a large sample. Methodological and data triangulation refers to the use of 'complementary, symmetrical parallel' methods so as to get alternative views, was achieved through the use of both interviews and quantitative surveys. Furthermore, the research design process allowed sequential triangulation (LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1997).

3.10 Ethical issues

The major ethical issue in most social research is related to the treatment of the human respondents or participants (Blaikie, 2000). To make inquires into human behaviour it is essential to behave ethically, qualitative researchers are required to have the knowledge of ethical principles (Johnson and Spicer, 2006a). Christians (2003) refers to it as moral principles to be applied in the real problem of conducting research. Jones et al. (2006a) state ethical decisions are to take place throughout the whole research process. Researchers are ethically responsible to ensure that their methods of the research are of the highest quality and as unobtrusive and inoffensive as possible. All researchers are also morally obliged to safeguard the interests of the subjects of their study or those who are affected by their work. Fogelman (2002) also highlights the concept of informed consent of the respondents which is tied in with anonymity and confidentiality as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2007). In this research, the researcher did that from the design of the research until the presentation of the findings,

both published and non-published forms. By doing so, the features of the ethical code were practiced as recommended by Christians (2003) The researcher was aware that to include interviews with participants as one method of data collection was a moral enterprise involving subjective informants. The preparation of interview materials, the interview field work and the management of the original raw data collected were carried out in a accordance with the University of Southampton ethical guidelines, the researcher's knowledge about ethical principles, social research textbooks and consulting with the supervisor.

The names of all interviewees, respondents and institutions that took part in this study have therefore been kept completely confidential all interviews were conducted as a one-to one interview in a closed place i.e. the participant's own office or a meeting room, with no third parties present. After the interview data was obtained, the researcher was obligated to retain the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. These participants were well informed that the information about them gained during the course of the research would be kept strictly confidential and all results would be anonymous. The participant information sheet addressing the nature and purposes of the study, research questions and the statement of informed consent, stressing the participant confidentiality assurances, is provided in Appendix P. In addition to individual anonymity, the four selected universities in the interviews were also anonymously named to protect the privacy of these participants, whose workplaces would never to be exposed. A foreword to the self-administered questionnaires explicitly stated the purpose of the survey and the anonymity and confidentially of respondents' views was stressed. Anonymity was important to encourage respondents to be truthful about their opinions, thus reducing the potential bias that may result when respondents try to conform to what is professionally or socially desirable or expected. Respondents were informed that the objective of the survey and interviews were to determine their views on generic quality management rather than their views on a particular institution, a fact which was clear from the nature of the questions.

3.11. Cultural constraints

This study was carried out in a conservative society, which presented a number of cultural issues during the data collection process. Some students and staff asked to end the interview through lack of time or they did not have more information to contribute regarding all student services or they changed their mind at the beginning of the interview. Some students and staff members did not want to talk about all the services in detail because they felt that taking part in the interview would damage their relationships with colleagues. This may have been due to loyalty to family members, who may be in higher positions in the university.

Another significant issue concerns trust. Often respondents were hesitant to talk and they would ask (several times) to view the identity and research documents and permission details carried by the researcher. The researcher encountered another problem which is that some of the respondents would easily divert from the subject and delve into personal or family matters that were not related to the research point. This feeling of comfort can arise from recognising a common family name or 'tribal' identity.

Saudi people are generally shy, and the researcher needed to spend some time "ice-breaking" to initiate the interviews. Interviews would also be interrupted by religious reasons such as the call for prayers. The fixed times for prayers have to be adhered to. Additionally, due to cultural and religious reasons, the researcher was not able to interview females (students or staff) who are benefiting from the university services.

Arab culture calls on providing people with the most possible hospitality and letting them speak their minds. In this case, and according to the Arab culture, the interviewee would invite those coming over and interrupt the interview process. The presence of a third party in the interview negates its confidentiality and thus the answers might be given in line with the third party.

3.12 Translation issues

Both the questionnaire and interview were developed in English and then translated into Arabic by academic translators in a translation centre in one of the Saudi universities. The process of piloting the questionnaire is explained in section 3.6.1 and piloting the interview is explained in section3.8.3. The translators and the researcher did not come across any misunderstanding as a result of two languages being used. The use of an Arabic questionnaire ensured that the chances of misinterpretation of statements due to language problems was minimised.

The interview outcomes were in Arabic and therefore the researcher had to translate this from Arabic to English and to make sure it was accurate. The interview outcomes were then presented to two independent translators, one to translate from Arabic to English and the other to translate from English to Arabic.

3.13 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology used to conduct this research was presented. First, research philosophies were described. This is important, since research philosophies provide vital guidance for the research design and the development of the research methodology to be used. The research process design involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative, positivist mode guided the researcher towards certainty and objectivity (Patton, 1999) while the qualitative method opened up other ideas and gave confidence in the findings.

The data collection methods were described in detail and include focus groups, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The triangulation mechanisms used in this study were described. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews was collected and interpreted, although the number of participants was limited due to time and budget constraints, while the quantitative approach allowed a large number of participants. In addition cultural constraint that the researcher encountered has been discussed. The qualitative and interpretative approaches were used to organize and

describe the subjective data in a systematic way (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Finally the ethical considerations employed were outlined.

Chapter 4

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the analysis of the preliminary research findings. Firstly, the descriptive analysis of the data provides some quantitative insights to describe and discuss the data obtained in terms of value and contribution to the aims and questions of the research. Secondly, it focuses on the purification and computation processes of the measuring instruments. In this process, Cronbach's Alpha Scale is used as an indicator of reliability of the scale measurement. Results of the statistical analysis are used for further analysis in this chapter for question answering and to interpret the findings in the context of the research aims and questions.

It is important to note that this Chapter is aimed specifically to present the statistical results from the analysis. Chapter 6 will interpret and discuss the implications and findings of Chapters 4 and 5 within the context of the literature discussed in previous chapters. The conclusion and recommendations of these results are discussed in Chapter 7.

4.2 Reliability analysis results

Computing the item-to-total correlation and also a coefficient alpha carries out the reliability analysis process. As mentioned earlier, item-to-total correlation and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is considered to be more popular than a cross-item reliability index in the field of social science research. All items were found to have a high item-to-total correlation, which is above the acceptable level of 0.30. As shown in the last column in Table 12, the reliability coefficient ranged from 0.804 to 0.925, which was significantly higher than the acceptable level of 0.60 (Nunally and Bernstein, 1978). These results confirm that the scales used are reliable.

Table 12 Reliability analysis for the questionnaire variables

Item Code	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Group 1	**Admission**		**.804**
1	Admission	.524	
2	Registration	.569	
3	Schedules	.498	
4	Course Add/Drop	.545	
5	Course postponed/ re-enrolment	.486	
6	Promises commitment	.580	
7	Procedures duration	.572	
Group 2	**Teaching**		**.913**
1	Faculty performance	.575	
2	Teaching methods	.563	
3	Technical use	.545	
4	Curriculum coverage	.532	
5	Student assessment	.522	
6	Faculty Attendance accuracy	.438	
7	Attendance time obligation	.478	
8	Students Attendance mentoring	.450	
9	Faculty/students courtesy	.571	
10	Problem solving	.614	
11	Students encouragement	.578	
12	Curricula outcomes	.539	
13	Curriculum development	.484	
14	Faculty development	.559	
15	College following-up	.607	
16	Excellence motivation	.526	
17	Students # in class	.451	
18	Exam times	.376	
19	Student/ computer #	.423	
20	References use	.475	
21	Office hours commitment	.502	
22	Semester duration	.447	
23	Students critical thinking	.581	
24	Students creative thinking	.556	
25	Team work	.561	
26	Student/faculty assessment	.448	
Group 3	Library		**.904**
1	References availability	.589	
2	Up-to-date References	.639	
3	Loan procedures	.688	
4	Up-to-date Periodicals	.680	
5	Computers In library	.608	
6	Librarian Performance	.685	
7	Librarian knowledge	.700	
8	Librarian courtesy	.696	
9	Working hours	.614	
10	Library location & size	.545	
11	Research tools quality	.664	
Group 4	**Deanship of Student Affairs**		**.911**
1	Sports Activities	.560	
2	Cultural Activities	.611	

3	Social Activities	.606	
4	Allowance Delivery	.473	
5	Housing Appearance	.617	
6	Rooms allocation criteria	.669	
7	Accommodation Services	.727	
8	Cleaning Services	.681	
9	Accommodation distance from campus	.550	
10	Number of students in rooms	.604	
11	Accommodation closing/opening hours	.619	
12	Problem solving	.699	
13	Administrative procedures	.704	
14	staff/students courtesy	.596	
Group 5	**Medical services**		.925
1	Medical services availability	.836	
2	Medical services delivery time	.853	
3	Quality of medical service	.869	
4	Medical staff courtesy	.745	
Group 6	**General Services**		.877
1	Student as a customer consideration	.506	
2	Distance between buildings	.533	
3	Internet availability	.583	
4	Guidelines availability	.704	
5	Expectation gaps	.716	
6	Students consultation	.724	
7	Student satisfaction assessment	.712	
8	Mistakes repetition avoidance	.658	

Table 12 Reliability analysis for the questionnaire variables

4.3 Profile of the universities' respondents and universities

This section focuses on providing general information about respondents and participating students. The aim is to provide a brief account of the sample in the study. Frequency analysis is used to distribute the participating students according to the following characteristics:

- Age of respondent

- Gender

- Year of entering the university

- The college type

- The university

4.3.1 Age of respondents

Sample by age category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18- less than 20	323	21.5	21.5	21.5
20- less than 22	542	36.1	36.1	57.6
22- less than 24	513	34.2	34.2	91.8
24- less than 26	89	5.9	5.9	97.7
More than 26	34	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	**1501**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 13 Distribution of sample by age category

The first descriptive analysis begins with the age of respondents. Table 13 shows that 21.5% of the respondents were aged between 18-20 years. Normally, students enter HE at 18 years of age in Saudi Arabia. 36% of respondents were aged between 20-22 years, 34% of the students were aged between 22-24 years and 8% of them were over 24 years. This indicates that 42.4% of respondents were more than 22 years of age and there are some students who spend more time than normal at university or will graduate late.

4.3.2 Gender of respondents

Sample by gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	1045	69.6	69.6	69.6
female	456	30.4	30.4	100.0
Total	**1501**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Table 14 Distribution of sample by gender category

According to HE policy in Saudi Arabia, genders should not be mixed and there is segregation in different buildings. Distributing and collecting the questionnaires was difficult among female students and the results in Table 14 support this by showing that the majority of the respondents in this study, two thirds 69.9% were male and one third 30.1% were female. However, the return was considered acceptable from a statistical point of view.

4.3.3 Entering the university of respondents

Sample by year of entering the university category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2004	466	31.0	31.0	31.0
2005	393	26.2	26.2	57.2
2006	274	18.3	18.3	75.5
2007	363	24.2	24.2	99.7
2003	3	.2	.2	99.9
2002	2	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1501	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 Distribution of sample by entering the university category

Table 15 shows that more than half of the respondents (57.2%) have spent more than two years at university prior to participating in this study, thus indicating that they were able to judge the quality of services provided by the universities based on their perceptions. The researcher chose to cover 6 years of university entrants as some subjects, e.g. medicine require students to spend six years studying.

4.3.4 College of respondents

Sample by the college category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Islamic	92	6.1	6.1	6.1
Humanities	157	10.5	10.5	16.6
Management	391	26.0	26.0	42.6
Science	344	22.9	22.9	65.6
Agriculture	50	3.3	3.3	68.9
Medicine	203	13.5	13.5	82.4
Engineering	66	4.4	4.4	86.8
Education	142	9.5	9.5	96.3
Social	35	2.3	2.3	98.6
Other	21	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	1501	100.0	100.0	

Table 16 Distribution of sample by college category

Table 16 shows the distribution of the sample by colleges. Out of the 10 colleges in total it is clear that the highest percentage of the sample is from management, science and the medicine. However, the table also shows that

the Islamic colleges are one of the lowest colleges in the category which is not as some authors in the literature review, of this study, classify the Saudi university system as being of Islamic orientation.

4.3.5 University of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	K.S.U	425	28.3	28.3	28.3
	K.A.A.U	571	38.0	38.0	66.4
	K.F.U	302	20.1	20.1	86.5
	K.K.U	203	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	1501	100.0	100.0	

Table 17 Distribution of sample by the university category

The distribution of sample by university shows that the largest of the four universities is the King Abdul Aziz and the smallest is the King Khalid University. According to Table 17, there were few differences between the universities, so the results were analyzed as a whole.

4.4 Ranking of services

Service/Percent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Deanship of Student Affairs Services	17.8	14.1	15.3	12.6	10.3	9.3	6.8	6.7	6.5	.7
Teaching Services	28.4	24.7	15.4	9.3	7.7	4.6	4.1	3.4	1.9	.4
Library Services	3.9	6.7	11.3	11.5	13.7	14.7	12.4	14.9	10.6	.3
Admission Services	24.2	18.5	14.3	12.5	9.6	8.0	6.1	3.9	2.9	.1
General Services	8.5	9.1	12.9	14.5	15.1	11.7	13.2	8.4	6.3	.4
Medical Services	4.3	6.2	6.9	8.6	13.1	17.0	17.3	16.1	10.1	.5
Motivation Services	4.8	6.6	8.9	9.8	10.3	11.5	17.9	15.2	14.5	.6
Treatment	18.8	13.7	12.8	10.1	8.1	8.6	10.0	12.5	5.1	.4

Services										
Internet Services	6.1	6.6	6.5	7.7	7.9	9.9	7.2	13.1	34.4	.7
Other Services	.5	.2	.3	.1	.2	.1	.2	.6	1.1	96.7

Table 18 Ranking of services

The importance of services provided by the universities to students differ according the students' point of view from one service to another, hence the priority for improving the quality level of services is usually given to the most important services for students. In order to know the degree of importance of each service to the students, they were asked to put the services in order according to their importance. The result in Table 18 shows that teaching services occupied the first place in importance followed by admission services then treatment service and the least important service was considered to be internet services inside the university at 34.4%.

4.5 Factor naming and Interpretation process

The interpretation of six groups of services was accomplished by relating them to the theoretical concept of service quality management. The six groups of services are explained as follows:

1. Admission and Registration Services
This service consists of 7 items and they are the most important service provided by the Admission and Registration Department. The values are closely grouped with the highest being" Promises commitment" 0.580 and the lowest "Course postponed/ re-enrolment" 0.486 the overall mean of this factor is 2.69, 2.29. See Tables 12 and 19.

2. Teaching Services

This service consists of 26 items and they are the most important sub-criteria of Teaching Services. The values are closely grouped with the highest being "Problem solving" 0.614 and the lowest "Exam times" 0.376 the overall mean of this factor is 2.77.

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3. Library Services

This service consists of 11 items and they are the most important sub-criteria of Library Services. The values are closely grouped with the highest being the "Librarian knowledge" 0.700 and the lowest "Library location and size" 0.545 the overall mean of this factor is 2.929.

4. Deanship of Student Affairs Services

This service consists of 14 items and they are the most important sub-criteria of Deanship of Student Affairs. The values are closely grouped with the highest being the "Accommodation Services" 0.727 and the lowest "Allowance Delivery" 0.473 the overall mean of this factor is 2.5.

5. Medical Services

This service consists of 4 items and they are the most important sub-criteria of Medical Services. The values are closely grouped with the highest being the "quality of medical service" 0.869 and the lowest "medical staff courtesy" 0.745 the overall mean of this factor is 2.50.

6. General Services

This service consists of 8 items and they are the most important sub-criteria of General Services. The values are closely grouped with the highest being the "Students consultation" 0.724 and the lowest "Student as a customer consideration" 0.506 the overall mean of this factor is 2.54.
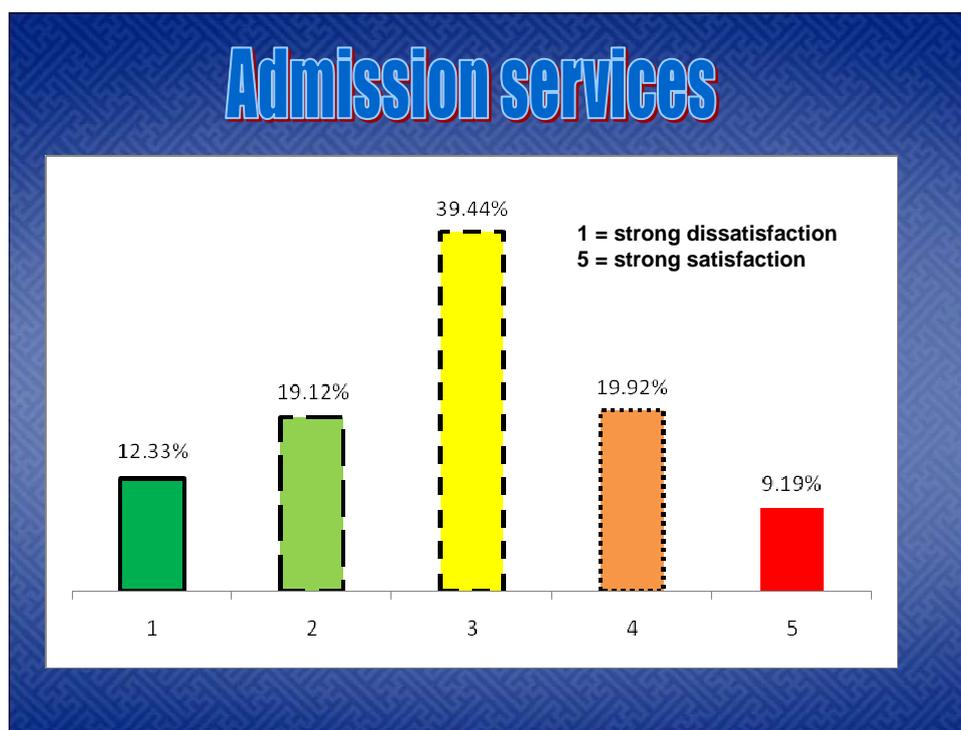
Figure 4 Student satisfaction with the Admission and Registration Services

4.6 Admission and registration services

Service		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Admission	1501	2.95	1.118	.029
	Registration	1501	2.97	1.047	.027
	Schedules	1501	2.55	1.209	.031
Admission and Registration Services	Course Add/Drop	1501	2.48	1.328	.034
	Course postponed/ re-enrolment	1501	2.69	1.260	.033
	Promises commitment	1501	2.29	1.172	.030
	Procedures duration	1501	2.41	1.205	.031

Table 19 Student satisfaction with the Admission and Registration Services

The Deanship of Admission and Registration is the first unit in the university dealt with by the students on applying to the university. Their relationship with it continues throughout their studies, and it is the last unit they deal with on graduation from the university. This means the level of the services provided to the students by Admission and Registration will leave an

impression on the students, as is known the first impression is the longest lasting. The Deanship of Admission and Registration provides services to all students of the university, hence Admission and Registration ranked number 2 in importance from the point of view of the respondents.

These services should be high quality however the results of analysis show that 71% of respondents were not satisfied with their level of quality while 29% of them were satisfied.

The overall mean of the degree of satisfaction is 2.6 and the mean of the sub-criteria of Admission and Registration varied from 2.29 for promises commitment to 2.97 for the quality of the registration services. The improvement in the quality of registration may be due to registration in the university being undertaken through the university website.

Regarding the difference between satisfaction of the students about the admission and registration service quality in each university, Table 22 shows that the overall mean of the satisfaction of the students in King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah was the highest among the universities under study, reaching 2.63, and the lowest value was recorded for King Saud University in Riyadh at 2.39.

From Table 26 there is no difference between the degree of satisfaction of the male students at 2.6 and female students at 2.65 with the admission and registration services, indicating that gender has no effect on the degree of satisfaction about service quality.

4.7 Teaching services

Service		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Teaching Services	Faculty performance	1501	2.58	1.276	.033
	Teaching methods	1501	2.77	1.055	.027
	Technical use	1501	2.62	1.238	.032
	Curriculum coverage	1501	3.01	1.091	.028
	Student assessment	1501	2.59	1.130	.029
	Faculty Attendance accuracy	1501	3.06	1.331	.034
	Attendance time obligation	1501	3.07	1.397	.036
	Students Attendance mentoring	1501	3.00	1.222	.032
	Faculty/students courtesy	1501	2.84	1.122	.029
	Problem solving	1501	2.50	1.166	.030
	Students encouragement	1501	2.69	1.177	.030
	Curricula outcomes	1501	2.54	1.168	.030
	Curriculum development	1501	3.11	1.267	.033
	Faculty development	1501	3.02	1.263	.033
	College following-up	1501	2.80	1.208	.031
	Excellence motivation	1501	2.80	1.249	.032
	Students # in class	1501	2.81	1.302	.034
	Exam times	1501	2.62	1.233	.032
	Student/ computer #	1501	2.37	1.194	.031
	References use	1501	2.76	1.090	.028
	Office hours commitment	1501	2.85	1.214	.031
	Semester duration	1501	3.28	1.129	.029
	Students critical thinking	1501	2.63	1.178	.030
	Students creative thinking	1501	2.49	1.166	.030
	Team work	1501	2.60	1.216	.031
	Student/faculty assessment	1501	2.77	1.373	.035

Table 20 Student satisfaction with the Teaching Services
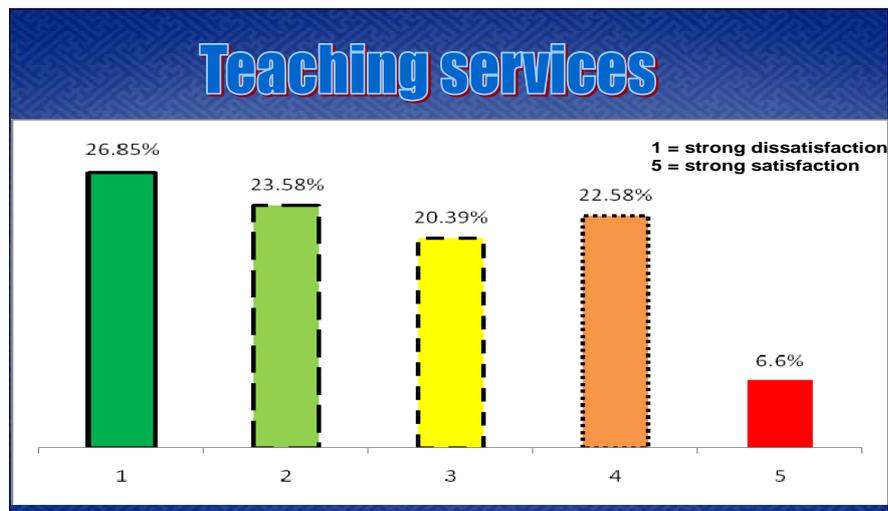
Figure 5 Student satisfaction with the Teaching Services

Teaching services is considered one of the most important functions of any university on which a larger percentage of the budget is spent moreover some students pay annual fees for studying at the university. This service ranked first in importance as per the opinions of the sample (the students) – see Table 18. Teaching services in universities consists of 26 items as shown in Table 20. A service of such importance for university students should show a very high degree of quality. By asking the students about this, 71% of them indicated that they are not satisfied with the level of quality of the teaching services and 29% are satisfied with this service. The overall mean of the degree of satisfaction with the teaching service is 2.77. On the level of elements and the mean of the degree of satisfaction of sub-criteria of teaching services ranges between 2.37 for the availability of computers for the students inside the university and 3.11 for students satisfaction with curricula development. This may be as a result of payment by some universities of a monetary reward for the faculty members who develop curricula of the subjects they teach in the universities.

As regards variation in students' satisfaction with the teaching service as per the universities there is a variation as shown in Table 20. The mean of satisfaction at King Abdul Aziz University is 2.90, 2.87 at King Faisal University, 2.67 at King Khalid University and 2.59 at King Saud University. There is no variation in the degrees of satisfaction according to gender, as the mean of satisfaction of male students with this service is 2.78 and the mean of satisfaction of female students is 2.77. See Table 26.

4.8 Library services

Table 21 Student satisfaction with the Library Services

Service		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Library Services	References availability	1501	2.80	1.202	.031
	Up-to-date References	1501	2.80	1.157	.030
	Loan procedures	1501	3.16	1.137	.029
	Up-to-date Periodicals	1501	2.89	1.076	.028
	Computers In library	1501	2.88	1.223	.032
	Librarian Performance	1501	2.88	1.187	.031
	Librarian knowledge	1501	2.88	1.123	.029
	Librarian courtesy	1501	2.98	1.179	.030
	Working hours	1501	3.02	1.197	.031
	Library location & size	1501	3.12	1.285	.033
	Research tools quality	1501	2.81	1.135	.029
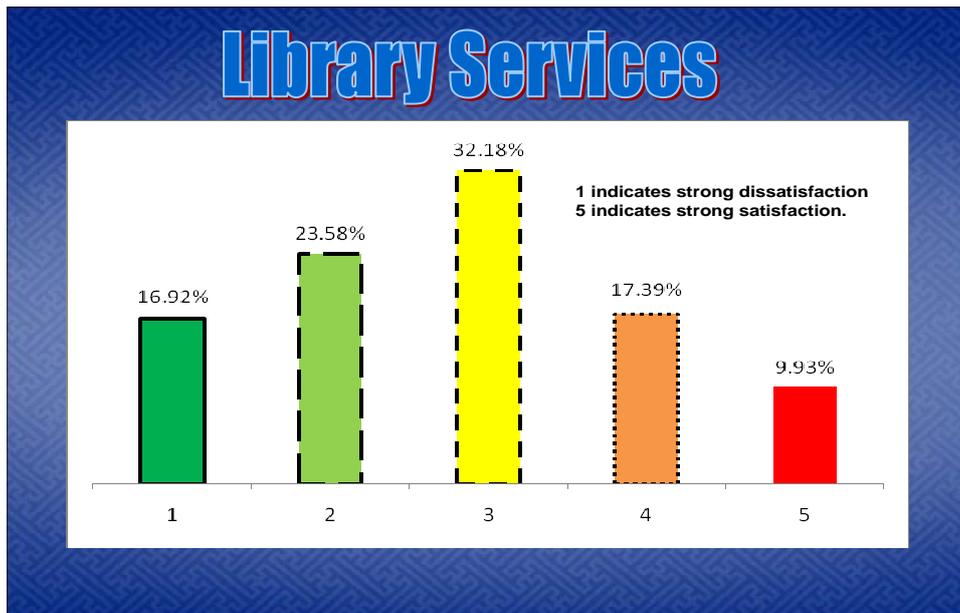
Figure 6 Student satisfaction with the Library Services

Libraries are considered as the most important facilities in modern universities due to the importance of books - research manuals and references - they offer for the students and lecturers. Hence, it is assumed that its services, contents, furnishings and systems should be of high quality and satisfy all its visitors. For the Saudi universities in the study, it is clear

from the opinions of the sample, shown in Table 21, that a larger percentage of them, 72% are not satisfied with the services offered and only 27% of them are satisfied with these services.

Library services include many important elements for which the degree of satisfaction may differ from one element to another. Table 21 shows that the borrowing system element obtained the highest degree of satisfaction at 3.16, while the elements of availability of new books in the library and availability of references both registered the lowest degree of satisfaction at 2.80. Regarding differences between universities under study the lowest degree of satisfaction with the quality of library services was registered at King Khalid University at 2.56 and the rest of the universities are very close to each other table 25. There is no variation between the satisfaction of male students and female students with the library services. See Table 26

4.9 Deanship of Student Affairs services

Service		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Deanship of Student Affairs Services	Sports Activities	1501	2.58	1.244	.032
	Cultural Activities	1501	2.70	1.160	.030
	Social Activities	1501	2.63	1.155	.030
	Allowance Delivery	1501	2.75	1.375	.035
	Housing Appearance	1501	2.41	1.167	.030
	Rooms allocation criteria	1501	2.42	1.110	.029
	Accommodation Services	1501	2.31	1.092	.028
	Cleaning Services	1501	2.41	1.108	.029
	Accommodation distance from campus	1501	2.72	1.252	.032
	Number of students in rooms	1501	2.55	1.173	.030
	Accommodation closing/opening hours	1501	2.45	1.176	.030
	Problem solving	1501	2.35	1.108	.029
	Administrative procedures	1501	2.44	1.101	.028
	staff/students courtesy	1501	2.39	1.139	.029

Table 22 Student satisfaction with the Deanship of Student Affairs Services
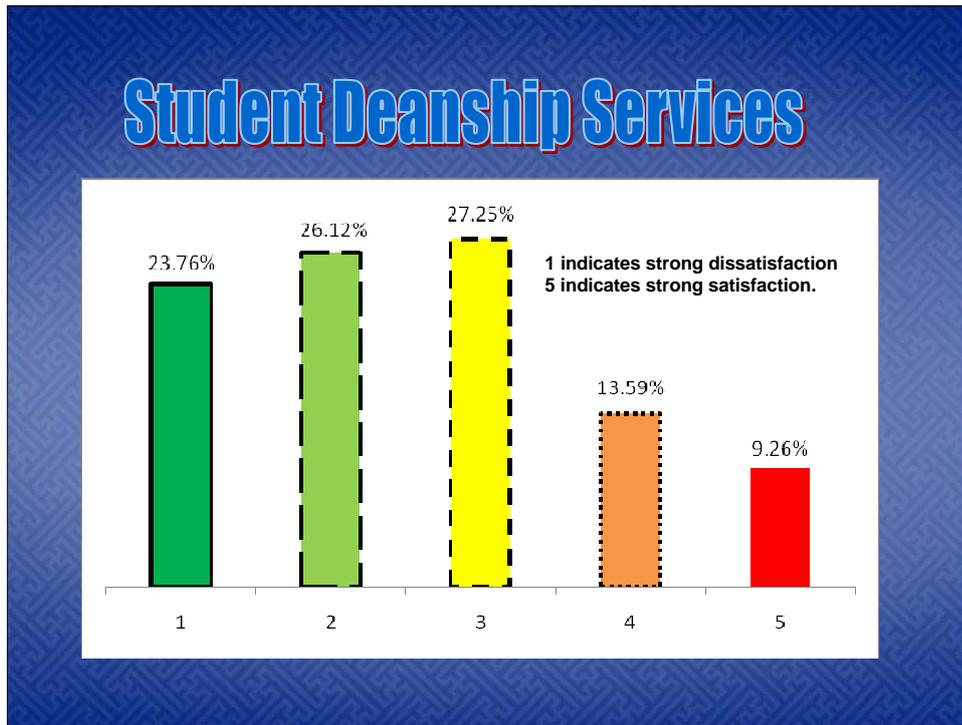
Figure 7 Student satisfaction with the Deanship of Student Affairs

Students need many services inside and outside the university premises. The most important of these services are accommodation, sports and social activities which are supervised by the Deanship of Student Affairs. The respondents ranked the Deanship of Student Affairs services third in order of importance for them as shown in Table 18. When the sample was asked about their degree of satisfaction with these services the results showed that 77% of them were not satisfied and 23% of them were satisfied figure 7. The overall mean for these services is 2.5 and the mean of degree of satisfaction about sub-criteria ranges between 2.3 for accommodation service and 2.75 for rewards payment timing table 22.

For each university in the study, the researcher found that there is a variation among the universities in respect of satisfaction of the population with the services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs. In King Saud University the degree of satisfaction was 2.35, King Abdul Aziz University was 2.77, which is the highest degree of satisfaction among the universities, the degree of satisfaction of the students at King Fahd University was 2.5

and King Khalid University was 2 which is the lowest degree of satisfaction among the universities. While there is no significant variation in the degree of satisfaction according to gender. The mean of satisfaction for female students was 2.6 and the mean of satisfaction for male students was 2.45.Table 25,26.

4.10 Medical services.

Table 23 Student satisfaction with the Medical Services

Service	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Medical Services	Medical services availability	1501	2.83	1.264	.033
	Medical services delivery time	1501	2.68	1.209	.031
	Quality of medical service	1501	2.77	1.192	.031
	Medical staff courtesy	1501	2.79	1.220	.031
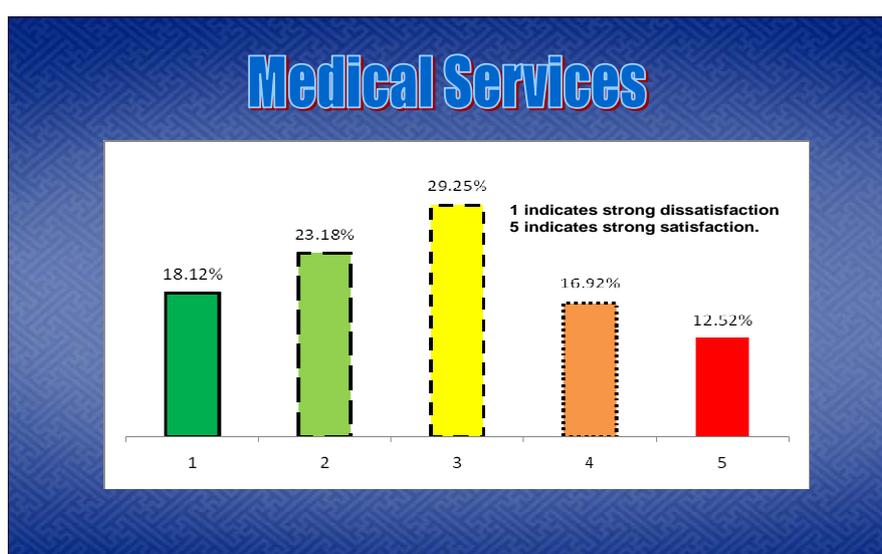
Figure 8 Student satisfaction with Medical Services

Advanced educational institutes care about the student's mind, thinking and body with equal degrees of importance. Most of the universities in this study have university hospitals attached to them, in addition to the internal medical clinics. When the students of these universities were asked about their satisfaction with the medical services offered to them by the university, 70%

of them were not satisfied with the level of quality of these services, 30% were satisfied.

The medical services include 5 elements, and the mean of the degree of satisfaction with these elements ranges from 2.68 for the speed of offering the service and 2.83 for availability of medical service at the university and the overall mean of satisfaction is 2.5. The researcher found that there is variation in the degree of satisfaction of the population according to the university. The students' satisfaction in King Fahd University reached 3, the highest degree of satisfaction whilst King Khalid University registered the lowest at 2.3 and at King Abdul Aziz and King Saud Universities 2.9 and 2.48 respectively.Table 25. There is no variation in the degree of satisfaction attributable to gender, with male students' satisfaction with the medical services at 2.74 and the female students at 2.75.table 26

4.11 General Services

Service	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
General Services	Student as a customer consideration	1501	2.29	1.254	.032
	Distance between buildings	1501	2.66	1.263	.033
	Internet availability	1501	2.55	1.344	.035
	Guidelines availability	1501	2.52	1.171	.030
	Expectation gaps	1501	2.39	1.128	.029
	Students consultation	1501	2.27	1.208	.031
	Student satisfaction assessment	1501	2.36	1.190	.031
	Mistakes repetition avoidance	1501	2.35	1.142	.029

Table 24 Student satisfaction with General Services
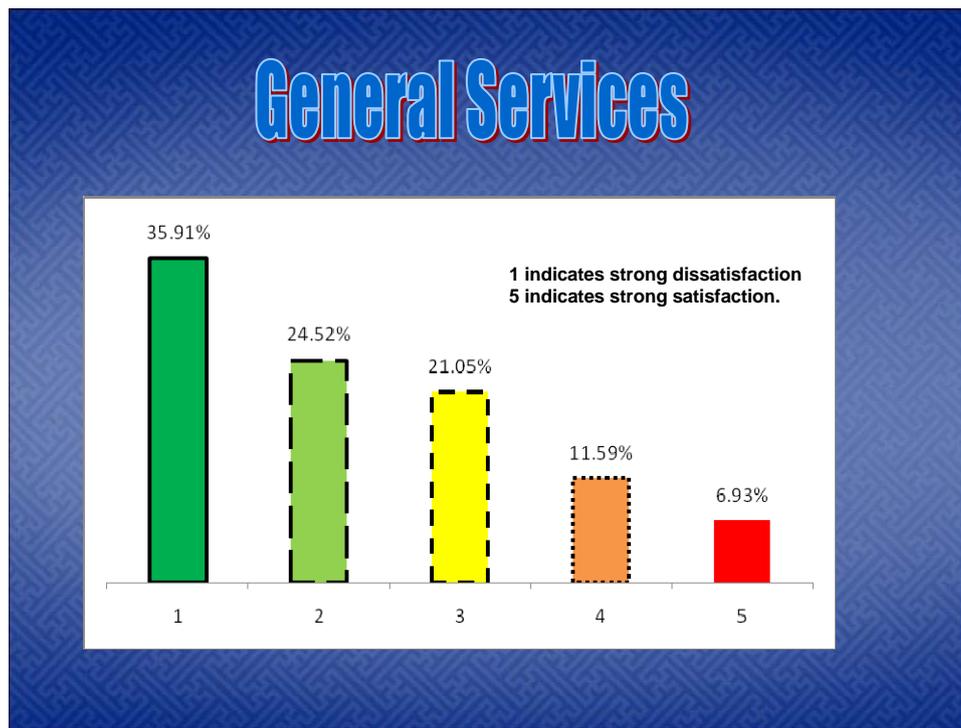
Figure 9 Student satisfaction with General Services

When the population was asked about their degree of satisfaction with some of the general services provided to them by their universities, it was revealed that 80% of them were not satisfied with the level of quality figure 9. The overall mean was 2.5 for all sub-criteria of general services. The degree of satisfaction ranged between 2.27 for the service of enquiring, from the students by the university, about their requirements and 2.66 for the proximity of the university buildings to each other table 24. The researcher found that King Fahd University registered the highest degree of satisfaction at 2.68 while the lowest was at 2 for King Khalid University, see Table 25. There was no variation in the degree of satisfaction attributable to gender, see Table 26.

University		Admission Services Group	Teaching Services Group	Library Services Group	Deanship of Student Affairs Services Group	Medical Service Group	General Services Group
K.S.U	Mean	2.3855	2.5892	2.9880	2.3563	2.4855	2.2012
	N	425	425	425	425	425	425
	Std. Deviation	.69625	.59739	.76973	.64983	1.03470	.75955
K.A.A.U	Mean	2.8454	2.9029	2.9637	2.7678	2.9440	2.5871
	N	571	571	571	571	571	571
	Std. Deviation	.82194	.69993	.84017	.80010	1.05980	.87729
K.F.U	Mean	2.6282	2.8744	3.0229	2.5315	3.0386	2.6800
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302
	Std. Deviation	.80662	.70801	.87000	.80735	1.12703	.95547
K.K.U	Mean	2.4588	2.6656	2.5683	2.0528	2.3169	2.0591
	N	203	203	203	203	203	203
	Std. Deviation	.82910	.65248	.84631	.77274	1.05709	.85282
Total	Mean	2.6192	2.7763	2.9290	2.5070	2.7484	2.4251
	N	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501
	Std. Deviation	.80952	.68160	.83957	.79637	1.10050	.88999

Table 25 Variation in satisfaction as per university

Table 25 shows the mean for the dissatisfaction levels of the students concerning all of the services, which consist of six groups of services based in the universities. The table shows that the lowest mean of dissatisfaction levels of admission services is for King Saud University, while the highest mean of dissatisfaction levels for admission services is for King Abdul-Aziz University.

The library services get the highest mean of dissatisfaction levels among the four universities. The highest mean goes to King Faisal University. While in the teaching services, King Abdul-Aziz University has the highest mean of dissatisfaction levels and King Saud University has the lowest mean.

In the services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs, King Khaled University has the lowest mean of dissatisfaction levels among the four universities, followed by King Saud University.

The highest mean of dissatisfaction in the Medical Services is at King Faisal University then King Abdul-Aziz University, while King Saud and King Khaled Universities have a small variance in the mean levels between them.

In General Services, the table shows that there is no big difference of the mean levels between the four universities. In all these services the mean levels show that the students from all four universities are not satisfied with the services.

Gender		Admission Services Group	Teaching Services Group	Library Services Group	Deanship of Student Affairs Services Group	Medical Service Group	General Services Group
Male	Mean	2.6022	2.7782	2.9214	2.4578	2.7467	2.4170
	N	1045	1045	1045	1045	1045	1045
	Std. Deviation	.81600	.69268	.84250	.77972	1.09270	.88208
Female	Mean	2.6582	2.7719	2.9464	2.6200	2.7522	2.4438
	N	456	456	456	456	456	456
	Std. Deviation	.79398	.65623	.83348	.82309	1.11937	.90858
Total	Mean	2.6192	2.7763	2.9290	2.5070	2.7484	2.4251
	N	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501
	Std. Deviation	.80952	.68160	.83957	.79637	1.10050	.88999

Table 26 Variation in satisfaction by male and female students

Table 26 shows the mean of dissatisfaction levels of the services based on gender; it also shows there are no big differences in the mean levels of the two genders in all the six services groups with the exception of the Deanship of Student Affairs services where the table shows a higher mean of dissatisfaction levels in the female sample.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion: Qualitative Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes how the interviews were conducted in the four universities. The perceptions of the students and staff regarding the structural matches between the universities' services and the students' perceptions is examined in this chapter in terms of exploring structural mismatches between the two. The process starts with the student's acceptance at the university in order to understand how they are selected. The role of academic programmes, administrative staff and students in the universities are the main component of this process, but there is also some focus on extracurricular programmes and their role in preparing students for employment; highlighting skills, personal attributes and facilitating ways to provide services to student. This chapter will also explore students' satisfaction based on the services they received. The outcomes of the process will also be included in this section, communication and sources of information, will be discussed.

The student services that the universities provide to the student is not a new issue, so that in 1976 the terminology was identified as Services that make up a comprehensive student personal programme at any university, to further the development of the whole student (Algaber, 1998).

The quality of university services provided to the students was the main focus in the student interviews in this research however the researcher found that the students correlate all these services with their future career when they will have graduated. At this stage the researcher found that a new consideration in this study should be undertaken, identified as services after graduation. In fact, the employability service is not that much different from university services which are provided to the student. However, there is a major debate about the role of universities regarding this service. Students' views are that it is the universities' responsibility

to qualify them for the labour market and to facilitate their employment after graduation. Consequently, the main focus will be the relationship between university services and student employability as the following:

First, the coordination was conducted with students who agreed to participate in the interview. All interviews were conducted inside each university with the time and the place determined by the students. The number of the interviews with students was twenty six. However, not all the interviews were successful; some students did not want to talk about all the services in detail, some students asked to end the interview through lack of time or they did not have more information to contribute regarding all student services or they changed their mind at the beginning of the interview. In addition some interviews conducted with students, six in total were neglected at the analysis process, due to low quality of the information related to the main subject. As a result the total of valid student interviews for analysis was twenty one.

Before carrying out the interviews, an exploratory phase had been conducted as a first phase. The second phase of this research, which involved interviewing staff, students and employers, was conducted for several reasons. First, it helped in understanding the current situation of services presented to the students in the KSA. This was important to set the questions of the interviews on a solid basis and obtain a clear picture of the current situation. Second, it enabled service providers to be interviewed in order to see how the level of quality in Saudi universities is used in relation to each stage of the services process. Third, it enabled an exploration of Saudi universities leaders' ideas about the services and beneficiaries and whether the design of the universities services met students' needs from their views.

In this chapter, the results from both phases are synthesised, interpreted and set in the context of the research. First, the research developed on the basis of the literature is briefly recalled. This provided the starting point for the research. The findings in this respect will show the contribution of this

study. Following this reminder of the research starting point, universities' objectives in implementing administrative strategies such TQM by which they attempt to promote this service are considered. Consideration is also given to the influences of students' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, university, in the quantitative phase.

After I had finished gathering and analysing my questionnaire data I needed to cover some questions in more depth to achieve deeper understanding about how the universities provide these services to the students, particularly the new approach I found most important with students at universities which was the employability services. In the qualitative phase of the study, [21 students, 14 staff, and 4 employers] it is worth mentioning here that one of the employers, after three attempts at arranging a meeting time with him, sent somebody to tell me that he would not take part in the interview and advised me to choose another employer. Semi-structured interviews with staff at four universities were conducted and analysed utilizing NVivo 8 to obtain coding at the first stage (See Appendix Q)

The 39 participants were in an age range from 20 to 60. Their experience ranged from 1 to 45 years. Their qualifications ranged from 1 to 4 (Diploma to PhD). The staff occupied 12 different positions at universities and 11 different specializations, as indicated in Table 27

Demographic information

University	4
Gender/ Male	39
Age range	20-60
Qualifications numbers	4
Specializations numbers	11
Positions numbers	12
Experience range	1-45 year

Table 27 Descriptive interviews data, N = 39

Appendix R shows the coding of the interview participants from the universities and the employers.

5.2 Perceptions of university services regarding the preparation of students for the labour market

This section reports the perception of participants to explore the relationship between the universities and the labour market and to identify if there are any gaps between the two. I found this relationship to be the most important issue among students.

5.2.1 Perceptions of the curriculum

5.2.1.1 Curricular places

The universities and the labour market start matching between each other with the admission of students or may be before this stage. According to the curriculum, most of the learning at the universities takes place in the classrooms; however students have other opinions in terms of the relationship with the labour market when it is stated that:

"*We know that curricular programmes are an important element to link us with the labour market, but our university education does not take place outside the classrooms as part of the relationship of the curriculum with the labour market*" (Student: 8-B)

In the process of preparing students for the labour market, it should be noted that the places of programmes are optional and a key factor, but staff have different views:

"*In order to fulfil the main goal of the university's curriculum programme it is not necessary to take place outside of the classrooms as part of the relationship of the curriculum with the labour market*" (Staff: 3-A).

The researcher sought other views outside of the universities to see which view is correct. The employers agreed with the students' views and one was very happy to hold some of these programmes in his company in order to build this relationship.

" I am very happy to invite the universities students to take their lessons in my company and that will help students and staff to understand more about the labour market and private sector in particular" (Employer: 3).

5.2.1.2 Curricular content

The researcher found that all interviewees agreed that the curricula at universities need to be updated and deal with real facts in society. There also needs to be many changes in order to improve the quality of the outcomes of the programmes and subjects being studied. According to the interviewees the main obstacle facing the attempts to restructure courses further comes from top management at the universities. The researcher also found that there was general agreement among the staff participants from all four universities that it was not easy to restructure their curricular programmes and their plans take a long time to be approved by the university administration or maybe higher authority than the university. One staff member stated:

" The new development plan for the curriculum was submitted 4 years ago and still we do not know if they agree with it or not" (Staff: 11-C).

Another comment was that:

"How can I change my curricular context with this kind of long procedure delay?" (Staff: 6-B).

These findings agree with Bocock and Watson (1994) who consider the implications for management of the university curriculum when they argued that the HE curriculum must be managed more explicitly and actively than has been customary in the past and for a closer association between the management of universities and colleges and the organization of teaching and learning within them. They also argued that a 'lower-cost higher-volume' system of education provision can be achieved without compromising standards, but that the university curriculum must be more purposefully managed for this to happen. They also see that the

developmental decisions related to the departments came from outside the universities themselves, such as a decision to reduce or stop accepting students on some programmes, because their graduates have no place in the labour market. The staff did not know about this until it was implemented, one stated:

"It's very upsetting, that those academic departments are not able to develop curricula without permission from the labour market as well" (Staff: 14-D).

Another said:

"Decisions come to us at the academic department to implement them; we cannot change anything" (Staff: 1-A).

The old content of the curriculum was another concern for most of the students. They felt that the knowledge that they learned would not be suitable for the labour market. Most students felt that theoretical learning would not help their future in the private sector in terms of finding jobs related to their studies. In terms of the knowledge provided it was very old, and this made it impossible to relate it to the private sector.

A further comment was that:

" The problem is that we learn old knowledge, passed on in the old content of the curriculum and as a result of this we will not find jobs in the labour market because they require new and modern knowledge " (Student: 19-D).

The researcher found this to be in line with Giles and Drewes (2001) who stated that the main problem with the faculties was the lack of matches between what students learned and particular occupations.

5.2.1.3 Curriculum with the labour market

Both students and staff from the universities were unhappy with the content of the curriculum in terms of its relationship with the job sector. Staff said that students were extremely disappointed with their future prospects. A significant

point was made by two members of staff who added that this was not their job at all because preparing students for the labour market is not the role of the university and it should not to be so. The universities should prepare students' knowledge only. All students from the four universities agreed that the main thing they miss in their universities is practice in their subjects. Staff indicated however, that it is the students themselves who should do more practice. Almost all of them, both staff and students indicated that their programmes have a poor relationship to the labour market, because there is insufficient practical learning.

All agreed that the content of universities' subjects is not related to the labour market, and lacked technology expertise, in particular computing software. For example, one student said:

" The new job has changed a lot and a lot of software programs have emerged, unfortunately our university and teachers do not provide anything new for us; what we learn is old knowledge" (Student: 21-D).

Staff agreed with the students on this point. They stressed that there is a need for more degree schemes in the universities in order to bring them up-to-date with the labour market. Moreover, staff acknowledged that the lack of use of modern technology requires providing more technical training to enable the students able to find jobs in the private or public sector. One of them said:

"The current situation is not that encouraging, there should be chances to use computing technology (...) as the labour market has rapidly changed. I agree that the private sector prefers workers who have a lot of practical training experience which is not available at our universities " (Staff: 5-A).

This finding agrees with those of Yang (1991) who indicated that in educational programmes with more technical and vocational orientation it is very important for students to be matched with the labour market requirements.

5.2.1.4 Employers' views

When the researcher interviewed employers regarding this issue, in general they were unaware of the subjects that students study and did not know anything about their theoretical learning, even though their perception was that university graduates were not fait with modern methods. Their justification for this perception about the ability of university graduates was based on the lack of practical training among the students. This finding agrees with Dobalen and Adekola (2001), who stated that the main problem of the mismatch was the lack of practical training at the universities.

5.3 Perceptions of extracurricular programmes and practical training

It was noted that extracurricular activity programmes presented by the universities were mainly directed towards generic employability skills and training e.g. English language, computer skills, communication skills etc. The programmes are aimed at offering development programmes for personal attributes e.g. interpersonal skills however leadership skills are not taught at the universities,

Some services at the universities do not provide skills related to the labour market or its students, others are trying to fill in the gap. For example, the manager of Quality and Development at one university (B) said:

"For sure, the university is aiming to help all students in terms of improving their ability in the labour market. We include new skills related to the labour market because most departments at the university are not able to prepare their students for the labour market" (staff: 3-A)

Even though the main problem that they face is the small number of students attending these programmes, which affected the benefits obtained from the programmes, the manager of the Students Affairs Department stated that:

"Let us say that there are a few students who join our activities. Also I would say that they are ignorant of these programmes. I do not know the reasons" (Staff: 11-C).

5.3.1 Practical training

The issue of practical training emerged from the student interviews in terms of matching university services to the needs of the labour market, particularly the private sector. This section will therefore cover perceptions of training programmes and the quality of student services in the universities. The main discussion focused on the disadvantages in terms of the benefits in preparation for the labour market. Students were unhappy about the activities provided; this unhappiness was clearly confirmed by staff who were also dissatisfied when they were asked about student attendance. The majority stated that there were a few students who attended these activities. For example, one stated:

"I would say that there are a limited number of students who join our activities" (Staff: 1-A).

Another complaint about extracurricular programmes, according to most participants, is that activities are short-term programmes and theoretical. Students expressed feelings that they are keen to attend programmes even if they are not free of charge, just in case they are useful for their future. For example, a student said:

"We are fed-up with speeches (...) it is better to read a book rather than attending these kinds of activities. For me I will join any programme if it provides me with practical skills required by the labour market such as computing skills. Unfortunately most extracurricular activities are too theoretical" (Student: 15-C).

The students identified problems with administrative services, two students attended extracurricular programmes; one attended for a long time and was disappointed that his certificate was not issued and said that:

"Actually, I have finished a programme six months ago and until now I have not had my certificate, which is very important to me" (Student: 18-D).

Students therefore did not trust the department who provided the programmes and stated that the most important goal was to have the certificate; the benefit from and activities came second, for example one said:

"You know the most important thing to me is to have the certificate. The programmes were not very important for me. The employers will not ask me what I have learned, they will ask just for my certificates" (Student: 12-B).

Another problem raised by students was that they felt that the most important programmes were fully booked too far in advance; they were keen to attend some programmes but could not find a place. It should be mentioned in this respect that these programmes are practical and mainly in computing and are considered to be important for them. The high fees of some programmes are an obstacle and the students complained about the high fees for English programmes provided by the universities. They are comparing this programme with others outside the universities, which they consider to be the same and with the teachers from the same institutes. One student said:

"The university does not care about our financial situation. There is an English language programme of six months, but I discovered the same programme outside the university provided by the same company is cheaper than at the university" (Student: 5-A).

It can be said that students are not attracted by the extracurricular programmes and the directors of these programmes have other responsibilities besides leading these programmes. Teachers do not encourage their students to join these programmes due to their own lack of awareness, in terms of how they can improve their students' skills to cope in the labour market. These findings are in line with Bommer and Baldwin (2001) who found that university students who were members of

extracurricular activity groups were more adept with personal skills than non-members, a factor attractive to employers.

One common issue, agreed by the majority of participants, was the isolation between disciplines and the specific occupational requirements of the labour market, particularly the private sector. The key discussion of the majority of student interviewees stressed unhappiness about the role of their universities, as well as the environment in general, in preparing them for the future. They stressed that in terms of practical programmes, which are very important for joining the job market, they were not adequately prepared as what they have is theoretical knowledge, which is not highly valued by employers; they know previous graduates who are still jobless. One student commented:

"There are a lot of my graduate friends who have still not found jobs. I feel I will be in the same situation when I graduate. So I am not happy to face this situation" (Student: 16-C).

They further stressed the point that there are no specific jobs related to their degree programmes. Thus, they cannot imagine any specific jobs after graduation. One student claimed:

"All learning at the university is theoretical and there is no practical learning which is very important" (Student: 4-A).

Another said:

"All subjects that we learn are from a theoretical point of view. We do not know what we can do in the labour market." (Student: 13-B).

This is similar to the findings of Harvey et al. (1997b); Allen (1998); La Valle and Jackson (2000); Mason et al. (2003) and Cranmer (2006). While universities improve students' skills, gaps still exist between the students' university acquirements and the labour market's requirements.

It is important to note the students' lack of awareness of extracurricular programmes, which can help to prepare them at the practical level. Also the

activities provided by extracurricular activities are mainly directed towards the needs of the labour market and this finding is in agreement with Nemanick and Clark (2002); Li and Lee (1998); Eccles et al. (2003); Chambers and Schreiber (2004) who all found that extracurricular programmes are important for the future in the labour market directly by improving the personal attributes of students and at the selection stage of new recruitment by employers.

5.3.2 Staff communication and sources of information about extracurricular programmes

Not only students, but staff also lack awareness of extracurricular programmes at their universities. As a result, they are not able to encourage their students or advise them about programmes and activities even if they want to. This section explores the communication and sources of information between university staff and programme organisers inside the universities. Staff were asked about their awareness of extracurricular programmes at their university. The majority indicated that they had no formal relationship with programmes, unless they became a part of them.

"At the level of the university department the relationship with non-curricular programmes is very limited, unless you became a part of this programme" (Staff: 12-C).

A member of staff from University D said:

"The problem is that personal contact with these activities is not enough and not well organized. It should be through formal contacts, which can represent the collective effort but this really will take a long time" (Staff: 14-D).

Staff stressed the point that the administrative system of these programmes, in terms of how to organize them in order to cover all students, is not good. The publicity is very poor, since most of them and their students did not receive information about these activities, in terms of both time and location, as well as their content. They added that preparing projects for these programmes did not include an effective announcement and advertising

system. This can explain the main reason for the lack of students and staff awareness of knowing much about them. For example, a member of staff from University B stated:

"I think there is a lack of publicity concerning these activities for students. I think the main reason for this is the bad organisation of the system, in fact, the system is not helpful in informing the beneficiary" (Staff: 8-B).

In addition, as an indicator of the lack of internal communication and sources of information between the staff and extracurricular programmes, some programmes are unknown to the staff participants and in some cases the activities are also completely unknown, such as Vocational Day and some of the Student Affairs activities. For instance, a staff member from University B said:

*"For me, information about it is very lacking (...) I have heard of the Vocational Day programme but even now I do not know anything about it in practice" (*Staff: 9-B).

Other staff believe that the main reason for lack of communication about extracurricular programmes is due to time limitation; they believe that teaching is the most important thing for them and other matters are not a fundamental part of their duties at the university. Additionally, it is not acceptable for some of them to spend any time out of teaching and this is a good example that shows Saudi universities are teaching universities.

A member of staff from University A said:

"We have a lot of academic things to do. So, I have no time to learn about them" (Staff: 4-A).

Another said:

"Participating in these activities depends mainly on the students (...) staff are not part of them thus, there is no point in knowing about them" (Staff: 2-A).

5.3.3 Student communication and sources of information about extracurricular programmes

The benefits from the available extracurricular programmes and activities are very low among students due to their lack of awareness of what is available and what can enhance their skills or personal attributes; this widens the gap between students and the labour market. Therefore, this section explores the communication and sources of information open to university students about extracurricular programmes in order to clarify the reasons behind this situation. Student interviewees have little knowledge about some of the extracurricular programmes, as one student from University D said:

"It is the first time that I have heard about the extracurricular programmes. I do not know what it is or what benefits I can get from it" (Student: 20-D).

Specific activities, such as Vocational Day are not well known to students. The majority of student participants had not attended this activity, even though they had heard of it. Additionally, it seems that the aim of most extracurricular programmes is not clear to students, in terms of their role in preparing or linking them to the labour market. Many of the students mentioned that the activities provided by the extracurricular programmes were completely unknown to them. The students also claimed that if there are activities at other universities or an activity outside of the university they are not aware of them. The main reason is the publicity at the university in general, and about such activities in particular, is not adequate and there are no sources of information that can bring students up-to-date about programmes at the universities. Many of the students added that there was no information about enhancing their skills or what the content of these activities were. This fact affected their decision as to whether or not to attend. Due to the lack of communication and sources of information, students perceived these activities, in some cases, as just additional activities without any practical value and treated them as not valuable for their future. On this point they expressed their views clearly. A student from University C stated:

"It is very difficult to know about these programmes, I only know about the title of the activities and no further details. The most important of the activities for me is computing" (Student: 16-C).

Almost all the students indicated that they wanted an information centre, which would provide all the information necessary to allow them to know more about the activities offered by extracurricular programmes. For example, one student from University C stated:

"If I want to know about the activities at the university there is no specific place that I could refer to" (Student: 15-C).

The role of staff as sources of information is not adequate. There is a lack of encouragement by teachers of students to attend extracurricular activities and programmes and they have failed to provide information about their usefulness. This is due to the fact that most of the participating staff have little or no information about these programmes and activities.

Extracurricular programmes should complement courses. For example regarding linking programmes, staff of the programme of Vocational Day stated that:

"The main role is to provide a programme that can link students to available jobs, and it is part of the university website, it is a modern communication role that we provide" (Staff: 6-B).

In terms of direct meetings, he added:

"We do not have any meetings with other programme organisers at the university due to the limitation of time and place" (Staff: 6-B).

And when asked about the communication with other programmes he added:

"What the other programmes provide exactly I do not know, I am doing my job which is most important to me" (Staff: 6-B).

It was noted that the directors of extracurricular programmes were staff at the universities. They stated that they had other responsibilities, especially teaching, as well as directing these programmes. This indicates that they are unable to do more towards improving the role of these programmes and their activities. For example, a member of staff from Financial Services stated:

"I have other responsibilities. I am teaching as well so that my time is limited to do more" (Staff: 7-B).

One of the main disadvantages is that the administrators of extracurricular programmes are teachers as well; in other words, they are only part-time supervisors. Almost all staff agreed that time limitations presented problems that they faced when attempting to open up communication with the market. Many felt that they could do more, but that they do not have the time to do a better job. It was expected that they would improve the programmes, however based of these interviews this is not the case. Staff from the Department of Development and Quality said:

"There is more I could do, but the problem is lack of time to do so" (Staff: 9-B).

Another said:

"I am not always available at this office; I am doing another job and have other responsibilities" (Staff: 10-C).

5.4. Perceptions of students about careers and student study at university

A major concern of the students is the relationship between their careers and their study at university. Through the interviews the researcher investigated most of the issues surrounding student satisfaction regarding the quality of services provided by the universities. All students agreed that there was no career planning during their study; nor was it part of the teachers' learning strategies or part of the subject. Strong feelings were identified that it is more important for them to develop their careers, since their studies at university would prepare them to become part of the labour

market, but the method of teaching is not helpful at all. There is no use of software programs or the Internet. Most students referred to the reasons for not developing their careers and put it down to having no direction and no guidance during their studies. One student from University A stated:

"The only things we do are to attend lectures, sit examinations and then at the end of the term get the results. There is no guidance during our study" (Student: 4-A).

The principal reason for this lack of career planning is that teachers tend to focus on lecturing and theoretical learning rather than practical and laboratory learning, which is a key component of some departments.

5.4.1. Preferred job sector

When asked about what kind of jobs they expect to get after graduation almost all the jobs mentioned by students, were in the public sector which has a very limited capacity to absorb new graduates. Private sector jobs were mentioned as a second choice. This is an important indicator of the lack of awareness by students of the private sector. Staff agreed with students about job availability in the public sector, such as in education, government and hospitals. A staff member stated:

"Students do not value jobs in the private sector; they prefer jobs in the public sector. Here is a big problem. It is important to increase the value of the private sector among students and it is important before they join the market in order to make sure that they can do the best for their country" (Staff: 13D).

The only types of jobs mentioned were in education in both the public and private sectors. Some students indicated that they seek high level jobs in government ministries (the public sector). When asked about the private sector, some of the students are not willing to seek employment there:

"No, I do not think so because the subject content is not related to the labour market at all and the labour market requires skills not available at the university unless I worked as a teacher" (Student: 4-A).

Based on the seventh Five Year Development Plan, employment policy has changed. The plan stated that the private sector would absorb 95% of new entrants to the job market and the public sector 5% (Ministry of Planning, 2000). The researcher believes that the requirements of the private sector are stricter than those of the public, so students have to do more to be accepted by the private sector.

5.5 Perceptions about university and the labour market

"…because my specialist subject is not accepted in the labour market and the reason was that the university did not clarify the best way to decide which subjects to study" (Student: 13-B).

A student in the last stages of university thinks that it is the university's responsibility to study the labour market and its needs so it can provide specialist programmes to cover these needs. It should even encourage students to study these required subjects. And who does not want to study a programme or a subject that the labour market needs? Universities should warn the students that it is their responsibility and the university's responsibility. This may encourage students to choose their employment future correctly and also the university would have played a sufficient role in preparing the students for entry into the wider society.

The desire for subject restructuring was strongly expressed across the entire sample of participants, both students and staff. This is a widely held belief at the universities due to the extensive changes in the labour market in general and the private sector in particular.

Staff participants mentioned new plans at the universities to include a compulsory course for first year students, based on the requirements of the labour market, stressing English language, communication and computing skills. This finding is in line with most recommendations made in Saudi studies such as Alghtani (1998) and Mahroos (2003) who stated that university programmes should be developed in the light of the needs of the

labour market. Some staff are against developing programmes in response to the needs of the labour market, claiming that the development should be directed towards improving knowledge only. For example, one member of staff from University A stated:

"The university's goal is very clear. The fulfilment of labour market needs through the university means that the university starts losing its essential academic role, so I am against these plans" (Staff:2-A).

Not all see the idea of matching with the labour market as a problem. However, some staff said that this development would not be very useful to the labour market because students would still need new communication and computing skills after four years of study at university. A member of staff from University D said:

"Yes, for most subjects at the university, this development will be useful not just for the labour market" (Staff: 13-D).

It would be more useful for them at the university to have a high level of general awareness of English and computing skills, as well as communication skills.

The majority of staff stated that there is no direct communication with the labour market in general. Therefore, it is not possible for them to be up-to-date with all of the changes. For example, one said:

"*There is no direct communication with the labour market. The problem is that there is no good way of meeting them, except the limited formal meetings with top management of the university in general, not with us. Communication is very limited"* (Staff: 10-C).

However, another staff member holds different views regarding communication with the labour market. In the case of the Department of Quality, its marketing and public relations sections appear to be very helpful in communicating what is new in the labour market and in understanding their needs. It is considered to be the best example. Unfortunately, the other

programmes have no such departments. A Department of Quality member of staff said:

"We are in direct communication more or less with the labour market. We have a department for marketing and public relations which allows us to be in contact with the labour market" (Staff: 9-B).

Staff were also questioned about the role of the external communication departments dealing with the universities and the labour market. It is clear that there is lack of communication with them and they wished to improve their relationship. They also indicated that the role of the external communication departments is not sufficient to improve the matches between the universities and the labour market. A Director of Student Affairs stated that:

"*The role of the external communication departments still needs a lot of improvements to reach a satisfactory level"* (Staff: 13-D).

This is clear evidence of lack of professionalism in communication and sources of information. All the other programmes have neither a communication outlet nor any good sources of information about the labour market because they have no department to deal with this aspect. This is an organizational problem at the universities.

Some students thought that it would be a good idea if all university departments and programmes had a marketing and network relations section in order to facilitate communication and exchange information between them. Most staff stated that the problem is with the labour market and referred to this issue as a lack of channels of communication. All the staff gave the same reason, and said that communication channels to which they could refer to if they needed information about the labour market are not visible as one said:

"Let me say in general, the reason for the lack communication with the labour market is lack of response from the labour market" (Staff: 13-D).

Another said:

"We need information from all companies in one place and that is not available. There is no centre to refer to if we need information about the private sector" (Staff: 7-B).

However, this issue is not part of the problem for some departments because of their marketing and network sections. It can be said that the situation concerning communication and sources of information on the part of the guidance to staff is unsatisfactory. Their information about other curricular programmes is limited and not clear, personal effort is the main source of information for them. In terms of their communication and sources of information with the labour market there is no direct communication and no professional sources of information. The reason for this situation is a lack of response from the labour market and rapid changes in the labour market. This finding is in line with Morio and Zoctizoum (1980) and Smetherham (2003) who found that rapid changes in the labour market are one of the main reasons for universities not being up-to-date with the requirements of the labour market. Another barrier to good internal and external communication is limitation of time.

5.5.1. Perceptions of employment services by employers

The researcher found that students are not happy with and are most concerned about employment services. The majority of students are not satisfied with their future prospects; worrying about the future regarding not finding a job, needing to train, not graduating or late graduation. All these findings are supported by Mason et al. (2003) who found that for other stakeholders such as employers, information is valuable for a variety of reasons in particular for informing them of the quality of institutions whose graduates they employ. Mason et al. (2003) added that according to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) during the consultation period before the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) produced its new quality assurance regime some argued that employers wanted a more objective comparative measure of academic quality.

Employers believe that universities have no information as to what the labour market needs with regard to employees. The justification for this view is that universities still teach subjects that bear no relation to the needs of the labour market. They believe that there is a lack of knowledge about what the labour market needs in terms of skills and personal attributes. One employer stated:

"The university itself does not know what the labour market needs. It is important to add new subjects at the university, rather than teaching old ones, which have no relation to the labour market. They do not make any effort in terms of knowing about our needs" (Employer: 1).

One of the most important findings is that the knowledge of employers about the universities in general, and in particular the skills that students gained during their studies at the university, is totally lacking. When asked about what students gained from their study, they could not give any specific information. For example, an employer said:

"Sorry, I do not have any idea about it" (Employer: 3).

In addition, employers stated that they had no information about students until they applied for jobs at the company.

"There is not enough information about the university. So, we have no idea what students do there until they apply for jobs" (Employer: 3).

This is a good indicator that communication and sources of information between the two are very poor. Employers were asked about their relationship with the universities. Discussions were centred on the difficulty of contacting the universities in general and almost all indicated that relations with the universities in particular are very limited and that there are no good sources that they can refer to. Some of them had tried to contact the universities, but received no response.

"To be honest, there are no direct sources. But I can get the right information from the university when I need" (Employer: 2).

Another said:

"As an employer you do not know where to go and ask to get information about students (…). No, it is not easy as I know" (Employer: 3)

A most informative response was given by an employer whose company location is near a university:

"I have some job vacancies at the moment, I want the university to help me to choose the best students but up till now I have not found anyone who can help me at the university" (Employer: 1).

The above statement agrees with the view of a member of staff of a Public Relations Department who said that it is not his role to link the university with the labour market. The situation had come about as a result of the bad state of affairs at the universities regarding the improvement of communication with the labour market.

Employers were also asked about the role of external communications between universities and the labour market. Most of them agreed that the role was very poor at linking them with suitable graduate workers. Universities' external communication departments had no information about companies which do not help them to improve matches between the two. One employer claimed:

"The universities do not know what we need exactly. They do not come along to our company and ask about skills required and what kind of technology we use" (Employer: 4).

Employers agreed that there is no consistent information; they said that if one has a query it is not possible to find only one answer. The system of providing information by universities, they said, is very poor and there is no information centre at the universities that can bring them up-to-date and facilitate the flow of information that they need. This is one of the most important barriers against improving communication with universities. For instance an employer said:

"If you want to know about what kind of skills are taught to students, then you should prepare for a formal meeting, so that it is not possible for me to communicate with the university easily" (Employer: 4).

Another said:

"Every time you get different information about the same thing" (Employer: 3).

Employers were asked about the main sources of information in learning about the universities. They were also asked about how to identify the best university. Employers identified a number of information sources regarding the universities including:

Personal effort - a personal visit to the university. However, that is a very limited source, for particular reasons. For example, one employer said:

"I do make personal visits to the university; most of my visits are to special departments" (Employer: 1).

Friends - the information received is based on informal meetings. Although this source was neither formal nor based on scientific methods, it was very important to them. However, its importance came partly from a lack of any official sources, not from its weight as a good source. For instance, an employer stated:

"I have some friends who work at universities, when I meet them we start talking about university issues, this gives me a general understanding about the universities" (Employer: 1).

Family - this is mainly depended on whether a member of their family is at the university. For example, two employers stated that information about the universities come from relatives. They suggest that without such a resource there is no way to get information, except from a family member who may be a teacher at the university, and is a valuable source. The following statement supports this source:

"All information about the university that I have comes from my relative; he is a student at the university" (Employer: 2).

Media - all employer participants indicated newspapers and the TV as sources of information about the universities. These findings can be compared to those of West et al. (2000), who found that the main sources of information that build employers' knowledge about universities are: 1) their own track record of recruitment; 2) produced by the government; 3) reports produced by the labour market; 4) experience; 5) university statistics; 6) daily newspapers. Employers were keen to learn about the faculties teaching the subjects related to the main interest of the company.

5.5.2 Employers' methods of evaluating university graduates

Employers were asked about the methods they used to evaluate the universities in terms of the graduates they produce. Institutions were mentioned by almost all employer participants as the best in relation and the quality of their graduates.

"These institutions are very strict and demanding, which encourages valuing the work that they are doing" (Employer: 3).

Almost all the employer interviewees, although they did not know about the department at the universities, claimed that there is subject restructuring happening at the universities. This feeling about subject development comes from comparing graduates from Saudi universities with (Saudi) graduates from abroad. The demand is mainly about improving the employability of students in terms of understanding the work environment, the general system of the labour market, in particular working in the private sector and respecting working hours. It can be concluded that the mismatches are not seen as a serious issue from the point of view of some at the universities. Mismatches can be seen as arising mainly from the lack of practical training from the curricular programmes available at the universities. Students do not find a clear relationship between the content of the subjects studied and the labour market. Using new technology in the classrooms is one reason for the

mismatches. This agrees with Allen (1998) and Al-Kahtani 's findings (1998) who found that the use of new technologies in teaching students is one of the main factors in improving students' ability to facilitate entry to the labour market.

Surprisingly, employers had no idea about programmes at the universities. Moreover, they did not know the names of the departments; providing a clear picture of the unawareness of employers about the universities. The majority of employer participants said that generally graduates from abroad are accepted in the organisation.

"No, there is no specific job for specific disciplines from university. I think that none of their programmes are relating to company's need" (Employer: 1).

A further interesting finding from the interview with a participating employer was that they treated all graduates from universities as the same; they could not distinguish among them. As an employer said:

"It seems to me all graduates come from one department. I had not heard of most departments before you told me" (Employer: 3).

This finding is in line with Li and Lee (1998) who suggest that employers distinguish between graduates after they are employed.

Generally, the employer interviewees are not confident about the ability of university graduates. They agreed that graduates are not ready to join their organizations therefore any university graduate must have a training period before starting the job. Moreover, an employer stated:

"I do not know about the subjects of the applicants, I think there is no need to know, since it will not make any difference to me training will be enough" (Employer: 3).

5.5.3 Employers' methods to select applicants

Employers were asked about the methods they use in judging the employability of applicants. They looked at the students' grades that but not

at their subjects and they did not care what kind of knowledge was obtained. The other important methods were the interview and then the CV. Of course experience was mentioned as a very important concern by the employers, however the most important concern was the personal attributes of the graduates. They added that the grade is a good indicator of students' adherence and commitment. For example, one employer said:

After laughing. "Oh (...) the thing that I do when applicants submit their files for jobs at the company is to eliminate, look at their grades, then the CV. and then interview" (Employer: 1).

These findings addressed the way employers judge graduates' employability. However, Cranmer (2006) stated that `measuring employability outcomes are more difficult than defining them.'

5.6. Perception of university knowledge in relation to the labour market

Students claimed that their teachers do not engage with the private and public sectors to learn what is new and related to their subjects. They felt that there was a big gap between the knowledge that they had gained and that of the public or private sector; additionally, there was no attempt to relate their subjects to the labour market. One student said:

"… unfortunately, teachers do not try to learn about changes in the labour market and then teach us, we have to know what they are and how to deal with them (Student:14-C).

Another student stated that:

"Knowledge - it is not accepted by the labour market or the lifestyle, it seems to me that there is no relationship with the labour market and the knowledge we have. We need more details about the new ideas such as the labour market, the internet thread and life issues as well" (Student: 10-B).

However, most staff participants believe that it is not their job to build or develop knowledge about the labour market. They feel that it should be the job of universities to do so. However the knowledge they provide to their

students can not be easily updated due to the bureaucratic methods implemented in the universities. Some, but not all, teachers partially shared the same point of view of being up-to-date with the changes in the labour market, the private sector in particular, and the insufficiency of theoretical knowledge, improving the ability of students to gain entry into the labour market. A member of staff from University C stated:

"Knowledge at this university is very broad and not enough to improve the ability of students for the modern labour market" (Staff: 11-C).

Another stated:

"…with transactional companies and globalization students need more practical learning and staff also need practical training in terms of being up-to date" (Staff: 2-A).

This finding agrees with Zaiton (2005) who stated that in developing countries mismatches between the university and the labour market could be the result of insufficient development of curricular programmes.

Staff participants expressed the idea that theoretical learning at the universities is very important, and has its role in indirectly improving the ability of students in relation to the labour market. They believed that students gain skills which other students outside the university sector cannot gain. As a member of staff from University D said:

"*Yes, some of this information that my subject provides does not apply to the Saudi market, because it is not an industrial country, but it can make students aware of how to develop new ideas about the labour market"* (Staff: 14-D).

A small number of students agreed with the staff about the issue of theoretical knowledge in terms of indirectly improving their ability to enter the market. Most students during the interviews raised the point that a very well paid job depends on knowledge. One of the students said:

"Some of theoretical knowledge is partly related to the labour market, such as Islamic commercial law it helps if we work at jobs related to our subject." (Student: 12-B).

The majority of students said that to some extent theoretical knowledge is at the expense of practical training. This finding concurs with the findings of Li and Lee (1998) who found that students were clamouring for more practical training in their studies, rather that focusing on theoretical knowledge. Two students mentioned that there were some possibilities in the universities to provide practical training during study periods, but most teachers did not provide it because it needs more time to prepare. It is clear that students were asking for more practical training, related to their subjects, to be made available in the universities. Students from University C were concerned about their future in the labour market due to their lack of practical training. They pointed out:

"The problem is that technical equipment in the university is very limited and is not enough to prepare us for the labour market's requirements" (Student: 16-C).

However, as previously mentioned, not all staff in the universities focused mainly on practical training. Some of them claimed that there are many issues in the universities that need to be reorganized and rethought by the decision makers in top management, not only issues relating to training. According to some staff, one of these issues is that geography departments should not be part of the Arts Faculty; rather, they should be part of the Earth Faculty. They justified this view by indicating that geography is more to the earth sciences than any of the other humanities and also uses technology related to the earth sciences more than any of the other humanities departments at the Arts Faculty. As a researcher I agree with this point even if it is not directly related to my current study but it is worth researching in the future to see how the universities organise themselves.

Staff from University D indicated that knowledge provided by universities has no direct relationship with the labour market. Some staff from the universities

are more disappointed for their students. They mainly talked about the need for new degree schemes being related to the labour market. This finding is consistent with Cranmer's (2006) which claimed that debates that tended to focus on HE should seek to enable the individual to better fulfil their potential. Recent discussions have focused more on the notion that all academic courses are about employability enhancing content

Some staff believe that teaching non-academic skills, such as work related personal attributes, are not one of their responsibilities.

The majority of staff indicated that students had gained personal attributes through their studies, not only from their university. They also believed that the university played an important role in this, but in terms of working skills staff said that their students were ready in terms of employability by the nature of the subject, which did not require a high level of technology. Moreover, the nature of a particular department played a role in helping students' competencies for the labour market. The conflict here was when students claimed that what they had learned was old style and strategy that were no longer required. Staff said that students should pay more attention to improving their employability skills themselves. It was not enough to depend only on skills learned in university studies. They added that students could do more regarding skills required for the labour market., found that there is a lack of directly linked programmes and specific jobs. This finding is also in line with Giles and Drewes (2001) who found that there is a lack of directly linked programmes and specific jobs. This finding is also in line with Taylor (2003) who argues that the diversity in HE is a major concern for policy makers and the role of HE increases the range of choices available to learners; makes HE available to virtually everyone; matches education to the needs and abilities of individual students; enables institutions to select their own mission and confine their activities; responds to the pressures of a society and becomes a precondition of college and university freedom and autonomy.

5.7 Perceptions of students and staff about skills

Staff were asked to identify skills that students at the universities had acquired during their study period. Students were also asked about the skills that they had gained during the same period. Additionally, employers were asked about the skills and attributes that they required. Students were asked to identify the skills and personal attributes they felt they had learned during their study at university. These are presented in Table 28

List of skills identified by students

1	Internet skills
2	Academic skills
3	Research skills
4	Employability skills
5	Teamwork skills
6	Organization skills
7	Writing skills
8	Evaluation skills
9	Gain Knowledge skills
10	Presentation skills
11	Problem solving skills
12	Creative thinking skills
13	Ability to priorities
14	Discussion skills
15	Critical analysis skills
16	Flexibility
17	Making decisions skills
18	Self-confidence skills

Table 28 Skills identified by students

It can be seen from Table 28 that there were shortages of some skills identified by the majority of students. Almost all students stated that personal skills were acquired outside of the university. Specific technical skills were isolated from the list and some skills were not mentioned by students.

Students complained about shortages of practical training, which would improve their employability skills.

Students identified two sources from which they had gained skills; first university and the other from outside the university. The skills gained at the university are mainly academic skills. Employability skills were learned outside of the university, personal attributes came in the middle, i.e., some were learned at the university. This is in line with the findings of La Valle and Jackson (2000) who noted that not all skills needed by the labour market can be learned during study at the university. These findings also agree with Mahroos (2003) who argued that building confidence is more than just developing personal approaches to study. Almost all students reported that extracurricular activities were not useful employability skills, and thus did not play an effective role in improving their preparedness for the labour market. It is important to note that this judgment was based on lack of extracurricular activities.

One of the important findings was that the skills learned outside university largely appeared among students who had left their own cities for the purpose of study. This played an important role in learning new skills related to the labour market, ability to prioritise tasks, making decisions, flexibility, internet use, and self-confidence. For example, a student stated:

 "Skills such as prioritise tasks, becoming more confident and flexible I have learned them outside the university" (Student: 19-D).

Another student said:

"I came from outside of the city and thus I have learned how to make decisions about everything without referring to my parents, so that I become more confident than earlier" (Student: 16-C).

However, this was limited to those who did not live originally in the city where their university is located. Those who lived with their families in the city did not need to do so, and they directly were supported by their families.

However, those who came from outside said that they had to work part-time to get more money. One student said:

"I started working at a shop for about four months last summer, I liked study it is more important. What I have realized is that there is a big difference between studying at the university and working outside the university" (Student: 7-A).

When staff were asked about the skills and personal attributes provided for students, they indicated both generic employability skills, there are some advantages given to personal attributes. Staff were asked to identify the skills that their students gained during their studies at the university, these are shown in Table 29

List of skills identified by staff

1	Inter-personal skills
2	Time management skills
3	Leadership skills
4	Teamwork skills
5	Confidence skills
6	Desire for Contribution
7	Compfuter skills
8	Expansion of Capacity
9	Presentation skills
10	English language skills
11	Creative thinking skill
12	Ability to priorities
13	Discussion skills
14	Critical analysis skills
15	Flexibility
16	Making decisions skills

Table 29 Skills identified by staff

5.7.1 Difference and similarity between students and staff perceptions of skills issues

Unlike staff, students when their personal attributes were discussed believed that these had a role in improving their employability and they also believed in not depending on the university to improve these skills, even though extracurricular programmes are available. On the other hand, staff believed that the development of personal attribute skills were not realised by

students. These conflicting views, between students on the one hand and staff on the other, reflects the lack of internal communication networks at the universities; it is important in terms of improving the outcomes of the universities and investing every effort in helping students. In terms of teaching skills however, there is still a lack of practical training, as one student commented:

"During my study in the university they taught the student how to deal with cases, but I am not sure whether or not I can practically do it, for example, in the educational programme we have not been to schools to do practical training. The students just learned skills theoretically" (Student: 19-D).

Students believed that the main problem exists in the old content of the subject matter and said that the subjects did not contain any new skills that the labour market needs. There is a poor development system at the universities for example, one student said that:

"Teachers cannot make any more efforts they just teach us what is available in the subject" (Student: 4-A).

5.7.2 Perception of shortages of skills

Both students and staff were questioned as to whether or not they felt that there were skill shortages. Students were also asked whether or not they believed there were skills and personal attributes missing in preparing them for the labour market. One student said:

"If we do our training in the labour market this will give us more experience and allows us to be aware of working environments" (Student: 13-B).

Students complained about the lack of computer experience and English language, which were the main requirements of employers. They suffered from poor English language and were unhappy about their level of proficiency. For example, a student said:

 "Teachers of English language say one word in English followed by many in Arabic they do not care about our practical English (Student: 6-A).

The last shortage identified by students was communication skills. It was evident during the students' interviews that this was not part of the learning at the universities in either curricular or extracurricular programmes. However, it was part of the extracurricular activities indicated by the staff. Staff were in agreement with their students that there were skills and attributes excluded, such as value of work. The students felt that a job was valuable to them; however, when students' focussed on talking about jobs they always meant public sector jobs. Jobs in the private sector were a choice. A general feeling by some of the staff was that the universities should have a role in preparing students for the labour market by improving some of the main skills, including communication skills, English language and computing skills, however others who were against this idea believed that:

"Programmes or activities not directed towards improving knowledge are unnecessary" (Staff: 11-C).

Most participating staff agreed that more skills and attributes should be developed by their students for the needs of the labour market and were concerned about experience and job awareness of their students, which resulted from a lack of practical experience. However, most staff recognised communication skills and the value of job priorities among their students, particularly in the private sector. One member of staff said that these should be improved during their study at the university, not after:

"No, I agree that the student should learn and improve their jobs skills during their study at university not after their graduation" (Staff: 4-A).

One of the findings that the researcher identified was that almost all the skills attribute shortages mentioned by students were extracurricular programmes, however, the main shortages mentioned by the staff, were job interview skills and value of work because the staff felt that students were knowledgeable about how to present themselves to employers. A Director of Student Affairs stated:

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"When students start talking about jobs problems they are talking about jobs interview skills and value of work" (Staff: 13-D).

Another said:

"They are looking for jobs in the private sector as a choice and as not valuable jobs, just for a short time until they find another public sector job" (Staff: 10-C).

Although staff felt that job interview techniques were very important, students also mentioned these skills.

5.8. Perceptions of admissions services

There are many issues that the researcher extracted regarding admission services; such as the majority of students are not satisfied with registration procedures and they are also not satisfied with their specialist subjects because they are forced to study programmes based upon their percentage scores in high school and also the majority of students are not satisfied with their subject because it is not welcomed by society. These findings agree with Mason et al. (2003) and Williams (2002) findings which expresses concern that too many students are taking inappropriate degree programmes because of faulty information provided by HE institutions.

5.8.1 Acceptance and selection

This section is about the acceptance situation for student participants at the universities. The main focus is on the views of students to understand how they are selected and what services are provided by the universities; the role of employability chances after graduating from the university, as well as the effect of students' wishes and other reasons for student selections procedures. Staff views will be examined as well. Moreover, this section will explore the beliefs of students about the sub services which are provided under the main services.

The majority of students stated that they had had no information during their high school study period about the acceptance policy and procedures which might affect their wishes to enrol in the faculties that they were interested in.

They related this issue to their lack of awareness of the universities' acceptance policies and to the lack of guidance at high school, which was not helpful in terms of understanding the real situation before their graduation from high school. The majority said that when they had graduated from high school there was no chance of entering their first choice for almost all of them; they therefore, had to accept the faculty chosen for them by the university or not go to university at all. For example, a student from the Islamic Studies Department said:

"My graduation as a Shariah specialist at high school would not allow me to enter the Administrative College. I should have been told that by the guidance staff at school but I discovered this after beginning my studying at university" (Student: 9-B).

The majority of the student participants found themselves in a situation that they could not change, having been faculty or department students.

"There was no choice, I had to enter the Arts Faculty or not go to university" (Student: 8-B).

"I was not interested in the Science Faculty but there was no choice for me" (Student: 18-D).

These findings are in line with Li and Lee (1998) who found that the Social Science Department was not the first choice for the most of its students. In terms of the availability of information to high school students no participants mentioned receiving any help from the universities regarding this issue. In contrast Veloutsou et al. (2005) who investigated 306 high school students in the U.K., found that the universities play the most significant role in terms of providing information to students, which helps them in their selection and application process.

For most of the students the reason for the lack of interest in the universities, was that stereotypically they had less chance of finding a job after graduation. They also mentioned a lack of skills in many kinds of ability; but mostly, they mentioned the situation of previous graduates and their

chances of not finding jobs. However, some students enrolled at the university based on their preferences; it should be mentioned that two student participants were science specialists at high school who were able to enter other departments, but they did not do so because they were interested in management. As one student stated:

"My graduation as a science specialist at high school would allow me to enter the science college but I prefer the management college" (Student: 14-C).

Three other student participants said that the most important thing was actually to be a university student; it was not important which faculty or department. The first student was in employment and wanted to get a Bachelors degree for further promotion. The second one was under pressure from the family who felt it was important for their son to be a university student and the third one was looking for an allowance regardless of the situation after graduation from university and therefore had to accept the faculty chosen by the university. In terms of the second one, being a university student was not his own first aim; it was his parent's wishes. Rather than university, most had been looking for jobs or short term programmes after high school to facilitate their entrance into the labour market or the military sector. One student stated that:

"I was thinking about being an employee in the public sector or in the army sector, but my parents and brothers were asking me to be a university student" (Student: 1-A).

However, some students in University B believed that some programmes such as agriculture were not helpful for their future employability; they considered that they would only gain a degree. They clearly said that they were looking for another programme which would give them a more secure future, such as management or education. Students indicated that the chances of finding jobs after graduation from these two faculties were much more likely than from the Agriculture Faculty, as one student explained:

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"In the beginning I applied for the Management Faculty, but as a result of my high school specialization I realized that there is no choice, except the Agriculture Faculty" (Student: 12-B).

When the researcher compared these findings with other studies it was found that there are similar to the findings of Sanders (1986); Sevier (1993); Kang (2004); Byrne and Flood (2005) who pointed out that the academic reputation of a particular faculty and the chances of getting better jobs in the labour market are very important reasons for selection of a department.

5.8.2 Selection of the department

Beliefs in stereotypes play an important role when students are trying to distinguish between departments. For example, students were excluding some departments from their choices based on their belief that they would not be helpful in finding related jobs after graduation. However, there was no clear evidence or justification for this view, except as mentioned earlier that they had learned of some bad experiences of past graduates with finding jobs and also the belief that there was a lack of practical training. These departments, they believed, were the only ones at university that could prepare them for the job sector. Extracurricular programmes and the desire to learn new skills did not seem to be taken into account. Nevertheless, it was clear students were worried about their future employability and their selection of programmes of study was mainly based on its ability to fit them for the labour market. This opinion was clearly recognized and mentioned by the staff, one of whom said:

"When a department becomes more likely to offer job opportunities for its graduates, most students moved to this department" (Staff: 6-B).

From the students' interviews the researcher found that the majority were looking at some main departments such as the Arabic Language, English Language and Management Departments, as they offer teaching jobs. These findings agree with those of Giles and Drewes (2001) that most of the human faculties' graduates were enrolled in the education sector. However,

due to the large number of applicants the capacity of these departments is limited and it was not possible to accept all students, as one staff member stated:

"The Department of Marketing offers some job opportunities at some companies and students heard of it (...) this situation makes students try to move to it from most of the other departments ,which is more than the capacity of the department" (Staff: 3-A).

The capability of a particular department to facilitate employment can be treated as one of the main reasons for selecting interested departments. For example, students said:

"There was no chance to enrol in Arabic Language, thus I had to choose the Library Department" (Student: 20-D).

"I was applying for English study but unfortunately there was no place, they accepted me in the Computer Science Department" (Student: 14-C).

I found that some participants were interested in departments, other than their own, because of their poor assessment for future employability, so they did not enrol in these departments. It was clear that there was a conflict between the academic and the vocational orientation of students, even though it is apparent that vocational orientation is the dominant factor. For example, one student claimed:

 "The future of the English Department in terms of being a teacher is much better than sociology, Although, I am interested in sociology but I decided to continue in the English department" (Student: 17-C).

However, it is notable from the interview data that student participants were not interested in their departments; and they had selected it as not their first choice but second choice and the main reason being the prospect of better employability chances after their graduation. It is notable also that this finding is consistent with that of Sanders (1986) who found that one of the main reasons behind students' selection of a particular university was

employment opportunities. Moreover, this is in line with the findings of Berger (1988); Paglin and Rufolo (1990); Pascarella and Terenzini (1991); Montmarquette et al. (2002); Kang (2004); Porter and Umbach (2006).

On the other hand, the majority of the student participants from the universities were not interested in their departments, but said there had been no other choice due to their specialization and low grades in high school. They had to accept these departments, or not go to university. The main reason for this situation was the lack of finding jobs after graduation. This point was recognised by university staff, one of whom stated:

"Few students entered the department based on their own wishes, the rest were compulsory due to the lack of capacity of the other departments and the college as well as their grades in secondary school, as a result students become dissatisfied, which affects their achievements" (Staff: 8-B).

So it is clear that the staff consider the reason for student dissatisfaction is related to the universities policies and not to the student themselves. To conclude this section, it can be said that there was unawareness on the part of high school students about universities' acceptance procedures and information about programmes and faculties; moreover, there was a lack of awareness of the labour market and its requirements. The faculties and most of their departments were not the first choice of the majority of the student participants. Additionally, the lack of awareness about the labour market, in terms of its relations with available departments, was another barrier to matching student expectations and perceptions. In addition, the bad pre-conceptions of some departments at the universities, in terms of their future in the labour market, played an important role in increasing the gap between the universities and the labour market. This agrees with Sanders' (1986) findings who found that one of the main reasons for students' selection of a particular department was employment opportunities after graduation.

5.8.3 Inaccurate information provided to students

Many students believed that they were victims of inaccurate information about specialist subjects provided by the universities which lead the students to choose subjects which have low employment and social needs which in turn made them regret the decision. Some of them stated that the problems behind this were that the universities did not provide details; there was only a name of a subject without any accurate and detailed information about the subject and the employment future or there was not enough information about the subject's content, the syllabus and the special abilities needed by students. All of this is not available especially when applying for the first time which makes the student confused and may lead them to ask non-specialist people or just follow their colleagues into the same subjects where they find themselves in a situation not of their choosing. The main reason for this, as they stated, was a lack of awareness and guidance from their high school about the acceptance policies and procedures at the universities. Another reason mentioned by the students was a lack of high school staff knowledge about the importance of improving students' knowledge about education after high school graduation in order for them to be able to plan their education and career paths. It can be seen that there is a lack of communication throughout the education system.

A student said:

"My teachers in high school did not let me know that, even if I got high marks, it is not possible to join the faculty that I was looking at either the Administration or the Education faculties (...). You know, I am sure that they have no information at all" (Student: 9-B).

It was clear that the majority of students had no information about the acceptance procedures; the only thing they were aware of was that they should get good grades in high school, but they did not realise that if they graduated from a specific programme in high school they would not necessarily be able to attend the faculty of their choice. As mentioned, most students treated the lack of information and the poor sources of information

about the universities during their high school years as a serious limitation. They were aware that they would not be able to attend a science faculty if they had graduated from a non-science discipline in high school, but did not know that the other faculties, such as the Administration Faculty, would also be beyond their reach. A student from University A said:

"There was no chance to choose another faculty, not because I am not capable, but because I did not know that nothing will be available except the Islamic Faculty in fact, if I had information about this situation before my graduation I would have changed my branch in high school" (Student: 7-A).

The lack of information about the role of the universities in serving the community and the role of graduates in the labour market was another reason for newly enrolled students to perceive their futures as uncertain. In fact the only information they had was the uncertain future of graduates. What was evident was that students had negative perceptions of universities before they entered, which was due to the lack of communication and sources of information within the universities, as well as the absence of good systems for providing information by the universities to both high schools and the labour market. This finding however disagrees with that of Veloutsou et al. (2005), who found that universities play a major role in providing information, using various sources of information about themselves, such as university prospectuses, university open days, university websites and university school visits, which helped students to select a particular university or area of study. However Williams (2002), suggests that concerns have been expressed that too many students are taking inappropriate degree programmes because of faulty information provided by HE institutions. He added that students on some programmes complain that information given in prospectuses or other forms of information did not match their actual experience. To confirm this point, employers were not looking for academic skills among the graduated students, but employability skills and personal attributes, which could also be developed during their time at the university. However, this fact was not clear to students because of the lack of information and sources of information; in fact, students were

only looking for jobs related to their subjects. Moreover, the perception of students regarding the universities was very negative. The majority of students indicated a preconception about the universities based on a lack of information and poor sources of information.

In fact, the interview results reflected a clear picture about how the process of moving from high school to HE is stressful, which is consistent with the view of Byrne and Flood (2005).

5.8.4. The relationship between admission services and the labour market

The large number of students accepted at the universities was another gap in relations with the labour market. Students believe that the problem started when they applied to the universities because there was no clear information regarding what they would need to be qualified in for the labour market. They also stated that the large number of students in the class and in the same department was another reason for not gaining high quality knowledge allowing them to apply for suitable jobs, as one student stated:

"I agree with anyone who said that the large number of students in the class and in the same department is one of the problems we will face in the future when we will apply for jobs in labour market" (Student: 5-A).

Staff agreed that the large numbers in a class and in a department is one of their problems in preparing students to be more qualified with good skills that they will benefit from and will help them when they graduate from university. They also stated that the teachers are not able to understand students' needs individually because of the high number in a department, as one teacher stated:

"Of course, the large number of students is one of the admission problems in universities, how can I provide students with high quality knowledge with this problem and how can I understand student needs on an in individual basis" (Staff: 2-A).

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Another said:

"If there is a gap between the graduated student and the labour market I would see that the main reason is the policy of admission in the universities" (Staff: 14-D).

This finding is in line with the findings of Alqhtani (1998); Hafis (1998); Meshari (2001) and Dobalen (2001). Whereas some university teachers do not believe in matching curricular programmes with the labour market requirements. Instead, all efforts should be directed towards knowledge acquirement.

5.9. Teaching services

Each university in Saudi Arabia has three goals, one of the most important goals is teaching knowledge and skills. However, how subjects are delivered to students is also important. In this section students' perception about teaching and learning methods will be explored, along with staff views at the universities. Generally, the style of teaching and learning are the same in terms of learning at the universities whereas according to Harvey et al. (1997a), HE should be viewed not as teaching but learning and the active nature of learning should be emphasised. Lucas (2006,p170) found that there is a clear division between staff who were engaged in research and those involved in teaching also there is a perception that staff engaged in teaching and administration were being undervalued. However, most students agreed in the interviews that the most major element of academic services is teaching services quality which is at a lower level and there is a lack of use of new technologies in the classroom. The students complained of poorly delivered lectures a n d when asked about their perceptions regarding academic services they were not satisfied in general and in teaching in specific because some of the teaching staff did not deal with students with courtesy as some students indicated:

"I would like the university to try to employ teachers who have more experience specially those who do not improve their knowledge" (Student: 16-C).

Another said:

 "We as computer science students face many problems which makes us feel that we want to leave our studies at university because the quality of teaching at university is very low and without any use of technology" (Student:11-B).

Yet another stated:

 "Yes, teachers do not care for us or deal with us with courtesy. I will give you one example when we struggled with part of our course and we asked one of our teachers to explain to us. He asked us to come to meet him in his office during his office hours form 10-11. When we attended we found the office was locked then we waited for two hours then when he came, without any apology, he told us that he did not have time to explain the course to us as simple as that" (Student: 5-A).

The majority of staff agreed with the students about not using better technologies and complained about the shortages of equipment. The only thing available to them was the overhead projector as one member of staff said:

"*Yes, most teachers do not deal with technology in the classroom because it is not available the only thing most popular is the overhead projector"* (Staff: 14-D).

These findings are in agreement with Al-Kahtani's (1998) which confirmed that one of the main barriers to university teaching was the lack of teachers' usage of available technology in the classroom. It also supports the finding of Edwards (2001) in which he confirms that the use of new technologies in teaching was insufficient and also the findings of Taylor (2007) who found that teaching and research remain central to HE, but a powerful reaffirmation of traditional views of the teaching/research nexus. Also that there were mutual benefits between teaching and research which impacted upon the quality, relevance and delivery of teaching; the positive benefits of teaching on research were less well articulated he also found that staff performance

in both teaching and research were maintained, although universities recognised that training and performance tended to emphasise teaching and research as separate rather than integrated activities.

The findings also agree with the findings of Alharbi (2009) who found that the students ranked teaching services as the first priority and they feel that they do not gain benefit from the teaching services.

5.9.1. Theoretical learning not practical training

The main role of universities in general is to provide students with learning. The majority of student participants agreed that most of the learning in the universities was not related to the general situation around them. The students were worried about their study and what they would do with this much theoretical learning in the public or private sector without practical training. Students also claimed, during the interviews, about the impact of extending practical training and that it was not possible for them to find jobs related to the subjects easily. This finding is in line with other researchers including Allen, (1998); Lee et al., (2004); Yang, (1991); Giles and Drewes, (2001); Dobalen and Adekola, (2001) who stated that the lack of practical training faculties was one of the main reasons for the gap with the labour market.

Many ideas are considered an indication of student learning, however some staff tended to add the need for preparing their students for the challenges that they will face in the future: they also add quality, course survey, student experience and curriculum issues as important elements to give students more knowledge as one member of staff from University D stated:

"*Despite the fact that students were not sufficiently engaged in their studies or attended their lectures and I am very surprised that students were critical of some professors' attitudes. However, I agree on the need to provide better quality of teaching and better facilities, to improve the teaching delivery, and*

to update the curriculum to give students more usable knowledge and optional subjects" Staff: 14-D).

5.9.2. Student and teacher interaction

Most students agreed in the interviews that discussions between students and teachers are lacking. Lecturers delivered their lectures without raising any discussion issues. For example, one student stated:

"The lectures are very boring there are no kinds of discussions between the teachers and the students inside the classrooms" (Student: 17-C).

When the staff were asked about discussions in the classroom, most of them said that most students have no desire to start debates. One member of staff gave the reason for this when he said:

"*Because of the large number of students, it is impossible to discuss many important matters"* (Staff: 8-B).

The researcher did not research the skills of the universities' teachers as a main point but found this finding is also supported by Raaheim et al. (1991), who argued that it was taken for granted that a person who has the necessary qualifications for doing research - to fill a post at the university - will automatically be suited to lecturing. It is also in agreement with Giles and Drewes (2001), who stated that one of the main problems that universities face, in relation to labour market preparation, was supply and demand. It is important to mention that the main reason for the large number of students in classes was the open door acceptance policy of the Higher Education Department (Kingdom of Saudi Aribia, 1995-2000) due to the large number of high school graduates in Saudi Arabia.

In general, students offered more details about the teaching services and the researcher, from the students' responses, identified a list of teaching problems that may give some understanding of how students identify this services. See Table 30.

Areas of concern	Major issues
Curriculum	• not moderated and long • no focus on critical thinking
Exams	• outside the curriculum • marking is not fair • inflexible exam schedule • no right to object against grade
Teaching	• poor attendance of teachers • old fashioned, unsupervised teachers • lack commitment of office hours
Classes	• small and not air conditioned
Term	• variation in duration of terms

Table 30 Teaching problems from the student perspective

5.10. Deanship of Student Affairs services

Almost all student services are provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs, this unit is in all Saudi universities and is responsible for providing the services discussed below. As it was difficult to researcher to discuss all the services provided in the interviews, only the most important services to students were covered.

5.10.1. Accommodation services

The majority of students are not satisfied with their accommodation. They are concerned about lack of privacy in accommodation halls as some staff enter the rooms without prior notice. They are also not happy with the facilities of the accommodation in terms of emergency exits, hazard awareness, elevator operations and the opening and closing times. Roommate behaviour, including smoking habits and noise were also mentioned. They also feel that they are not treated as mature students because they are under supervision at all times by the accommodation staff. As one student stated:

"To be honest with you, I am not satisfied with the accommodation services at university. All the time you feel that you are under the control of staff who enter the room without any advance notice - I am not a child" (Student: 10-B).

Another student said:

"The university does not have an emergency plan in the halls of residence or good criteria to choose students by in the room, so that some students suffer from their roommate who not care and make fun, smoke and are noisy. In general all the accommodation facilities need more maintenance" (Student: 17-C).

These findings are similar to those of Chickering (1969) who found that university students are likely to be under psychological pressure which produces many problems for them, such as not being comfortable or not coping with the environment, especially students who live in the university residences because they are involved with new changes, whether internal or external, that they are not familiar with it.

Comments made by the student participants regarding the accommodation services at the universities are listed in Table 31.

Areas of concern	Major issues
Accommodation	- expensive - unsuitable
Safety	- no ambulance in the building - no first aid - no near pharmacy
Basic living facilities	- laundry - cash withdrawal - shops - leisure facilities - transport

T a b l e 3 1 L ist of student comments on accommodation services

5.10.2. Catering services

Catering is one of the services that students are not satisfied with; in particular the quality of the meals and the length of time they spend to get their meals. They also maintained that the cafeterias on campus are not very clean and the staff who work to provide these services are not polite with students. For example, a student said:

"I am not interested to have my meals at university so I use my self-catering. I used to have the university supplier but I found the meals are the same kind every day without any changes and the people who serve students are very rude" (Student: 19-D).

Another said:

"My experience regarding the catering services is that the quality of the services is not good and if you visit the catering places in the university you will not find a comfortable places; variety of food and suitable prices (Student: 4-A)

5.10.3 Financial services

The majority of students are not satisfied with the financial services which provide many kinds of financial facilities for the students. The most popular service is the management of students' allowances; this service is one of the Deanship of Student Affairs responsibilities. These allowances are a monthly state payment to university students as its part of the university's budget. Each student at university receives about SR840 which is equivalent approximately to £200.

The next problem that students considered, after the problems of the labour market, was the allowance problem so the majority of students complained regarding the allowance problem. For example, one student said:

"Although, I'm keen to receive my allowance monthly however every month I suffer to get my allowance because the university operates a complicated system" (Student: 16-C).

But another student raised questions regarding the allowance system at universities when they stated:

"We noted that the university delays our allowance to be delivered; so many students are wondering how universities manage the allowance and where the cutting amount goes to" (Student: 8-B).

It was very interesting when a student asked me before I asked them, as the interviewer, to answer a question about the allowance problems at the university when I shrugged my shoulders he added that:

"One of my friends at university told me that the university has a fund called Students Fund. All the students' allowances are invested in this fund so there is a delay monthly and it is not transparent how it's managed… I do not have any idea about this situation as a student" (Student: 19-D).

Students' comments about allowances are listed in Table 3 2 .

Areas of concern	Major issues
Receiving the money	- delayed cheques - long queues to receive payment - deductions made without explanation - insufficient allowance
Spending the money	- no differentiation between single/married, live with family/ on their own, - sum received mismatched with what student has to spend

T a b l e 3 2 List of student comments on allowance services

As a researcher, this issue surprised me when nobody from the staff responded to my questions about the allowance problems only one staff member expressed his opinion by saying:

"As far I understood from students I think there is problem with students' allowance".

5.10.4 The role of the Deanship of Student Affairs

The main department or agent in providing most student services is the Deanship of Student Affairs its role comes after student enrolments at university so it is the second department students need to go to after the Admissions Department. Some students and some staff are not happy with the services that the Deanship of Student Affairs provides to the students. When I asked students about their perception towards this department I found that the majority of students are dissatisfied because it does not play a major role in terms of the quality of its services or the information provided to help students as one student stated:

"I would say the Deanship of Student Affairs does not provide good quality services to students even it is its responsibility to do so" (Student: 11-B).

Another said:

"Any aspect of services I need from the Deanship of Student Affairs (…) I was looking for a person who knows any staff in this department to help me otherwise I do not go there" (Student: 1-A).

Some staff also are not satisfied with the role of the Deanship of Student Affairs. They said the problem is not with the university policy regarding the services provided by this department but how the staff are able to understand and implement the policy. It is subject to more training for the staff in university in general and staff who work in this department in particular. For example one staff member stated:

"Any department in the university has its own policy to serve the students but sometimes it's the problem of interpretation and implementation so the more training the more understanding how to improve staff skills to provide satisfactory service" (Staff: 11-C).

5.10.5. The role of the Relations Office in the Deanship of Student Affairs

The Relations Office in the Deanship of Student Affairs does not play its role, such as exchanges with other universities, providing educational advice services to the public, as well as support to students. It does not conduct its own training programmes to the specific needs of the students. Its information was also not available on the universities websites. As one student said:

"When I enter to the Deanship of Student Affairs building I noticed the sign for the Relations Office with out more information on the website but as a student in the university I did not exchange any experience with other universities through this office" (Student: 15-C).

5.11. University facilities

5.11.1 Laboratory facilities

Students, who during their studies required laboratory facilities, when asked to express their perception about this facility, were not satisfied with many aspects; such as no facilities for special needs, the laboratory times not suiting the students as they close early, the laboratory instructors not coming prepared and taking a long time to prepare the lesson. Some of the laboratory machines do not work and need fixing and students were asked to clean the equipment. For example, one student stated:

"I noticed that some of our colleagues who with special needs are not able to use the labs, I also entered the lab many times and found it out of order" (Student: 14-C).

Another student who was angry when he talked said:

"It was not fair to ask the students to clean the labs as some teachers asked that, especially if you take into account that the time for lab use is not convenient for the students" (Student: 9-B).

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5.11.2. Building services

The researcher found that the majority of students are not satisfied with the campus buildings because they need development and re-creation of the campus. They are also not satisfied with the annoying environment beside teaching buildings which prevents student from concentrating as a result of construction work. Samples of what they stated are:

"Our buildings are very old. There are a lot of restrictions and need re-creation to be suitable places" (Student: 14-C).

"*If you will join us at the classes you will discover that its difficult to hear the lectures because many construction work take place, I am wondering why it's not carried out in the summer time"* (Student: 19-D).

One student at one of the universities was very upset when they talked about the distance between the buildings and showed me how far the distance is between the buildings after the interview:

"I have a lecture in building 26, immediately after that I have another lecture in building 125 and the distance between the two is nearly 2 km walking" (Student: 10-B).

The students' comments about the building services are listed in Table 33

Areas of concern	Major issues
Safety	- no cctv, - no pavements for walking, - construction work near university buildings
Ethical	- not suitable for disabled people - no water to drink, - not environmentally friendly - no elevators - equipment favours right handed students, - no equipment for special needs

Buildings	• poor maintenance of building structure
	• poor facilities within buildings
	• lack of maintenance of facilities
	• lack of essential equipment in buildings

T a b l e 3 3 List of student comments on building services

Staff were also asked about their perceptions regarding the building services, although they were not that happy about the conditions of the buildings but less unhappy than the students.

These findings agree with Williams (2002) and Mason et al. (2003), that there is a relationship between environment and learning and that satisfaction with aspects of the institutional environment will affect students learning, and in terms of class design and environment these findings also agree with Pease and Pease (2006) who found that a group of students with folded arms had learned and retained 38% less than the group who kept their arms unfolded. They also found that when a listener folds their arms they pay less attention to what is being said and they recommend that training centres should have chairs with arms.

5.11.3. Transportation services

The majority of students who use university transportation are not satisfied because there is no regular transportation to the university and their colleges are far from the halls of residence.

 5.11.4. Car parking services

Car parking services at universities is the third most important problem after the labour market and allowance problems that students are not satisfied with. Most students see that the universities have failed to find a solution to car parking problems even though there are available spaces inside the university. The problem originates from bad preparation before the buildings were built, so according to the students the universities management did not

think of the capacity of car parks. The students are suffering daily from this service; almost three quarters of university students have their own cars according to the students. In addition students are not satisfied with this service; their cars get damaged daily. The students also maintained that the universities treat the teaching staff differently from students in terms of the car parking and it is biased towards members of staff who are provide with permission cards to park beside the lecture buildings whereas students have to park their cars far away from the buildings if there was any space. The students also stated that some students get the cards as a result of management corruption and they can park near any building they study in. Examples of comments made by students are:

"We are not satisfied at all with this service in addition our cars get damaged daily by university security without any one taking responsibility" (Student: 13-B).

"The university treats the teaching staff differently to the students in terms of the cars park as it is biased to the members of staff, so they are provide with permission cards to park beside the lecture buildings but students have to park their cars away from the buildings, I know some students who get the cards as a result of management corruption" (Student: 9-B).

5.11.5. University websites

In my extensive use of the four universities' websites in 2007, I consulted the sites in preparation for my visits and when comparing interview comments with official information. Each of the four universities maintains an English-language version of their website which enabled independent research into their structure, policies and public information. However the information related to students, the information leading to the Student Services and the findings in this chapter were compared and constructed from many different links, using both the native language websites and the English version websites. None of the websites contained information on student activities, events, or a complete list of student services. The findings from the student

and staff interviews show that they were not happy with universities' websites, as they said:

"If you access the university website you will find information about the university and its colleges in Arabic and English language but you will not find any links to students services or guidance to help students to get any services as if the student services are not part of the university " (Student: 21-D).

"I agree with the students' concerns regarding the university website and I argued before that the students should be represented as one of the university website designer team, I hope that will happen soon" (Staff: 14-D).

5.12. Library services

Any university's memory is in its library and the quality of library services is one of the important elements to someone who needs to rate or rank the university. The quality of library services at Saudi universities was not of a high level to satisfy the students and staff. Most concerns of the students with the libraries was that the books and periodicals were not updated and they were not enough to meet the students needs. The students also do not know when the libraries bought new books or periodicals because there is no information provided to the students. Students and staff agreed that not all colleges have a library so they depend on the main libraries at the universities. There was no guidance and sometimes the librarians are not knowledgeable about the contents of the library, as a result the students do not get help from them. The opening and closing times of the libraries were not convenient to the students. Another issue that students raised concerns about was the complicated and long process of benefiting from the libraries. Moreover, the students were dissatisfied with the librarians' attitudes, which is in line with the findings of Alharbi (2009) who found that there was a low quality of library services provided to the students.

5.13. University management

5.13.1. Centralisation versus decentralisation

None of the four universities have autonomy under common regulations and financial control such as applying the principles of management. As one staff stated:

"We are suffering from the centralization methods implementing in the university, there is no autonomy in any level" (Staff: 7-B).

5.13.2. Ambiguity versus transparency

Some students and staff believe that the universities' policies and procedures are dependent on a policy of ambiguity and do not use a policy of disclosure about any existing or new policy. In addition to this, according to them, there was no transparency in any part of university management, from top to bottom. They also believed that any university without implementing transparency will not gain any success as indicated by the following samples of staff and students' opinions:

"I am very surprised how the university seeks successful management whereas it's not implementing transparent management" (Staff: 3-A).

"I have some issues regarding my study at university when I meet staff in top level management I found a world of ambiguity was practiced" (Student: 18-D).

5.13.3. External agency to control and assess

Students believe that there should be an external agency to assess and control the universities and one of the tasks for this agency is to conduct questionnaires to seek their views and their satisfaction about the university services. This information should be analysed and the findings presented to the universities as recommendations or be presented to other agency that are able to make enquiries regarding any lack of providing good services to the students. In the meantime students should take a part in the whole

process as they have to know about these findings to be aware of them, as one student said:

"My colleagues always mention that if there is an external agency dealing with students via questionnaires and interviews to assess the universities it would a good idea" (Student: 6-B).

But a member of staff said things very clearly:

"… as I told you I do not trust university management without external agencies to play a major role to assess and make accountable the universities" (Staff: 13-D).

These findings support what some countries have established as Eagle and Brennan (2007) described relating to experiences of external quality assessment of three universities from three countries namely Sweden, Denmark and Australia.

5.13.4 Relationships between the universities and other agencies

One of the findings is that students believe that the relationship with other agencies outside of university, especially the employment agencies, was not good. Students may benefit from good relationships whether agencies provide funding for the university to help the university to create programmes during their studying time or after they have graduated and they may work at these agencies, or at least they will earn training experience immediately after graduation. So as a result these relationships with employment agencies are vital. It was found that universities do not have a good relationship at the moment with the employment agencies. As a student said:

"There is nothing to lose as students if there are good relations between universities and other agencies" (Student: 9-B)

Another student said:

"We will benefit from these relationships in many ways" (Student: 15-C).

5.13.5 Strategic planning

Interviewees believe that strategic planning at the universities was very poor, and the related effort on the part of the management to training in strategic planning:

"*I have to say it's a very difficult task because staff have to be trained in this field and there are no clear training plans at the university to improve the quality of student services. I was very surprised*" (Staff: 10-C).

These findings agree with Taylor (2003) who argues that HE should respond to the pressures of a society and become a precondition of college and university freedom and autonomy.

It was notable that the aims of any new development projects at the universities were directed to the needs of the labour market in general. Most staff were keen to add new degree schemes in order to fulfil the labour market requirements, particularly those of the private sector. It is clear that these schemes will develop a new policy for Saudi universities emerging from new needs. Staff indicated that there should be an increase in the use of new related technologies and software programs. The only reason for this restructuring was the remarkable growth in the private sector which is the main absorber of new graduates. Almost all students stressed the point that development should cover main areas; the first to improve practical training, second, to develop extracurricular programmes and the third to improve administrative procedures. The Director of the Department of Quality and Development at University C stated that the department had a big project aimed at improving the university in total. He also indicated that the goal of this department was to improve the student services.

"*I agree that the university in future planning needs to look to the needs of the labour market in general and to add new degree schemes in order to fulfil the labour market requirements*" (Staff: 12-C).

5.13.6. University commitment

According to one university member of staff:

"Student services were taken and discussed at the level of the university, faculty and department, in response to specific requests by the students." (Staff: 10-C).

This finding leads to note that there is an absence of institution-wide policies or plans or staff leadership charged with the strategic development of student service activities. Such services remain the result of decisions, taken in response to specific needs which continue to operate in an uncoordinated manner.

The leadership had no clear understanding of the needs of students judging by the financial constraints faced by each institution. These universities are more likely to achieve this understanding of the needs of students if they formulate proposals to the Ministry of Higher Education, and put their efforts into working out common definitions and performance indicators.

5.13.7 Total Quality Management (TQM)

Centres for total quality management have been set up at the four universities. These centres have emerged as new administrative strategies and are aimed, at the request of leadership, to serve the whole university service. According to staff in the four universities proposals were submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education to recognise/accredit these centres in order to improve the services. Staff at one of these centres said that:

"*It was a little bit new and there was no more experience in the student services it was like we create structures from nothing*" (Staff: 6-B).

Another said:

"We believe that the university services will improve when TQM is implemented, the university just submitted this to the M H E" (Staff: 14-D).

But students have opposing thoughts as one student said:

"As students at university we have heard about total quality management centres in university but so far nobody has asked us for feedback about the implementation of TQM as a kind of assessment of this implementation" (Student: 21-D).

The researcher found this in line with the findings of Leckey and Neill (2001) who found that in TQM closing the communication loop is a very important matter so that the students may become sceptical and unwilling to participate if they do not see any action resulting from their feedback. Ensuring that the loop is effectively closed is one important key to effective institution surveys. It is also in agreement with what Williams (2002) suggested that the underlying assumption of the student satisfaction approach is that stakeholders have a clear right to be informed of actions that have resulted from the expression of their views. In particular, students must be informed of the results of their feedback.

5.13.8 Universities annual reports

Some issues from the Report of 2005 of the development plan that staff agreed about occurred when one member of staff asked me to read with him what was written in the report as the following:

"*It was pleased to note the growing cooperation between students and the universities and faculty leaders … however, much work is still needed…*" and "*the involvement of students … should be further developed*". Even the *Report* noted that "most of the students and academic organisations act as entirely independent entities" (Education., 1998).

The lack of cooperation has made them extremely inefficient in their service provision, both in respect to activity at central level and the centre-faculty interface (ibid. pp. 21-22).

Related service issues were concerning the students' standard of living, sports and leisure activities. The establishment of several central centres is

recommended, including an Office of Enrolment Policy (ibid. p.16) and the design and implementation of a University Information System connecting all organisational and administrative activities. Despite the lack of a clear definition, elements of student services functions (i.e. enrolment policy, student retention and graduation rates) were also included in the strategy section on quality management (ibid. pp. 36-42).

5.13.9 Job satisfaction

Some students see that because there was no job satisfaction at university for the staff, especially the teachers, means that the students are not satisfied as well because this dissatisfaction will affect student services provided via the staff. For example a student said:

"We always hear teachers inside the classes complaining about the university systems and they feel very upset that they do not have job satisfaction" (Student: 8-B).

According to many students the role of a university teacher seems invisible and when it does appear it only appears at the teaching task. However the role of a university teacher should be greater than it is because the real role for a university teacher is to guide the students in everything or in everyday needs since they have more experience than the students. In addition they should support the student against any procedures or policies which might affect the student's progress or make the student dissatisfied.

"I have talked to you now and I am about to graduate, there was never an academic or scientific co-corporation between me and my teachers or even building a good path to future works after my graduation, as we are two parts wishing to end the relationship between us as quickly as possible without seeing each other" (Student: 5-A).

As a researcher I interpreted from the student's facial expression, signs of upset and being fed up when they talked about this relationship. They added that:

"I was wishing to be a university teacher myself but a teacher's limited role in society makes me hesitate to go forward in that direction" (Student: 15-C).

As a researcher I tried to ask many questions regarding students' services provided by universities but the student insisted on talking about this specific subject because they believed that this subject was the most important at the universities. So I just summarised what they said.

5.13.10 Resistance

Staff from the universities reported resistance on the part of the professors with regard to providing student services at the faculty. As one staff member stated:

"*For me as a Dean it is very difficult that some colleagues are giving resistance to the activities which support student services*" (Staff: 11-C).

Another member of staff said:

"I would say that we as younger staff find that some of the elderly staff still follow the old fashioned style of the teacher-student relationship in a classical way" (Staff: 2-A).

5.13.11 Information systems

Some staff stated that regarding student services all universities lacked a central university information system; all data regarding student enrolment and their professors' teaching loads, courses and student allowances, was managed at each university in the same way. The staff of all universities complained bitterly about this situation, but universities have the financial funds to launch a good database development project to support a comprehensive information system. This matter is one of the main obstacles to the quality of the services as one member of staff stated:

"Management of university constituents is centralised, due to no level of autonomy, most of them lack a developed independent information system

regarding management of students, work force and financial issues" (Staff: 4-A).

A number of services are also provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs functioning independently from the university. None of the institutions has a top central office, a senior person or service unit to formally coordinate or plan the work of the different student services units such as that in different colleges. The individual's knowledge of what services exist is limited. In fact, this study identified many more services.

The researcher noted that despite the lack of coordination and strategic planning for the development of student services each university tries to present cases of transformation and integration, such as the establishment of some new offices and programmes, expanding the activities of existing services, or delegating administrative functions to student organisations and all these efforts differ from one to another

5.14 Student needs

Surprisingly, when staff were interviewed about their relationship with students in order to find out about students' needs, most of them indicated that it was not important for them to know students' needs. They made decisions without referring to students. This clearly indicates that students' views of what should be offered to them are excluded. Knowing their needs and personal attributes would appear to be important when planning activities. However, staff justified this exclusion, stating that they know the situation well and also know what is best for students. For example, the Director of Students Affairs said:

"There is no meeting with students, we know the situation and what is best for them" (Staff: 13-D).

It seems that the main reason for this situation was the publicity or advertising used by the staff. When questioned about how they announced activities they said that they used the Internet (the university website) and some brochures. Students had access to the Internet at the universities and

the brochures had not been seen by students as an effective method of communication. None of the staff used electronic means as a publicity method, although it was mentioned by some students, meaning that the sources of information to students were very limited. Furthermore, the students could not find out about the activities such as lecturer, the time and the location. Information as to the content of the activities was restricted. For example, one member of staff said:

"For a long time we have used leaflets in order to inform students of activities, we also use the university website and the Internet and the electronic screen in order to announce our programmes" (Staff: 6-B).

It is important here to say that results from the students' interviews indicated that the university website was very weak in terms of its popularity among students. In terms of formal sources of information a student stated:

"There are a limited number of meetings with staff and there were no questionnaires for students from the university" (Student: 19-D)

5.14.1 Role of students

A student in the focus group led another debate from another perspective; on the subject of the student's role. The student sees that the student's role is not clear but very vague even at the university there is no written definition of the student's role so they can read it and comply with it. Students do not recognize this role and therefore the university does not know what the role of the student is; apart from being present in one of the classrooms, in front of teacher talking about one subject, listening and taking notes and therefore being examined on what he has heard and being granted a grade either high or low. I noted that one of the students was very enthusiastic about this idea and he though he had every right to talk about this subject he added that he has a colleague studying in one of the European universities (he did not name the university) that differs from him because his colleague's university treats him as an important element of the education process so he is a participant not only just a receiver. For example, one student stated that:

"I do not understand my role at university, because there is nothing in writing to help me to read it, I just come to the class sit, listen and take notes to sit the exam and gain marks" (Student: 7-A).

Student representatives had not been included in a formal capacity as members of the top management team at any of the four institutions. Students were unanimous in their comments that the situation was different in each faculty and that support for student involvement was entirely dependent on the staff and had been received quite differently at other universities. Such inconsistencies in day-to-day practices discouraged students from becoming involved.

Some staff suggested that student involvement was actively encouraged and welcomed at their university. The attitude of other staff was passive, leaving it to students to initiate requests. As one member of staff reflected, that all participants needed to be educated:

"We and everything at university here, buildings, teachers, facilities, are for the students, so students are the first players of the game" (Staff: 3-A)

Both students and staff comments clearly positioned the role of students as key. Interviewees emphasised the importance of good communication with the students and of working with students as partners in the management of the university. Three interviewee students confirmed that action had been taken without consulting the students or involving them in the decision-making process and similarly, spoke of students as important partners of the academic administration. Some staff noted that students had not worked with the Academic Department to find solutions on academic support, scholarships, employment and involvement of local business, space for student activities or access.

Interviewees acknowledged the role of the students in building a culture of mutual respect and cooperation. Staff particularly mentioned situations where the university is responsible for allocating state funding for the

students and to contribute the unused remaining funds to the improvement of buildings and facilities at the university. As one member of staff stated:

"We always had a very good contact with the students and all funds were located for students' interests" (Staff: 12-C).

Students at the institutions felt that there were difficulties to take a role in management and expressed dissatisfaction with the support they received to do so. A comment that the administration had a good dialogue with the students was not confirmed by students who noted that the universities are not responsive to, and not supportive of, student interests:

"*I could not do all these activities without the support of the university the relation between the university and the students are as though the university is not trying to make me part of the decisions*" (Student: 9-B).

My interview with another student stated something similar. At the same time, students remained critical of the level of communication and coordination between the university, the faculties and the students:

"*The problem is in this university I do not perceive the university as a structure where the teacher and students are not in a hierarchal position*" (Student: 19-D).

5.14.2 Student representatives

Most students see that the students at universities must be represented at the councils of departments, faculties and universities to be able to let their voice to be heard by the decision makers and also the students are able to defend their rights, explain their views which may be different from how universities implement their policy, and this representative should be real and not just by name, which means the students have rights to vote on the universities policies; especially those that concern them in person. As one student explained, nobody is able to understand the students' needs other than the students themselves and stated:

"Nobody is able to understand our needs, as we students do" (Student: 16-C).

Another said:

"Unfortunately, we are not able to let our voices be heard by university top management or able to define our right" (Student: 6-A).

These findings coincide with those of Bateson and Taylor (2004) who found that in order to achieve an appropriate balance between students' independence in finding their own way and effective institutional programmes which facilitate a dialogue on student expectations and needs outside the classroom, universities, faculties and departments must become participants in student life. Students have many ideas and suggestions and the university has a duty to find out or to listen to their experiences. It is through a shared involvement at every level of the university structure that students may succeed in identifying their needs.

5.14.3 Students as customers

Most of the students insist that the universities on the whole do not deal with them as customers but deal with them as consumers of services and provide these services in a paternalistic way, like they are providing these services as a charity. Some may say that "*as students we don't pay fees so should not be treated as customers*" however this saying is false because without the students there is no university and fees are paid by the government, including the university's annual budget and one of the factors affecting the budget is the number of students in the university. The more students the higher the budget from the government although the universities have recently started receiving fees from some students, but the treatment is the same without any change because the policy of the university is not to treat students as customers; in the best situation it will treat them as consumers. As one student stated:

"I hope that the university understands us as students and deals with us as customers not consumers" (Student: 12-B).

Whereas staff have opinions against this issue and against the terminology itself that appear when one of the staff stated that:

"Do you think we work as restaurant waiters to deal with students as customers? We are here to provide knowledge not anything else" (Staff: 4-A).

Another said:

"I will be feeling shame if I will call students as customers, or they will ask me to consider them as customers" (Staff: 13-D).

5.14.4 Student expectations

Despite awareness of the low preparedness of students in terms of what to expect from their university, there are no high expectations by students or perceived connection between the lack of adequate information and the lack of student services. This results in a passive attitude on the part of the universities and a sense of discouragement on the part of the students who are intimidated by bureaucratic structures and attitudes.

One of my questions was related to student expectations as a key factor in the provision of student services and to know what methods are used by universities to evaluate students' expectations as part of the improvement to the quality of student services in Saudi universities. Changing student characteristics leads to increased student expectations of the quality of student services they receive from the institution, ranging from a variety of customer-oriented flexible support to a higher degree of student. According to the interviewees student expectations are evolving and the universities need to respond to them. At present these findings correspond with the students not having big expectations. The student responses corroborated the reflections of the staff in not supporting the perception that students did not have high expectations of their university experience

The students did not agree that they do not have high expectations but the financial situation of the university depends on student numbers enrolled in each university to be better used to support teachers' salaries, or for the faculties to be able to purchase better equipment and books but not to be used to support student services. The students appeared to be more aware

of the differences in attitude between staff in HE institutions and students'
situations

As one student stated:

*"As far as I know, a few years ago there has been increasing student
numbers but I do not think there is feedback from the universities because
they are connected to the state and their budget comes from the state
regardless of the student feedback. So it does not need to know the opinion
of the student regarding their services in total* "(Student: 9-B).

For another student the problem lay in the recent growth of student
enrolments and in students doing only the things they were obliged to do.
Upon entry to the university most of the students did not know what to
expect and although they could find out about activities and ways to become
engaged, most of them had no interest in this:

*"We as students can make changes but with such situation it is so difficult
you need a huge process to have your ideas work but the problem is the
bureaucratic structure in university"* (Student: 2-A).

Another student who complained of the same attitude among students went
on to describe this apathy as an obstacle to continuing the activities they
were involved in. In their view, students did not see the benefit of these
opportunities for additional personal development, nor were they open or
interested.

Not all students commented directly on this question. However, some
universities had created a number of student services and units as
outsourced activities As these ideas, which were implemented by the
Deanship of Student Affairs at the universities, the implication was that
students did not expect the university to play a role. This findings agree with
findings of Byrne and Flood (2005) placed students in a passive role, as
recipients rather than involved participants, leading to disengagement and
low expectations

Some staff, who commented on this topic, noted that there had been some small change in the attitude of the students toward the quality of the educational process:

"*Students tend to turn their attention to get more quality so they might complain that some lectures are like they were years age it was now new information* " (Staff: 14-D).

Another member of staff agreed that student expectations had not changed; students were not sufficiently mature and responsible, unaware of their own interests in obtaining the maximum from their university experience. In fact, some staff thought that the change was for the worse, attributing this to insufficient preparation at high school and the increase in university enrolments. In their view students came to the university with a lower level of academic preparation and no clear expectation, not knowing what they wanted from the university:

"*Now in this system when the number of our student is three times bigger than it was previously the students in their first and second year do not know what they want form the university. And I think that four years are not enough to realise whether their choice, before entering the university, was good or not. So I think that output of the university is worse than it was previously because the input was stronger previously*" (Staff: 9-B).

Another member of staff agreed with the comments made by the staff member who said that students did not have high expectations, interviewees shared their experience that students were not actively seeking to be informed about the various services offered by the university, and another member of staff reflected on the lack of tradition in universities for students to have high expectations. This in fact presented a problem for the student services because they wanted to expand their offerings but the students were not receptive as stated:

 "*The students close up to this*" (Staff: 11-C)

But both staff and students did not mention any tools that the universities use to evaluate the students' expectations, such as questionnaires. A finding that is supported by Polachek and Frantz (2009) who argued that people who form expectations have a personal stake in having them confirmed and the expectations by faculty are crucial since they can have a profound influence on factors including student motivation, behaviour and achievement.

5.14.5 The student and university relationship

According to the interviewees the relationship between the students and the universities was difficult and complicated to operate at the university level. Some staff and students described the situation as a weak relationship. The universities did not have many integrated functions and cooperation among faculties and departments was inadequate. Staff had no particular knowledge about or were interested in the operations of the other faculties. In the absence of a common information system, faculties operated in isolation. This was emphasised by the students in interviews.

5.14.6 Students with disabilities

A service programme for students with disabilities was not launched as a student initiative service which deals with creating equal study conditions for students with special needs. Not only this but when I visited the universities I was informed by students that all the tables in classes are designed for students who hand write only, which I noted. I also noted that most university buildings did not have disabled access such as ramps for wheelchairs or elevators. I did not arrange interviews with students or staff who have a disability but when I asked students regarding this matter they said the situation was very difficult for the student with special needs. As one student from University B said:

"I do not have in my class any student with a disability but I saw some of them face problems when they try to enter the buildings, especially in the accommodation buildings" (Student: 9-B).

5.15 Competition

One of the indicators that informs about how the quality of student services was perceived in Saudi universities is to know if there was any kind of competition. The interview findings show that there is no competition in the provision of student services among universities.

Some staff from universities confirmed this view and thought that there was no competition due to the lack of an evaluation system of the universities. The choice of university was a geographical /financial decision, more so than an academic one, based on what the students were able to afford in terms of accommodation and living expenses. The interviewees from all universities made similar comments concerning the question of competition.

However, at the same time, interviewees acknowledged the rise of internal competition among faculties of the same university and it is very clear in sports activities. There is also institutional awareness of the impact of competition. The interview question was: Have the student services been introduced as a result of increasing competition between institutions? I was therefore interested to find out whether competition for students was a factor in the decision to improve existing or provide new services.

5.15.1 Student choices

Student services as an issue of competition between universities was not considered by any of the four to have an impact on the student's choice of university. Interviewees who commented on this topic were unanimous in their assessment that student services were not a factor. Staff agreed that, in principle, student services could be a factor but only after enrolment. Respondents reported that services such as advice about studying abroad was used for student recruitment purposes but were not convinced that this information had any influence on their choice. As a member of staff stated:

"I agree with your question that student services could be significant factors to students to choose institutions but with our university students service I think it comes after the enrolment process" (Staff: 5-A).

Students who commented on this topic confirmed the view of the staff that the provision of student services did not influence their choice of university or programme. As major issues, the students raised the lack of preparation as to what to expect from their university studies, how to choose what subject to study and insufficient information about career prospects. According to the students there was no connection between the lack of adequate information and the lack of student services. As one student said:

"No, I did not take the student services into account when I applied to the university because I did not have adequate information about universities but I still do not think there is a link between the two" (Student: 20-D).

5.16 Perceptions of staff and students about the concept of student services

The concept of the student services means something different to students and staff. Staff opinion is that the universities wish to create a motivating, appealing and modern environment for its students that serve scientific training, career building, stable conditions of life and an enjoyable passing of free time. The universities wish to adapt flexibly to the reasonable and continuously changing needs of the students, and continuously widen the scope of student services and widening the scope of its relations both with its internal and its external partners.

As one staff member stated:

"My understanding regarding the concept of student services meaning is increasing the budget for accommodation, improving services for students, creating the operational conditions for study and career guidance and for an advisory system" (Staff: 12-B).

Another said:

"It is very difficult for me to identify the term of student services because it means every aspect of services that students benefit from" (Staff: 5-A).

Whereas another member of staff considered the term student services as accommodation. As he stated:

"It means an accommodation service" (Staff: 3-A).

Given the high importance assigned by interviewees to the need for an official framework for the development of student services as a key issue, it also needs to be explicitly referenced to services for students in the HE system as a significant issue. One member of staff said:

"The universities nowadays need a framework for the services provided to students more than any time in the past" (Staff: 8-B).

Another said:

"It is very important because in this university we are students coming from all over the country so it is very important to have a place where we can go and ask for help solving our problems" (Student: 7-A).

5.16.1 Perception about differences between universities in managing student services

According to the interviewees there is a common perception that each university was no different from the others. Different levels were not perceived as a serious concern, as HE policies in Saudi Arabia expect all universities to follow the same methods in their organisation and structure. They all have more or less the same profile of faculties and academic programmes, the curricula and teaching materials and methods are very similar from one to another, and in many cases, the same teaching staff are actually employed by any Saudi universities at the same way. This situation leaves little room for diversity or differentiation between the universities.

5.16.2 Perception about student services fund

Some students and staff stated that the position of the university student fund was weak. It is worth talking here about the source of the student fund. According to the HE system in Saudi Arabia university students obtain an

allowance from the state budget via the university. The HE system stipulates that the programmes of the student services can be financed from the state budget through the Deanship of Student Affairs at universities, having obtained a prior opinion of the universities' student services. Under this scheme, the universities withdraw amounts from each student's allowance for the university student fund to support student services and should distribute the funds directly to the student services activities. As some students and staff reported the student fund *"was almost destroyed"*. While the students explained at length the nature of the problem and the steps the student fund had taken, none of the university top management staff referred to this situation. Although some top management staff referred to the activity of the student services as *"not as it should be"* the universities' leadership did not report any steps taken to bridge this gap with the universities.

5.16.3 Assessment of student services

The four institutions in this study represent cases of large public comprehensive universities in HE in Saudi Arabia. In the last decade, growth in student numbers, although not consistently documented on each institutional website, is reported as a general phenomenon in HE. The findings under this topic revealed a complex network of administrative offices, so that the student services functions are scattered at many levels of the institutional structure at all four universities**.**

Based upon institutional documents and interviewee descriptions of the type and position of student-related offices and services in each institution, I designed a matrix detailing existing student services at all levels of the organisational structure presented in Appendix S. Findings on the position of student services are structured in the following sequence. The assessment of student services is inherently linked to the role that students play in university management. In my questions, I assumed that students are considered as partners in this process, their requirements and demands are actively sought and integrated into strategic development objectives; reform is internally-driven, guided by student demands and interest in enhancing

the student experience. The assessment of Student Services at the university level (Services provided at university level, overseen by the university, and Services provided at university level, not overseen by the university) identified varying arrangements inside and outside the university

5.16.4 Student services provided at the faculty level model

The main functions related to student academic administration, such as enrolment, course registration, examinations, grades, and graduation requirements, should be located at the level of the faculty. This organisational pattern was found in all four universities. These functions should be fulfilled by the faculty under the supervision of the Dean and the Vice-Dean. Student services at the faculty level as were described by two Deans as having a very concrete task, such as registration for classes, registration for examinations, practical details which were connected to the students' everyday life in the faculty, but beyond that:

"*I am afraid we do not have anything structured, on the topic of student services"* (Staff: 6-B)

All student matters, other than the routine administration handled by the Student Affairs, were referred to the Dean. These might include both academic and non-academic issues. Academic matters were normally decided by the Vice-Dean. Special problems might be referred to the Faculty Council or to the Advisory Committee of the Faculty Council. In addition to the organisational structure described by staff they suggested as well that each faculty/department appointed a professor to serve as a tutor for a student responsible for the orientation, academic counselling and organisational matters. The tutor participated in the departmental meetings and communicated to the department head issues related to students. The professors who were appointed as tutors should be relieved of their teaching duties, the problem was that and their function was strictly department/faculty based - there was no forum for tutor meetings at the university level some staff reported no changes in the organisational structure of student support at the faculty level

Each faculty of the universities does not have a professional office, dealing with student enrolment, statistical information and reports, managing the data in the university information system, scheduling of classes, issuing student transcripts and certificates. The Head of this office should report to the Vice-Dean and occasionally participated in meetings of the Faculty Council. Some staff also suggested that there were periodic meetings of all Heads of Registry at the university. Every department appointed someone in charge of the students although this did not appear as a formal organisation; it was a type of student services management or self-management. However, some interviewees noted that although professors received a lot of information and were expected to know of the activities of student organisations, he thought that this communication was not efficient. He reported that student issues were discussed at every Faculty Council meeting, but there had been no discussion on student services

The staff of the Faculty Student Office did not have a meeting forum at the university level to share information or discuss particular problems. As a result, the process of identifying student needs, working to meet student requests or solutions to problems, was limited within the faculty, without a channel to reach higher levels for policy discussion, overall planning and evaluation of these services. As one member of staff put it:

"*It means that student services are done by faculties in very different ways in many aspects without any coordination and unfortunately without a unique or at least compatible system of information*" (Staff: 12-C)

Staff explained that their role was to execute the faculty policies, decisions of the Faculty Council and general regulations. One member of staff expressed openness to student requests, but in his view:

"*The faculty does not believe that we have to define the activities but to offer students the opportunities, the main initiatives have to come from the students*" (Staff: 5-A).

Another member of staff acknowledged that:

 "There are some services for students at faculties but they are so uncoordinated and so different" (Staff: 13-D).

Staff also emphasised the differences between large and small faculties, referring to the closer links between students and professors in the small faculties.

5.16.5 Student services provided at the Deanship of Student Affairs level model

The Student Services are separate entities which manage student accommodation, dining services, cultural programmes and activities, financed directly by the relevant section under a special provision called Deanship of Student Affairs and one main section is student allowances. Student service are direct recipients of, and are operated on the basis of, state subsidies for "student accommodation, meals, scholarships, grants, cultural and sports activities as well as many scientific programmes

The staff of the Deanship did not identify any particular person or position at the university as a regular point of contact, none of them had been involved in the strategic planning discussions at the university, nor had they taken the initiative themselves - their expectation was that they should be invited by the university management. Based upon comments from both sides, occasional consultations took place when the university organised special projects, some staff reported some interaction with the student organisations and the Student Dean and Vice-Dean, but did not give specific examples.

When student disciplinary issues occurred, either in the halls of residence or in the dining premises, those were handled entirely within the Deanship, without involving the university top administration. As some emphasised:

"*The Deanship of Student Affairs is an independent entity, so except providing dining services and accommodation for students without any connection with the top management at university*" (Staff: 12-C)

The centre's operations, referred to as Student Service, described the Deanship of Student Affairs as being responsible for providing meals and accommodation to students, allocating student rooms in the university halls of residence according to university policy. assisting students in finding part-time employment, a place for cultural events, foreign language or computer courses, entertainment, tourism and sports activities.

The programmes were organised by staff and students. Although the Deanship performed a wide range of student-related activities, no one from the interviewed participants from the faculties or the top management knew much about it, nor did they have direct contact with it. In fact, no one mentioned it in the context of student services in particular. My visit included a visit to the Deanship of Student Affairs at each of the four universities. In the view of the interview participants, the Deanship was:

"*Filling a structural gap in the higher education system*" (Staff: 8-B) (Staff: 14-D)

The target to increase student enrolments, as a policy and as a financial need for the university, was perceived as a university service. Staff in the Deanship of Student Affairs have another opinion as a management problem:

"*We work to provide student services but we are not happy on the day-to day running of these services because there is no clear policy of the university to provide such services*" (Staff: 9-B).

The researcher was looking to answer questions with regard to what extent the Saudi universities are perceived to provide high quality services to their students. The findings illustrated not a great deal of activity, such as self-assessment, strategic planning, re-organisation and amendments of regulations at the universities and at the faculties or deanship levels resulting from developed changes. It also appears that in this context student services received little mention. Interviewee comments did not indicate any specific formal discussions or planning related to student services.

5.17 Employers as stakeholders

The students did not raise any interest in this terminology; in addition they considered that stakeholders do not play a major role in university decisions. On the other hand, there was unawareness about the need to develop curricular programmes with regard to the subject of employers at the universities. Additionally, there was a programme to bring the students up-to-date. However, employers should participate in their development. As one student stated:

"To be honest with you I do not understand what stakeholders mean" (Student: 18-D)

Another student said:
"How can I believe that we as students are not considered by university as stakeholders and others will be considered" (Student: 10-B).

And another student said:
"Even I agree that employers should share in university council but I do not think they will play a major role in this council" (Student: 1-A)

Whereas a member of staff said:
"I hope that I will see employers as members of the university council" (Staff: 6-B)

Another member of staff stated that:
"Our universities still do not take the stakeholders in general as major factors and I believe if employers, as stakeholders, will be members of university councils the gap between the universities and labour market will bridge very well" (Staff: 11-C).

These findings agree withCranmer's (2006) who found that it is important to engage employers in the development of curricular programmes. The

findings also agree with Dunn et al. (2004) who argued that the student must be the first and most important stakeholder.

5.18 Perceptions about the research topic

The thing that interested me was that some interviewees were surprised to see the quality of student services as a topic of research, whereas others shared their enthusiasm for the topic. They were interested in the discussion because they had the same interest and were pleased to say that the university must plan to set up extra student services, especially in the area of career planning and contacts with employers. One of the staff of the Deanship of the Student Affairs in one university stated:

"This is the first study I have seen on the topic of student services in our universities" (Staff: 13-D.)

 While one member of staff went on to say that:

"*Such research is needed for our universities; in fact it should to be conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education or by the universities*" (Staff: 10-C).

Other staff agreed on the importance of student services as a university obligation. Student services were seen as part of institutional quality management, where quality is a lot more than course quality. However, although student services were perceived as important at universities:

"It is one of the important things, the fact that we discuss in each meeting student problems means that we give importance, but we give the same importance to other problems" (Staff: 2-A).

Staff from the universities suggested that the area of student services in their institutions needed improvement. On the practical level, staff and students thought that it was a priority to computerise services and centralise existing services - or provide new services, and whether such changes had an impact on the students' choice of institution or programme.

Staff noted that there was no mechanism to coordinate student services at the university level. The only unit at this level was the Deanship of Student Affairs which provides services mostly for undergraduate students. As a member of staff stated:

"*In our universities there is no mechanism in coordination of students' services and as staff we need to propose this mechanism and implement it*" (Staff: 10-C)

Chapter 6

Mixed Findings and Discussions

6.1 Introduction

Since this study used a mixed research methodology for data collection and analysis, and to achieve results through the use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this chapter is used to comment on and discuss the results contained in Chapters 4 and 5. This is to answer the questions raised in this research effort and to find if its goals have been achieved. Consequently, this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part contains the demographic information of the sample and its relationship with the satisfaction with the quality of services by the six groups that were mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5. The second part presents the sample's impression of the universities' administrations and the relationship between the universities and the job market. Here, a link is established between what has been addressed in Chapter 5 (such as the output of the universities and their suitability with the needs of students after graduation, the extent of students' use of technology, taking into account the views of the students regarding curriculum development, development of lecturers and training programmes, the relevance of the university curricula for the development of critical thinking among students and the ability of these approaches to configure creative thinking among students, the ability of professors in universities to build a team of students) and the treatment presented in Chapter 5 in a vigorous manner, while noting the results of the interviews conducted with students, staff and employers.

Part I

6.2 Sample's demographic and its relationship to services satisfaction

6.2.1 Age

The results showed that 70% of the respondents are aged between 22-24 years, indicating that the students have spent an adequate amount of time at

university, validating their judgment of the quality of services provided to them. This is particularly true if we take into account that tertiary education in Saudi Arabia starts at the age of 18 years. This result is also consistent with previous studies (Bomtaia, 2002); (Saleh, 1986), where it was shown that individuals aged 18-23 years constitute the largest group of "customers" in the HE system.

There are no differences of significance related to the students' ages and level of satisfaction with the quality of services provided to students. It is also noted that the highest average for student satisfaction on the basis of age was 3.74 out of 5.00. This indicates that for those aged 18-20, the level of satisfaction with the teaching service (lecture duration) is low. Moreover, when students ranked university services in order of importance, teaching services were ranked first as shown in Table 18. However, the lowest arithmetic average of the level of satisfaction of students on the basis of age was 1.99 for students aged 24-26. This result corresponds to the dissatisfaction of the students with not being treated as customers of the university. In fact, achieving customer satisfaction is one of the most important aspects of TQM. The results concerned with the relation between age and the level of satisfaction with the services are in agreement with the results obtained by previous research (Carey, 1998) which demonstrates that there is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction and the student's age.

Participants in the interviews ranged from 20-60 years old, furthermore there was no relationship between the participants' age and their level of satisfaction with the services. Some interview participants (especially students) expressed their views in a more open manner. They mentioned that some university employees (especially supervisors of student housing, nutrition and some teaching staff) deal with students as if they are immature. Some staff mentioned that older staff members present the old guard in Saudi academia, and are the most resistant to any change; they follow the traditional style of the old relationship between the professor and student.

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On another note, students did mention that younger teaching staff are usually more enthusiastic.

As for other demographic information such as gender, university enrolment, as variables, there were no differences in the satisfaction of the sample with the quality of services. As well as in interviews, there were no differences in the views of the sample on the quality of services in relationship to the university, college, specialisation, or employment rank in the universities surveyed; this is valid for both students and staff.

6.3 Quality of admission and registration services

The results of the student interviews show dissatisfaction with the quality of admission and registration services provided to them. Students claimed that the Deanship of Admission and Registration often provided little information and sometimes did not offer help to the students with making critical decisions. On this issue, the results from the interviews conducted with students at the four universities coincide with the results mentioned in Chapter 4 and with previous studies discussed in Chapter 5. Students also indicated that there is no coordination between universities and the high school system to offer some guidance to the students regarding the admission procedures. Here, the researcher points to a gap between the HE system in Saudi Arabia and the general education system. Even the universities' staff interviewed admitted that the problem with the students' dissatisfaction with the registration and admission procedures at the universities is due to the university system rather than the students themselves. Hill (1995) advocates the use of existing students for school visits and open days in order to shape the expectations of potential undergraduates and make them as down-to-earth as possible. Students should also be encouraged to reflect on their past learning experiences so that they will be able to build on positive approaches and unlearn unhelpful ones (Hill et al., 1996).

6.4 Quality of teaching services

Teaching services ranked first in order of importance to students followed by 26 secondary services. Students were not satisfied with the quality of this service. Moreover, demographic factors of the sample did not have any statistically significant affect on the students' satisfaction with the quality of teaching services. In fact, this is one of the findings of this research and when comparing these results with the qualitative results in the study, it is evident that the quality of teaching services is assessed differently between the students and university staff. In general, the students are not satisfied with the quality of the teaching services, and this is consistent with the results of Chapter 5, however in the qualitative results of Chapter 5, the views of the universities' employees and the students were more detailed. These are grouped under the following headings:

- theoretical teaching instead of practical teaching
- views of the university staff on teaching the students
- discussion between the students and their faculty at Saudi universities
- associated issues.

6.4.1 Theoretical instead of practical teaching

Through the students' interviews, the researcher identified another source of dissatisfaction with the teaching services which often focuses on theoretical concepts at the expense of practical and job training aspects. Thus, when students graduate, they immediately face a gap between what they have studied and real life practices, especially in the business sector. There is a wealth of studies that confirm this finding, and these are detailed in Chapter 5. Moreover, these results agree with the results of Chapter 4 concerning the quality of teaching services, where students were not satisfied with the elements of teaching and services. The satisfaction of the students with the outcomes approach, namely curriculum development, critical thinking (not encouraged by the curriculum) as well as creativity in teaching was low.

Once again, the results of the interviews and the questionnaires are consistent: the students are not satisfied with the quality of the teaching services offered by Saudi universities and in agreement with the results obtained by Wright (Wright, 1990).

6.4.2 Views of university staff on teaching the students

According to the results of the interviews conducted with the employees, teaching needs to be developed so that students are prepared to face the challenges of the future. Adequate programmes should be developed so that the quality of teaching services is constantly improving. Here, the staff stress that the quality of the teaching services are not satisfactory. These results are in agreement with the results from the students' interviews and the results of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the qualitative results validate the quantitative results regarding the low quality of the teaching services.

6.4.3 Discussion between the students and their faculty at Saudi universities

One of the modern means of teaching is open discussion and debating ideas between the students and their teachers instead of the traditional lecturing style. The results of the interviews indicate that the majority of students noted that open discussions and debating is not practiced at Saudi universities. Instead, the lecturers follow the old style of feeding the information to the students without any interaction with them. Students stressed that this style is ineffective, and these results are supported by the results of the interviews with the universities' staff. However, the staff justified the lack of interaction by the fact that classes often have large numbers of students per semester, which makes it difficult to manage a debate. Some staff even claimed that some students might not prefer open discussions, rather wanting a traditional type of lecture to secure passing in the exams. The results from the students and staff interviews are in agreement with the results of the questionnaire regarding the lack of student

satisfaction with the quality of teaching services in terms of teaching style, team-building or the affect of the number of students in the classroom.

6.4.4 Associated issues

The results of the interviews with the students confirmed that the quality of teaching, despite its importance to them, is not satisfactory. In particular, students complained that technology, if ever incorporated in the teaching process, is not used appropriately. Students also mentioned that the teaching staff do not always deal with the students in a kind and respectful manner. On the other hand, the universities' employees disagreed with the students regarding their views on the teaching service, but agreed with them regarding the use of technology which is often not used in a satisfactory manner, with varying situations and alternative values and interests. As Eagle and Brennan (2007) suggested HE must develop graduates with the "…*ability to think critically and laterally, to solve problems creatively, to adapt to change, and to understand the social dynamics of the organisations in which they will work".*

6.5 Quality of library services

72% of the students were not satisfied with the library services. Moreover, there were no statistically significant differences due to demographic properties that affect the level of satisfaction of students with the quality of library services. Comparing these results with the results of the students' interviews it is evident that students and staff regard the quality of library services as not of a high calibre. This judgement covers several services such as providing books and periodicals, loan services, directories that simplify and speed access to library services, and even the membership procedures and working hours and further supported by previous studies. However, the difference between the students and staff in their assessment of library services shows that libraries are more important for students than they are for staff. Students ranked library services as 2 among the services provided by the universities whereas the staff ranked these services as 4.

6.6 Quality of services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs

The Deanship of Student Affairs is one of the most important departments that deal with the students. In fact, it is this Deanship that offers the students most of the services they require from registration through to graduation.

Despite the importance of this Deanship, and the extent to which students have to deal with it, it was found that students are not satisfied with the quality of services provided. The proportion of those not satisfied was 77% of the students with an arithmetic average ranging between 2.30 and 2.75. It is worth mentioning that these results had no variations with any statistical significance when the demographics of the sample is considered. Furthermore, students and the universities' staff ranked the services of the Deanship of Student Affairs at the same level of importance. In fact, this Deanship is the only department in the four surveyed universities, which was ranked in third place by both students and staff.

6.6.1 Impressions about the Deanship of Student Affairs

The general feeling among the students is that the Deanship of Student Affairs does not perform the role required of them to improve the quality of services provided to the students. Some universities' staff shared the same opinions with the students. They believe that there is a need for the Deanship of Student Affairs to have more capability in meeting the needs of the students.

6.6.2 Housing services

The results of the questionnaire showed that the students are not satisfied with the quality of housing services. These results are in agreement with the results of the interviews. In fact, students do not feel safe with the lack of security and safety in the universities' housing facilities. Students also mentioned that they are often treated as immature and their privacy is often breached without any regard to their feelings. Additionally, students reported that housing officials do not usually treat them in a kind and professional manner.

6.6.3 Dining services

The quality of dining services is like the quality of housing in terms of dissatisfaction. Students prefer to eat outside the universities and they cite numerous reasons such as hygiene, prices and the attitude of the staff at the university dining facilities. University staff who participated in this study did not comment on this topic for unknown reasons.

6.6.4 Financial services

There are many financial services that are provided to students at Saudi universities. However, most students focused on the monthly allowance provided to them by the universities. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of this service specifically regarding its structure and its duration. They also added that this service is run in a way that often makes them feel uncomfortable.

6.6.5 Impressions about the role of the Deanship of Student Affairs

Neither students nor university staff belittled the importance of the Deanship of Student Affairs. In fact, they even ranked it as third in order of students' needs after the Deanship of Admission. However, students and officials think that the Deanships of Student Affairs are not performing the role required of them. Comparing the results of the interviews conducted with the students, with the results of the interviews conducted with the staff, the researcher found that the staff think that the deficiencies in the Deanship of Student Affairs is not due to the university policies, but rather to the implementation of those policies by those working in this Deanship. Thus, the justification of the staff supports what the students thought regarding the deficiency of the Deanship of Student Affairs.

6.6.6 Impressions about the role of the Public Relations Office within the Deanship of Student Affairs

The students think that despite this office being physically located inside the Deanship of Student Affairs; they know little about how they can benefit from it. According to the students, the Public Relations Office does not offer them

any service; it is practically absent and dysfunctional. Students think that this office is not performing the basic tasks a public relations office at any organisation would normally perform. University staff did not comment on this matter for unknown reasons.

In general, the results of the interviews with the students were in agreement with those of some interviews that were conducted with the staff, and with the results of the questionnaire of Chapter 4: students are not satisfied with the services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs. Clearly, there is a problem with this Deanship.

6.7 The quality of medical services

Medical services comprise four elements. These are the possibility of receiving medical service, rapid access to medical services, the quality of medical services, and finally the attitude of the medical staff. Medical services did not receive student satisfaction according to the results of the questionnaire of Chapter 4, and demographic variables did not have any statistically significant influence that would affect the student satisfaction. Nevertheless, there were some differences between the levels of dissatisfaction with these services. In summary, 70% of the students were not satisfied with an average of 2.5.

The researcher could not schedule an interview with medical staff in any of the four universities surveyed in this study. Moreover, none of the students surveyed had had contact with the medical services at Saudi universities, and hence it is not possible to compare the results of the two chapters or between the quantitative and qualitative results.

6.8 The quality of General Services

General Services provided at Saudi universities comprise 8 secondary services. These are: treating the students as customers, the distance between the university buildings, availability of the Internet, availability of advisers to help the students, the gap between what the students expect and what is actually offered to them, the students polling regarding the services

provided to them and whether they are satisfied with it or not, and the last secondary service is the will and ability of the university's administration to identify problems and mistakes and plan to avoid them in the future.

The results of Chapter 4 show the students' dissatisfaction with the quality of these services by 80% and an average of 2.5. Demographic variables did not have any statistically significant difference that would affect the students' satisfaction. There were a few differences among the four universities, but they all fall under the level of dissatisfaction. Moreover, there was a difference between the students and staff in the ranking of these services. The staff ranked this service as sixth, whereas the students ranked as seventh in the order of importance. The comparison between the results of the quantitative study of Chapter 4 and the qualitative study of Chapter 5 of this research showed the following:

6.9 Impression about treating students as customers

The students feel that universities treat them as consumers rather than customers. Actually, students believe that the policies of the universities frame them as consumers rather than customers receiving a service. However, university staff believe that this terminology (i.e., treating the students as customers) is not one of the goals of the university. In fact, university staff feel quite the opposite; the university should not treat the students as customers since universities are not business institutions where services are provided to the customer. In this regard, both the students and staff agree that universities do not treat students as customers and this itself contradicts the concept of TQM implemented by universities, which emphasises customer satisfaction. These results also do not agree with previous studies which preferred treating students as customers. Comparing the results of the quantitative study of Chapter 4 and the results of the qualitative study in Chapter 5, one finds that the results of Chapter 4 on this issue (treating students as customers) came at a low level of satisfaction with an arithmetic average of 2.29 and demographic variables did not have any statistically significant difference that would affect the students'

satisfaction. It was also noted at the beginning of this chapter that the lowest arithmetic average of the level of satisfaction based on age (24-26) was 1.99, and this was particularly on the issue of universities not treating their students as customers.

6.9.1 Impressions about the expectations of the students

Managing student expectations have now become a vital factor in HE management, a position identified by Wright and O'Neill (2002) when they recommended that students ought to be involved in all stages of HE design and implementation in order that their needs can be effectively met. Furthermore, although students' needs may remain static, the relative priority of those needs may change over time. According to the results of the students' interviews, the students are opposed to the notion that they do not have a high level of expectations. The students have linked their level of expectations to the financial status of the university itself, which in turn depends on the number of students enrolled in its programmes. In Saudi Arabia, every university receives its budget from the Saudi government, and according to the students, universities do not administer this money wisely, which creates a gap between what the students expect from the university, and the actual services provided by the university. Despite previous studies which further assert the low expectations of the students, yet students have high expectations about their universities.

On the other hand, some of the interviews conducted with staff are in agreement with the views of the students. In fact, some staff believe that the expectations of students are increasing year after year. But some of the results of the interviews with other staff stress that the students' expectations are low, and even that some students enrol in university without any expectations. The interviews with the students and staff did not reveal any means to measure the expectations of students. This is in contradiction with the concepts of quality, and specifically TQM. Comparing these results with the quantitative results of Chapter 4, there appears to be a wide gap between what the students expect of their university in terms of services and

what they actually receive (or not). Students' satisfaction comes at an average of 2.39 these results are not affected by demographic variables.

6.9.2 Impressions about the distance between buildings on campus

The arithmetic average, indicating the level of student satisfaction regarding the distance between buildings on campus, is 2.66. This value indicates that the students are dissatisfied with this service, and again this result is not affected by demographic variables. Both students and staff are not satisfied with the distance between the buildings on the campuses. They are not even satisfied with the facilities and their own location. The researcher links this to the dissatisfaction of students with the transportation system that moves students to and from the campuses.

6.9.3 Impressions on the availability of the Internet

Internet services are available on the campuses. Every university has a special web page that contains information about the university in both Arabic and English. However, both students and staff agree that the universities' web pages do not offer enough information and guidance services to the students. These results are consistent with previous studies. Additionally, students noted that internet services are not provided in the student dormitories. These interview outcomes are in agreement with the results of the quantitative study, where students were not satisfied with the internet service provided at Saudi universities. These results are not affected by demographic variables.

6.9.4 Impressions on the availability of guidance

Students were not satisfied with this service according to the results of the quantitative study, with an average student satisfaction value of 2.52. This result was also not affected by demographic variables. Despite some minor differences between universities in the level of satisfaction, these were all under the acceptable level of satisfaction. The interviews with the students and staff reveal that there is not enough guidance at the universities, which would help the students get to the information or other services they need.

The reason behind this is that Saudi universities do not have a central information system to guide its students and employees.

PART 2

6.10 Impressions about preparing students to enter the labour market

The second part of this chapter deals with the impression about the administration of Saudi universities, and the relationship of the universities with the job market. The output of universities has been addressed in Chapter 5 as well as its suitability to the needs of the students after graduation. Also, in Chapter 4, the researcher surveyed the students use of technology, their opinions on the development and advancement of the curriculum, their opinions on the development and training of the lecturers, the relationship between the university curricula and the development of critical thinking, the ability of these curricula to guide students towards creative thinking, and the ability of the lecturers to help the students in team building. This dissatisfaction led this research to a deeper search: on one hand, how Saudi universities are administered, and on the other hand, to what extent are Saudi universities linked to the job market. Consequently, Part II of this chapter is dedicated to the relationship between the output of Saudi universities and its relation to the Saudi job market. To achieve this objective, the opinions of the students and the employees will be compared. Moreover, these opinions will be directly compared with those of the employers and company managers who hire these graduates.

6.10.1 Curricula and teaching venues

Students and business people believe that the first steps in preparing students to enter the labour market lies in adequate curricula, which should have parts that would be taught to the students outside the classroom setting. However, university employees do not agree with this proposition.

6.10.2 Curricula and content

Students, university staff and employers agree that the curricula taught at Saudi universities need development and sometimes change in accordance

with the labour market requirements. University staff see that the problems of curriculum development lie in the senior management of universities which is often not enthusiastic about any development or change. Employers often discover the gap in the students' knowledge when these students apply for jobs at their organisations.

6.10.3 Utilising technology

Both students and university staff, according to the results of the interviews, are in agreement regarding the importance of utilising technology in the curriculum. In the four universities, technology is not sufficiently used and hence students graduate with a gap in using the state of the art software and hardware. Here again, the results of the quantitative study are consistent with the qualitative results.

6.10.4 Extracurricular activities and practical training

According to the results of the interviews, the students believe that university does not provide them with the skills needed for successfully tackling the labour market upon graduation. Particularly, students believe that universities do not offer enough practical training, in contrast staff believe that the universities do offer extracurricular activities, however the student turnout is often low. On the other hand, some students believe that these programmes need development and re-evaluation. The university staff think that the fault in this issue is that these programmes do not receive enough publicity and hence it appears that there is a gap between the curriculum and extracurricular activities. Practically, the lack of publicity and advertisement deprives the students of participating in these activities. Moreover, other university staff think that the students do not have much time to participate in such activities. The students and the staff agree on the lack of publicity, and both acknowledge the gap in communication. Here again, the quantitative results are in agreement with the qualitative results.

6.10.5 The relationship between the students, their universities and future careers

In order to develop such an organisation, members must have a strong willingness to deepen and increase the structure of their learning (Hsieh, 2005) and an HE setting requires learning opportunities that are able to benefit both students and employees. As Gouthro et al.(2006) pointed out collaboration between staff and students is vital. However they suggest that much of the literature on learning organisations fails to take into account the critical role of students' participation while others point out that there may be competing views of what constitutes necessary learning in a university.

There was a consensus among the students, according to the results of the interviews, that they do not receive any form of career advice during their university years. They also added that there is a gap between the available jobs and what they study in the classroom, and that lecturers often focus on theories and neglect the practical side of things. Students also pointed out that the public sector is the most appealing to them. University staff also agreed with the students on this point, and they clearly prefer working for the government. Here, the width of the gap is revealed between the needs of the public and private sectors in the job market; universities are not taking into account the needs of these sectors, and thus the students are stressed and worried about their future careers while studying.

6.10.6 Impressions on the relationship between the universities and the job market

The results from the students' interviews stress that the role of the university is to study the needs of the labour market and respond to these needs. Some of the university staff agree that the university is a part of the society and it has to play its role. There are numerous approaches to further coordinate the outputs of universities and the needs of the job market. However, this opinion is opposed by other university staff who believe that this task is not the university's main objective. The results of the interviews reveal that students, staff and employers acknowledge the presence of a

communication gap between universities and the job market, and another gap between the objectives of the universities and the job market. There are no central departments in universities that provide detailed information for the employers to utilise when evaluating potential hiring; whether the potential employee is a local or international graduate.

6.10.7 University knowledge and the labour market

Student interviewees believe there is a gap between what they learn at university and the knowledge required leading to a successful career in the public or private sectors. However, the results of the interviews with the university staff are split on this issue. Some university staff believe that it is not the role of universities to cater for the job market. They believe that the university provides its students with comprehensive knowledge and students have to then adapt to the job market. Other staff believe that indeed, universities should provide specific knowledge to the students which make them ready to tackle the job market immediately after graduation. On the topic of theoretical versus practical education, this group of university staff supported more practical education.

Moreover, the results of the interviews with the students and staff show a split among those who support more coordination with the job market, and those who oppose it. Most of the staff insist, according to the results of the interviews, that the role of a university is wider than only preparing the students to join the job market, and that the responsibility of preparation lays on the students themselves, not the universities.

6.10.8 Identifying skills

According to the interviews conducted with students, staff and employers the skills required by the students are listed in Table 28 and by staff in Table 29. These tables show a clear difference between the three groups in identifying skills. It is also noted that there are some shortcomings in learning some essential and basic skills such as English and computing. Additionally,

students are not taught any communication skills. These observations are agreed upon by the students and university staff.

6.10.9 Relationship between university admission and the job market

The students expressed that there is no relationship between the programmes offered by the Deanship of Admission and Registration at universities and the job market. One of the wrong policies according to the students is that some courses accept too many students while the job market does not need this number of graduates in these fields. Both the students and staff believe that accepting too many students on programmes that are not popular within the job market is one of the gaps between the business sector and the admission and registration services at universities. These results are shown in the qualitative results. The interviewees added that the lack of information provided by the universities to the applicants is one of the problems causing the gap between the universities output and the job market to widen. One of the consequences of these erroneous policies is the high number of students in classrooms. The university staff agreed on these issues, and they further point to a gap between the number of students accepted and the number of those who graduated but could not find a job.

6.10.10 Impressions about the universities administration

According to the results of the interviews, the students and university staff believe that the problem with the university management is that senior administration relies on a central style and politics of ambiguity. If there is no outside independent party to monitor the performance of universities, then there will be no improvement in the management style that is currently used. The current management style lacks proper management strategies, long-term planning and reliance of effective leadership. The results of the interviews that were conducted with the students and staff show that the universities under study did not benefit from quality management strategies, and consequently, there was no improvement in the services provided. Students and staff further added that one of the indications of the low level of

services is that university staff themselves have many complaints. Lecturers for example do not have a clear role within the university structure, and there is a strong resistance to any change or development. Even the role of the student, his/her contribution and representation within the university management are all ambiguous.

Interviews with the students and staff show that there is no actual role for the student, and their voice is not heard. However, some staff are reserved regarding a representation of the students in the university administration as students might not be able to play this role. Also, the results of Chapter 5 further show that the relationship between the universities and their students is not productive. The results of Chapter 5 do not show any competition between the universities, or that the university selection by the students has a competitive element to it. There is no competition among the students to enter a specific university based on the quality of services it provides. The stakeholders' representatives are not given any role in the university administration.

6.10.11 Impressions about the student services

According to the results of the interviews with students and staff there is no agreement between the two groups regarding the term "student services". Every group uses this term with a different meaning attached to it. At the four universities, the Administration of Student Services uses the term "student services" with the same meaning. Moreover, there was no difference in the quality of services provided whether the services were provided by the university administration direction or through the Deanship of Student Affairs.

6.11 Conclusion

This chapter has commented on the quantitative and qualitative results presented in two parts. In the first part, the demographic details of the sample were presented along with their relationship with the quality of services according to the six categories explained in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The second part dealt with the impression about the universities'

administration and the relationship of the universities with the job market. In this chapter, some of the topics mentioned in Chapter 5 are linked to the universities outputs. Also discussed is the suitability of educational services with the requirements of the job market.

Chapter 7

Recommendations and proposed framework for improving the quality of student services at Saudi universities

7.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the findings of the study and also the proposed recommendations that are based on the presented results. Moreover, this chapter includes a proposed framework for improving the quality of student services in Saudi universities. The chapter starts with a review of the results and discussion of admission services, teaching, libraries, student affairs, medical and public services, and the relationship of the universities with the labour market, according to the questions posed at the beginning of this study. Then, some recommendations which will improve the quality of services will be presented. The results of the previous chapters showed that, overall, the quality of these services is not satisfactory. These recommendations are categorised according to the respective services. One such recommendation is basically a proposal for a framework for improving the quality of services and presents a demonstration of the implementation mechanism of student services. The second part of the framework concerns the establishment of a department that is solely devoted for student services in Saudi universities this is in Table 34.

7.2 Review of the results

The study has been based on the premise that students are not satisfied with the quality of the services provided to them from Saudi universities. The results of the quantitative study with the students, using a questionnaire which included all the services provided to students at universities, point to one result: when the students were asked about their satisfaction with these services, their answer confirmed the validity of the original hypothesis. The level of student satisfaction with the quality of services provided to them at Saudi universities is low. Students are not satisfied with these services which were divided into 6 main services, each containing a group of key ancillary services.

The results of the study are presented, grouped under the services, as follows:

- <u>Registration and admission services:</u> Students were not satisfied with the registration and admission services at Saudi universities. The dissatisfaction starts before entering the university and continues. Generally, the dissatisfaction with registration and admission services encompasses all the secondary services grouped under this service.

- <u>Teaching services</u>: Here again, students were not satisfied with the quality of teaching services. The satisfaction average was low whether it is for this service or its secondary services.

- <u>Library services:</u> The quality of services provided at libraries in Saudi universities did not gain a high level of satisfaction. Indeed, the main and secondary services that are available at these libraries were deemed not satisfactory by the students.

- <u>Services of the Deanship of Student Affairs:</u> There are 14 secondary services that are listed under this service, however all these services were found to be not satisfactory. There is a clear problem in the management and operation of the services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs.

- <u>Medical services:</u> The level of satisfaction with these services was low. This result comes despite the fact that there are only 4 secondary services associated with medical services (which is markedly lower than other services). However, all these services were found not to be satisfactory.

- <u>General services:</u> General services were grouped under eight secondary services; all were found to be not satisfactory.

These six services were found to be unsatisfactory. This provides answers to the main question of this study:

How is the quality of services perceived in Saudi universities?

Thus, the overall impression is that the services provided are not satisfactory (often with low levels of satisfaction) according to the results of this study.

The six sub-questions are addressed below. One of the secondary questions posed was:

Are there any differences in the perception of the quality of services between staff, students and employers?

Despite the fact that students and university staff ordered services according to importance in different ways, there were no differences in the impression of the students, staff and employers (who eventually hire the graduates) regarding the quality of services provided at Saudi universities. It was also considered important to identify demographic relationships to address the following question. According to the results of this study, there was no statistically significant relationship between the demographic information and the satisfaction with the quality of services provided at the universities that were researched during this study.

Are Saudi universities perceived to provide high quality services?

Based on the results of this study, where the quality of services did not receive the consent of the beneficiaries (students) as well as the university staff and the employers similar to that based on it, the impression was that Saudi universities do not provide a high level of quality of service

What are the methods used to evaluate the quality of student services in Saudi universities?

When asked about the ways that are utilised to assess the quality of student services in universities there are no known clear methods, such as questionnaires or otherwise. This means that universities do not have ways by which to assess the quality of student services.

How have Saudi universities responded to the implementation of quality strategies such as TQM?
Is the application of TQM perceived to be successful ?

To answer the above two questions, and according to the results of this study, the following is revealed:

- there is no general satisfaction with all the aforementioned services

- there is a wide gap between the higher and general education sectors
- universities do not provide the students with enough information
- university guides (for the services provided) are often not available
- the beneficiaries of the services have no role in evaluating these services
- treatment is unprofessional
- there are problems with the implementation of services
- students are not perceived (and treated) as clients at Saudi universities. Actually, university rules and regulations do not regard them as such
- buildings where services are provided are not near each other
- there is a very wide gap between the student expectations and what is actually offered to them. The services provided do not meet all the expectations of the students
- students are not represented in any of these services
- there are no measures for the quality of services
- students are not questioned regarding the quality of services
- university staff are not familiar with the concepts of TQM
- in the case of familiarity with TQM concepts, university staff do not implement it
- despite the existence of centres or offices for TQM, these centres are often accused of not performing their role. Therefore it is clear that the universities under study do not respond to the application of the concepts and strategies of TQM. It seems that the existence of TQM centres serve only as an image for universities so that they look like other modern organizations that apply the concepts of TQM. However, the results of this study show otherwise, and based on these results, the universities under study failed in implementing TQM concepts and strategies.

The relationship between universities and the labour market and the extent to which high education satisfies the needs of the labour market are regarded by the students, staff and employers as services that the universities provide. To answer the following question:

How have Saudi universities responded to the labour market?

The results of this study confirm that there is big gap in the relationship between the universities and the labour market. Universities do not cater for the needs of the labour market, and this was obvious from the high level of dissatisfaction with the university graduates. Students often complain that curricula taught in Saudi universities do not focus on training that would be beneficial to the labour market. Furthermore, students often complain that the curricula are not undergoing any development, and as this study showed: curricula development is faced with many obstacles. The main opposition to curricula development is often the university management, which in turn did not receive a satisfactory assessment according to the results of this study. Students stated that university management is not performing its role. Moreover, the policies of Saudi universities do not include (or even mention) anything about curricula development. Also, according to the results of this study, there is a wide gap in the communication and arrangement between the universities and the labour market. This starts with the admission of large numbers of students to courses in fields that are not needed by the labour market.

7.3 Recommendations

Below, the researcher presents recommendations. These are organised according to the previously discussed entities.

7.3.1 University management

The research has the following recommendations for the university management:

❖ Introducing radical changes to the structure of universities to suit the needs of local and international labour markets. This can be achieved by implementing a series of programmes, procedures, strategic plans for the short, medium and long-term through acceptance, assimilation, adaptation, finance and scientific research.

- ❖ Paying attention to the quality and improving it in universities by enhancing the internal efficiency of universities. This can be accomplished by ensuring the quality of education in the university.
- ❖ Establishing centres and institutions for measuring and evaluating in universities and also raising the external efficiency of universities, by adjusting the output of universities and verifying its quality and further ensuring proper accreditation of universities through the creation of accreditation bodies.
- ❖ Establishing external committees to monitor and assess the performance of universities.
- ❖ Allowing student representation in the various faculty and university boards.
- ❖ Utilising the Internet effectively, so that university web pages would be updated on a regular basis and would include enough information for the students.
- ❖ Stressing the importance of services for people with special abilities/needs.
- ❖ Providing a simple questionnaire on the university's website that asks the students and staff: "Are you satisfied with your performance? If you answer is no, how would you improve it?"
- ❖ Every university is encouraged to have a foreign "role model" university, so that every university would aspire to be like its role model.
- ❖ Universities are advised to build information networks with other universities, education forums and conferences with the aim being advancing and developing these universities.
- ❖ Continuous improvement of the university services and assisting all the staff to achieve high quality services.
- ❖ The university administration should continue to encourage and support the application of TQM strategies.
- ❖ Universities should establish an efficient communication system that includes feedback from the students and staff.

- ❖ Understanding the needs of those benefiting from the HE sector and trying to meet these needs.
- ❖ Conducting research on the topics of quality management in HE in Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ Learning from the success of distinguished universities in developed countries regarding the implementation of TQM strategies.
- ❖ The availability of written information booklets and guides to aid the students and staff in the process of developing the HE institutions to be able to fulfil the duties and tasked assigned to them.
- ❖ Gauging staff satisfaction every now and then.
- ❖ Relating the university's budget to the quality of its services.
- ❖ In the future, looking further into more research work regarding the quality of services at Saudi universities, and how quality is managed in Saudi HE institutions.
- ❖ The universities under study, and other universities, should benefit from the results of this study. This is especially true in the case of the quality of services to the students and TQM concepts.

7.3.2 Buildings

Re-planning and designing of buildings in university campuses and updating the infrastructure and taking the rising demand for HE into account so that the sizes of these institutions meet the future needs. This should be inclusive of all the equipment, laboratories, recreational facilities and even car parking for all attendees of the university.

7.3.3 Teaching and research

- ❖ Establishing scientific and academic links and relations with international universities.
- ❖ Be student-focused, providing proper care to ensure the student's development, and continuous assessment of the quality of services provided to the student bearing in mind that the student is the first and foremost client of the university. To ensure the implementation of

such concepts, these should be included in the university's rules and regulations.

❖ Developing and fostering creativity and excellence among the students and the teaching staff.

❖ Being research oriented and driven and training students on conducting research and critical thinking. To implement this, the research output of the universities should be one of the assessment methods.

❖ Participating in the modification and development of academic tracks toward a better future so that knowledge is spread and disseminated and trying to stay up-to-date regarding scientific developments in all fields.

❖ Trying to satisfy the needs of the labour market through available trained and qualified professionals.

❖ Studying thoroughly the problems and challenges the Saudi society is facing and analysing it as a step for finding suitable solutions.

❖ Teaching and promoting the concepts of quality and TQM in HE and fostering collaboration between universities and business organisations regarding TQM.

❖ Advancing the quality of HE and improving the training and qualifications of the staff in relation to the teaching process (teacher, course, professor, etc.).

❖ Focusing and improving the preparation curricula so that students would have an acceptable level in the basic subjects (science, maths, Arabic and English).

❖ Conducting a study on the development and training of teaching staff to improve their qualifications.

❖ Establishing accurate scientific assessment tools to evaluate the student's needs and levels.

❖ Changing the teaching techniques to more modern methods such as forming groups in the class.

7.3.4 Labour market

❖ Forming a team in every university to organise the effort of the universities in collaboration with the labour market, for example through the chambers of commerce.

❖ Trying to link the courses in the Saudi higher education sector and the graduates to the future economic benefits. This will make the student more aware of the requirements of the economic and social needs of the society.

❖ Ensuring that universities and hiring companies are in concert, so that the admission policies are related to the needs of the labour market.

❖ Initiating alumni associations and helping them to keep the students in a good relation with their institute through professional guidance and training.

7.3.5 Libraries

❖ Libraries should benefit and utilise high technology so that books could be loaned over the Internet, and journal articles are searched online. Also, libraries should have extended opening hours especially during exam periods.

❖ Improving the training and professionalism of the library workers so that they can deal and communicate with the library patrons in a kind and professional way.

7.3.6 Student affairs

❖ Re-evaluating the situation of the Deanship of Student Affairs and even considering the modification if its title under a central management for student services that would be housed in a single building. This new entity should not be responsible of the cultural and sport activities at universities.

7.3.7 Recommending the implementation of the new framework

❖ Implementing the proposed framework in this study and coordinating with the researcher (if needed). The researcher would be glad to assist in the implementation of such framework.

7.4 Proposed framework for managing the quality of services at Saudi universities

What framework for managing quality can be proposed based on the findings of the research?

To answer this question, this study suggests (according to the results presented) a framework for the quality management of services. Based on the results of the study that showed that the level of quality of the service offered in the Saudi universities under study is low and that the beneficiary of these services are not satisfied with the quality of these services. Thus, the proposed framework is divided into two parts: one section presents a model of a detailed framework to improve the quality of services provided for students. The second part of the framework proposes establishing a building for student services at universities. A detailed description is provided in Appendix T.

Below, the researcher lists the details of the proposed model for the framework to improve the quality of services provided to students at Saudi universities. For each service, the secondary services are identified and the suggestions are then clarified. Comments regarding quality assurance are given at the end. This information is provided in Table 34 below:

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
Registration and Admission services	**Admission**	Establish a unified admission system (similar to UCAS in the UK). Publish a web page for the Deanship of Admission and Registration at the university website which includes all the accurate details about the faculties, courses, curricula available, The admission requirements to each faculty, and an extensive frequently asked questions (FAQ) section.	Facilitating the paperwork and procedures to achieve the clients' satisfaction and benefit the student from the service, and also measuring the student's satisfaction continuously so that these services would always be improving.
		Establishing a strong connection between the Deanship of Admission and Registration in each university and secondary school in public education through the Office of Public Relations in every Deanship of Admission and Registration at the university. These should be linked to the deanship, and their duties include promoting the programmes of each university through various media including the issuance of a CD-ROM distributed to secondary schools that contains all the information needed by the student who wants to apply for university and post-submission and registration services.	
		Provide a website for students to apply to for admission and provide an opportunity for follow-up by the applicant.	
		Design a form for submission to be inclusive of all the information required for the university and the applicant and leave space for the student to justify his application to this or that college.	
		The Deanship of Admission and Registration should act as a coordinator and observer at the same time. After the acceptance from the college, then the Deanship of Admission and Registration should start its role in completing the actions required and it must provide a counter staffed by officials with the powers to resolve any problems that might face the student.	
	Registration	Registration is the second step after acceptance. This process involves choosing the modules and obtaining the course schedule for the students. Here all the information	

		regarding the modules (name, level, number of hours, lecturers, location) should be readily available at the proposed deanship office. The student should register online after obtaining permission to use the website. This can be done after the student has been already accepted on the course. Thus, the student would use the website provided by the Deanship of Admission and Registration to register themselves in modules and courses throughout their tenure at the university until he graduates. The website shall also provide information about results and grades.	
	Add & Drop	The student should be able to drop from a course if needs be and this should be available. Adding or dropping modules is the sole responsibility of the student; however, there shall be a deadline for doing this.	

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
Teaching Services	Since teaching is the most important service provided by universities, the framework for improving this service is as follows:		
		1. The ability to convey information to students: The university leadership should provide enough resources (financial, space, equipment) in all its forms and shapes (traditional and modern) to improve conveying the information to students. More training is also needed to improve the performance of the teaching staff by improving their methods and techniques since: ➤ The quality of any university is measured mainly by the quality of its teaching staff. ➤ Teaching has become a global field that is very advanced scientifically and technically. Thus, it is currently not enough to rely on the teacher's degree only. Other skills and training should be utilised as well. ➤ The whole teaching process needs to be redesigned, and teaching methods and techniques in Saudi Arabia should be shifted towards: ● Using a team of teachers instead of the one lecturer system. ● Other organisations should actively participate in the teaching process, rather than the universities only. ● Investing in the information technology through fruitful interaction between the university leadership and the teaching faculty on one hand, and the students on the other hand. This can be used in the evaluation process of the students so that live rather than later results are provided. ● Developing teachers to be leaders and advisors of the students rather than a monitor or supervisor, or just feeding information to the students in lectures.	Achieving teaching efficiency and assuring the client's satisfaction with the service and measuring the level of satisfaction of the student with the teaching services. Also, the student should be continuously consulted regarding the teaching service and his suggestions and recommendations should be taken into account as much as possible.

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		• Schools should have a more active participation scientifically and academically in the teaching process as well as other society entities such as consulting offices.	

2. Teaching techniques and methods:

Curricula are in dire need for renewal, improvement, and enhancement. With new curricula, the need for new techniques and methods, and these include:

➢ Ensuring that achieving the objective of the course is the main target, not only the administering of teaching details.

➢ Using information systems and technology to build a network for teaching between the teachers and the students.

➢ Teaching through investigating, experimenting and critical thinking. This approach is based on stating a hypothesis that seems to completely solve a problem. Then, students can try this solution in the laboratory or by implementation and see whether the hypothesis is true or not. Thus, lessons and conclusions can be draw from this process, whether this process was a success or not.

➢ Moving from teaching one subject in one module to teaching the same subject through a group of modules that are inter-related.

➢ Trying to teach the students in groups.

➢ Reordering the seating in classrooms so that students are equidistant from the lecturer and trying to use study circles.

➢ Changing the role of the teacher from a lecturer only to a facilitator or a trainer.

3. Abilities to building new curricula and its improvement: this requires continuous work and efforts to improve, develop and enhance the curricula and monitoring these curricula from the leadership of universities so that the following can be achieved:

▪ Abolishing courses that are too traditional or typical and starting new, fresh courses that are required by the labour market. These courses should include modern techniques and methods of learning, so that the graduates of these courses are competitive in the local and global markets.

▪ Using the concepts of an open curricula, where new and additional

		courses are uses as an academically added value for the student.	
		- Polishing the names and terminology of the courses so that they look attractive to the student. At the same time, this terminology should serve the purposes of the departments and colleges. - Use curricula that help the student to acquire skills and techniques. - Curricula should be modified to encourage and reward critical and creative thinking. - Curricula should also encourage the students to be problem solvers and debuggers. Students are also encouraged to do soul searching, thus identifying their own mistakes and then they can make decisions, face problems and dilemmas, have an insight in the future, and can utilise the information available to them in an efficient manner, each according to his specialty. - Curricula should enforce the creation of a scientific approach based upon the new information systems. - Planning the educational process requires the reliance on information technology to reach the analysis, design, application, management, and evaluation of education. The researcher proposes a model for the evaluation of teaching by observation Appendix U has an example of a Teaching Observation Form. Universities can develop this model as it suits their needs, goals and objectives. **4.** Scientific research: since universities and higher education and research institutes are beacons of light to the community in general, and since conducting scientific research is one of the goals of founding a university in the first place, it is crucial that academic leaders are aware of continuously improving the quality of scientific research conducted at Saudi universities. This can be achieved by: ➢ Ensure the importance of scientific research in order to ensure the advancement in various fields to be a tool of progress and knowledge. ➢ The university should adopt the concept of marketing its knowledge, services, ideas and expertise through the provision of services to various sectors of society by conducting research related to the development and solving the problems facing the private sector in all	

		shapes and forms.	
		➤ Relying on scientific research to improve and increase the productivity of various industrial, agricultural and commercial sectors.	
		➤ Establishing consultancy offices that are linked to the society through conducting workshops for the employers in various sectors of different specialties.	
		➤ Trying to find a reference that can be presented as an information bank that can benefit in conducting academic, scientific, and application research for all the researchers in Saudi Arabia and at all levels.	
		➤ Modifying the scientific research methods to suite the international technological advancement and methods using in information systems.	
		5. Utilising the technological abilities and talents: the university leadership is facing a huge challenged that requires quick dissemination of information and knowledge to improve all the university abilities in the following areas:	
		➤ Bypassing the limited space and time in the educational process.	
		➤ Enable the educational institutions to achieve optimal distribution and proliferation of its limited resources.	
		➤ Enable the educated people to interact electronically with each other on one hand and with the teacher on the other hand and through the means of e-mail, chat rooms, and interactive web pages in e-learning activities.	
		➤ Revive and promote a culture of self-learning and training in the community so as to improve and develop the capacity of teachers and learners and trainees with less effort and cost.	
		➤ Enhancing the sense of equality in the distribution of opportunities in the educational process between students, breaking the barrier of fear and anxiety in the traditional Saudi learning environment, enabling the students to express their ideas and the search for facts, information using fast, more feasible and efficient means, rather than the traditional standard methods used in the classrooms.	

| | | ➢ Exploiting the electronic means in the delivery of information, duties, and activities to the teachers and evaluating their performance. This alleviates part of the administrative burden and textbooks.
➢ Enabling the student of receiving a scientific material in a style that suits his capabilities through the visual, audio or reading material.
➢ The availability of a large information bank whose content is constantly updated with experiments, tests, exams, etc.
➢ To regard the Internet as an important source of development of information and knowledge and provide a way to facilitate using it by the student and professor and leadership in Saudi universities.

6. Evaluation of the performance capabilities: The performance evaluation is considered as one of the functions with high sensitivity that requires expertise, neutrality and finding a set of standards to identify the level of performance of a members of the teaching in their field of scientific research, community service, as well as to identify the performance of other employees in various departments of non-teaching staff who have a great impact on the success of the educational process in the college or department. The goal of the evaluation process is:
➢ Measure the performance of the functions and tasks of teaching. Most often, the success rate for students is the yardstick.
➢ To identify the extent to which faculty members utilise modern technology in the delivery of information to the students in Saudi universities.
➢ Measuring the contribution of the department, college or university in the service to society through production activities, and the mechanism for cooperation and consulting firms, and representing a work based on teams in the universities.
➢ Measuring the efficiency of the curriculum in achieving the goals of departments and colleges. | |

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
Library Services		➢ Building an information network for the contents of the library and provide a link to this website on the main university's website. This website should also include a section for the new additions to the library's collection. ➢ Linking every library in Saudi university's to local and international libraries. ➢ Allowing the users of these libraries to use their magnetic cards to borrow and return books electronically through an electronic machine. ➢ Exchange of services with other libraries and to provide the required references to the beneficiaries through participation in the sources of information. ➢ Designing rooms with enough computer systems and photo copying machines that the students and staff can use. ➢ Ensuring the presence of facilities for people with special abilities.	Facilitate and achieve a heightened quality of service with the consent of the beneficiary of the library services and measure the student's satisfaction through a survey on a regular basis and taking the proposals for improving the service into account.

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
The Services of the Deanship of Student Affairs	Rewards	➢ Depositing the monetary rewards in the student's account after asking him to open a bank account, and changing the current method where the student has to stand in a long queue to reach the window and get the check for the reward and then go and stand in another queue at the bank to deposit the check in his account. ➢ The Rewards Management should be under the financial department rather than under the Deanship of Student Affairs. ➢ Finding an external consulting firm that is willing to overview this matter and monitor everything related to the students' rewards. This firm shall also present reports about the service and recommendations for its improvement.	Facilitate and achieve a heightened quality of service at the Deanship of Student Affairs with the consent of the beneficiary of the service and measuring the student's satisfaction through surveys on a regular basis regarding the extent of satisfaction with the service and taking the proposals for improving the service into account.
	Housing	➢ Contracting with companies specialising in cleaning and maintenance of residential buildings. ➢ Ensuring the availability of security and first aid kits, and also the means for entertainment and shopping. ➢ Giving the student the opportunity to choose a fellow roommate and preferably of a similar major academic disciplines (which has an academic advantage) and to guarantee absolute privacy of the student. ➢ Having clear and accurate wording for the housing contract (terms and conditions). ➢ Offering first aid training courses to the students. ➢ Making sure that the wardens are of the highest quality and ensuring their training is adequate.	
	Dining (nutrition)	➢ Contracting with outside companies that are specialised in the nutrition field and assigning a university department to monitor the quality of food presented to the students.	

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
Medical services		➢ Cancelling medical departments at each university and including them all under the university hospital. ➢ Coordination with the Ministry of Health to open a clinic at each university following the provision of suitable premises from the university to serve the students and staff of the university, as well as the residents of the university neighbourhood.	Unifying the procedures, reducing the cost, ensuring high quality of the medical service by the satisfaction of the beneficiary of the service and measuring the student's satisfaction through surveys on a regular basis regarding the extent of satisfaction with the service and taking the proposals for improving the service into account.

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
General Services	Laboratories	➤ Contract with specialised companies to clean, maintain and prepare the laboratories especially the laboratories of the applied sciences colleges. These companies should also provide the laboratories with safety equipment and a university department should monitor its work. ➤ The contracting companies are provided with a full schedule of the times of using the labs, the kinds of material and experiments that are needed, so that the lab would be ready one the students come to do their work.	Serving effectively to achieve quality through the maintenance of student time, ease of control, accountability, reducing the material cost, and achieving the beneficiary's satisfaction and measuring student satisfaction through surveys conducted regularly, regarding the extent of satisfaction and taking into account proposals for improvement.
	Buildings	➤ Redesigning and re-planning the university buildings and university campuses and improving them, and taking the future expansion of the higher education sector into account, so that the current size of university campuses is large enough to accommodate the future growth. ➤ Consolidating the university buildings in the centre of the campus so that all the users of these buildings can utilise the services available in the other buildings with ease and efficiency. ➤ A specialised company should be contracted to maintain and clean these buildings, and the redecoration or refurbishment of these buildings should be conducted during the summer months or during other holidays so not to disturb the students and staff. ➤ Ensuring that the buildings are accessible by people with special abilities. ➤ Providing these buildings with all the facilities for the comport of the users, and providing cameras for safety and security purposes, and also ensuring quality landscape outside these buildings.	
	Car parking	➤ Designing buildings with acceptable specifications to be used by car drivers as car parking after paying some fees. ➤ Using any available spacing with the campus as rented car parks. ➤ Investing the income from car parking into improving these parking lots and maintaining them.	

Service	Secondary service	Recommendations	Quality assurance measures
University Administration	Management capabilities	This is regarded as one of the most important capabilities in the university leadership since this is the strategy that the university uses in order to improve and advance itself. These capabilities have a direct and active relationship with the duties and powers that are in the hands of the university leadership in the management, financial, scientific fields. Thus, it requires a continuous revision to ensure that it is up to date and its performance is constantly improving and achieving the goals of the university.	Improving the level of the service and finding means to measure in an effective way the level of satisfaction. Also, ensuring the quality of services through the satisfaction of the beneficiary and measuring student satisfaction through surveys that are conducted on a regular basis regarding the extent of satisfaction with the service and taking the proposals for improving the service into account.
	Decentralisation	The top administration at Saudi universities should grant wider administrative and financial powers to colleges, departments, and mid-level and executive departments.	
	Quality	Establishing a quality management department that has a clear mission in all the university departments and services. This department should be constantly revising the rules and regulations of the university and suggestion solutions for financial and management problems at the university, provided that every university should have a clear goal and mission.	
	Strategy	Each university should have clear written strategy that all the staff follow and it is the duty of Department of Quality to ensure its implementation.	
	Student Representation	University boards should be restructures so that students are represented in these boards after establishing a student's union at each university.	

	Legal Rights	Universities must make way for the prosecution of those who harmed the students or staff.	
	Accountability	Accounting and internal questioning should have a clear and effective role in the university, and there shall be an external entity that has the power to question and hold the university accountable regarding its overall performance.	
	Information Bank	Maintaining a central archive that serves as an information bank including all the successful and failed experiments and procedures in the university. These should be documented in detail so that they can be benefited from in the future and researchers can use them when they desire.	

Table 34 Details of proposed framework.

7.5 The contribution of this study

The researcher would like to note that building new knowledge in any society should be a domestic industry because it is difficult to apply the imported concepts of other societies, unless this process is supported by a deep understanding of these concepts. In this regard, this study contributes to the construction of knowledge that can be applied in a growing and developing society. Although the qualitative sample in this study may be considered small, the quantitative interview schedule was developed from the results of focus group discussions and a substantial response to a quantitative questionnaire. The researcher acknowledges that the small quantitative sample is representative only of the viewpoints of certain individuals, however their views have contributed significant knowledge to the reality of managing quality in Saudi HE.

The contributions this study has made are effective in a number of categories.

Empirical/practical

Based on the findings of this research this study has identified opportunities to improve the quality of services in HE institutions. It has provided an insight into the perception of students' views as customers in their universities' academic environment. The perceived gap between provision and expectation has identified a disparity in management expertise and the development of universities as efficient and effective organisations. Students perceive universities as organisations that will prepare them for their future careers however a mismatch, between what the universities provide and what the labour-market needs, has been identified. The study reveals a major gap between the higher education sector and other sectors, especially the labour market. This study identified that TQM in the Saudi universities under study, is being inefficiently implemented. Universities are not performing their role and offering the proper services to their students. This study provides a model framework for action that may improve the quality of services provided by universities.

Knowledge

Despite a paucity of literary studies dealing with the quality of student services generally and more specifically in Saudi universities. This study has made a major contribution to filling this gap. This research work provides a greater understanding of the concept of quality of student services. Taking into account the motivation and the results of this research, it is noted that this study contributes to the expansion of knowledge in its field in general. Thus, the results may be applied in any country; however its special focus is Saudi Arabia. This is the first study of its kind in a conservative society that focuses comprehensively on university aspects that are of interest for Saudi society.

Methodology

This design of this study provides a solid foundation for future studies and research efforts. Using mixed method research to investigate the management of quality of services in HE from three perspectives contributes to methodological processes.

This study was able to involve a sample of participants (students, officials and businessmen) openly within a conservative culture. This research followed steps from qualitative to quantitative and to qualitative again for collecting data; this can be considered innovative.

7.6 The limitations of the study

There are some factors which limited this study. Since, this study was carried out in the Saudi society which is conservative, the respondents were sensitive, and the researcher faced some problems in collecting information. In several instances, arranged interviews were cancelled at the last minute and without expressed cause. In other instances, interviews were cancelled while being conducted and thus were not completed. Again, the reasons given were not realistic due to conflicts of interested (job or family relationships). Often respondents were hesitant to talk and they would ask (several times) to view the identity and research documents and permission details carried by the

researcher. Respondents would also change their opinions in the same interview, numerous times, in an attempt to be politically correct as much as possible. Another type of problem is that the researcher needed to go through so many bureaucratic procedures that were long and complicated to obtain permits to collect information from universities. The researcher encountered another problem which is that some of the respondents would easily divert from the subject and delve into personal or family matters that are not related to the research point. This often left the researcher struggling. On one hand, the Arab culture calls on providing people with the most possible hospitality and letting them speak their minds. On the other hand, the researcher had time constraints. As a result, and to be able to conduct interviews, the researcher often went over the allocated time. Additionally, people in Saudi Arabia are generally shy, and the researcher needed to spend some time "ice-breaking" to initiate the interview. Interviews would also be interrupted by religious reasons such as the call for prayers. The interviewees would go to perform the prayer with a congregation. This would either be within the same building or in another one, and this would take 20-25 minutes. Additionally, those interviews at their work place were often interrupted by students, clients or even friends. In this case, and according to the Arab culture, the interviewee would invite those coming over until he finishes the interview. The presence of a third party in the interview negates its confidentiality and thus the answers might be given in line with the third party. Also, due to the hot Saudi weather, the researchers tried to schedule the interviews in the morning (if the interviewee's time permitted). Thus, the number of conducted interviews per day was limited. Finally, and due to cultural and religious reasons, the researcher was not able to interview females (students or staff) who are benefiting from the university services.

7.7 Future work

The importance, impact and contributions of this study were presented previously. Nevertheless, these can form important pillars for constructing a new framework of ideas for future studies. This is true especially if every service of the services provided by Saudi universities is considered individually, along with ways to manage the quality of this service. Moreover,

future studies could investigate the quality of each service in a deeper manner and at each university separately in an independent manner. Based on the outcome of this study and the framework for the quality management proposed herein, it is suitable initiate its implementation in the Saudi university under study and other public and private Saudi universities that were not included in this study. The researcher believes that the framework proposed in this study will guide future researchers into proposing more advanced frameworks that can be compared and contrasted with the one proposed herein. In order to implement the results of this study, the researcher suggests that future studies consider the four universities considered here (or others). Also, the recommendations presented here could be further studied and refined so that a final set of optimised regulations can be obtained.

More importantly, since the researcher could not interview females (students or staff), he strongly suggests conducting a study on the quality of services provided by Saudi universities based on gender and then comparing the results with the results of this study. Also, the level of satisfaction of the students only, or staff only, or business people only could form the basis of a new study. Also, the quality of performance of the university management, and the issues of accountability, budget and disbursement, the role played by stakeholders, form a rich field for future studies.

Furthermore, the relationship between Saudi universities and international universities, and international community organisations is worth future study. The relationship and relevance of Saudi universities to the local and international labour markets is also worth future studies. Also because this study was limited to four areas represented by the four universities in Saudi Arabia, it is possible to study all the universities in ever region. This can be conducted by a government agency such as the Ministry of Higher Education, and perhaps beyond the scope of Saudi society to study the quality of services provided in the universities of the Arab Gulf, the Arab World or any international university if the conditions and circumstances are similar. Thus, this research effort is nothing but a starting point in a long path, and the researcher here prefers using "action research," especially in studies related

to the implementation of the recommendations and establishing a framework for action. This approach will bring the expected results better because the researcher will be part of the problem to be studied and therefore will be a researcher would belong to the institute he/she is trying to study. Thus, the researcher will be able to deal with the research problem at the faculty, department, deanship or university levels.

7.8 Conclusion

Chapter 8 reviewed the findings and recommendations of the study and proposed a framework for improving the quality of services provided to students at Saudi universities. The chapter presented the results of the study, which was built on the premise that students are not satisfied with the quality of service provided to them at Saudi universities and the validity of this hypothesis was proven through the results of the study. This was achieved by answering the research questions through the views of the students, university and businessmen that have revealed an imbalance in the performance of the services represented in the following services: acceptance and admission, registration, teaching, libraries, Deanship of Student Affairs, students, medical and general services. Furthermore, the study showed that there are no known methods to evaluate those services. Universities do not recognise the fact that students are clients or partners in their performance. Moreover, the relationship between the university and the labour market is not optimal. There is a huge communication gap between Saudi universities and the local and global labour markets.

The study also recommended that the university administration identify and reorder its priorities. Then, the proposed recommendations were presented and these were categorised per every service. The study then recommended a framework for the management of quality of these services and included details of this framework. The chapter is concluded with the contributions of this work, a brief explanation of the limitations of this study, the problems faced by the researcher when conducting this research, and ideas for future work.

The population of Saudi Arabia

The first census was in 1974 and since then, a considerable rise in the population has occurred. The first census estimated the population at just 7 million, of whom 6.2 million were Saudis, (89 % of the total population). The census in 1992 indicated that the population had increased to 16.9 million, 12.3 million of whom were Saudis, with 4.6 million expatriates. The population continued to rise at an average rate of 2.5 % per year. The 2004 census showed a population of 22.6 million including 16.5 million Saudis and 6.1 million non-Saudis. The proportion of non-Saudis was about the same as in 1992, representing just over a quarter of the total population

The make-up of the population by age

According to 2004 estimates, the younger age group (below 15 years of age) made up 40.4 % of the total population with half the population is being under 17.3 years (Kingdom of Saudi, 2005-2009). The age structure indicates strong dynamics, with significant socio-economic and demographic implications.

The make-up of the population by regions

Of the thirteen administrative regions, Riyadh, Makkah and the Eastern Region, account for 64.5 % of the total population. The population in Riyadh increased from 7500 in 1862 to 169,000 one hundred years later (Riyadh City Planning Office). By 1982 the estimate was 1.5 million and by 1985, the figure exceeded 2 million. In 1999, it had reached 3.4 million and in 2000 it was 4.7 million. It was expected to reach 6 million by 2007 (ArRiyadh, 2006).

The phases of education leading to university entry. Significant elements of each phase are identified.

School phase	Date of establishment	Curriculum	School and pupil and teacher numbers	Qualifications
Pre-school Age range 3 to 6 years	**1966**-private sector in Riyadh **1980**- included in girls' general education	Activity education and participation	**1988** - 425 school and 41,930 pupils	
Primary Age range 6 to 12 years		Curriculum based on Islamic values and should balance between pupils' ability levels and general aims of education. 2005 teaching of English introduced	**2005 - Boys** 6453 schools, 1,241,840 pupils and 99,630 teachers **2005 - Girls** 6555schools, 1,143,661 pupils and 105,621 teachers	Primary school students are graded according to annual examination results.
Middle school (Intermediate phase) Age range 12 to 15 years		Study of Islam and different religions, the Arabic language, grammar, history, geography, mathematics, science, and English. Same for girls and boys, except that girls have a domestic science subject while the boys have physical education	**2005 - Boys** 3,719 school, 574,000 pupils and 48,678 teachers. **2005 - Girls** 3,194 schools, 504,000 pupils and 51,305 teachers.	Students are accepted at middle school if they have a certificate to show that they have finished elementary school. Movement from year to year requires examination success, ending with pupils achieving the Intermediate Education Certificate.
Secondary schools Age range 15 to 18 years		Students must choose their future path such as literary or scientific.	**2005-Boys** 2,060 schools, 465,822 students and 36,249 teachers. **2005- Girls** 1974 schools, 426309 pupils and 38,872 teachers	Students entering this stage must hold a certificate from middle school
University 18+				Students who want to study at university level have to gain a secondary education certificate. The exams in the final year are set by the Ministry of Education for boys and by the Presidency for girls

Education policy in Saudi Arabia

Saudi education policy and curriculum developed along the lines of neighbouring countries. The Ministry of Education's established policy, insisted on education at whatever quality and subsequently quality for the growing number of students. Equality of opportunity goes hand in hand with social identity. Skill and confidence are required to produce researchers and scientific thinkers. Physical as well as mental health are factors of successful education, along with interest in other cultures and positive attitudes and learning foreign languages (Alhamed et al., 2005).

In order to understand the philosophy of the education system in Saudi Arabia, it is important to know that it is based on the following standards formulated by the Council of Ministries (Alsunbal et al., 1997).

The first educational policy document was issued in 1970 and included the following principles:

- Sound beliefs and manners
- Equal educational opportunities
- Islam at the core of all sciences
- Scientific education
- Development
- Humanity
- Social responsibility
- Management (Alhamed et al., 2005)

Islamic objectives

Islam is the most powerful factor in the Saudi education system (Alasmari, 2005) and it shapes the curriculum at all stages (Alsunbal et al.,1997). Religion promotes human development by encouraging students to learn and to open their minds to discover the universe. Students must have a comprehensive understanding of their religion. The educational system covers the values and ideals of the faith.

Educational objectives and skills development

While the overall rate of illiteracy (10 years old and above) has declined considerably, illiteracy does vary considerably from region to region

(Kingdom of Saudi, 2005-2009). In the 1990/1995 Five Year Plan, 18 percent of total government spending was allocated to education. This vital sector has always been of concern to the Saudi government (Saudi Arabian Information Centre, 1996, pp. 8-15). National policy focuses on population dynamics, the health services, health conditions, education, future challenges, the labour market and employment opportunities, opportunities for women in education and work, environmental considerations and population databases.

Students should be prepared to understand the country's cultural, economic and social problems and participate in their solutions. In addition, students should learn to appreciate achievement in the fields of science, literature and mathematics, and to contribute to humanity. The Saudi curriculum covers Arabic, science, mathematics, history, geography, drawing, physical training and Islamic culture. There are five elements to the Islamic culture curriculum at every level of general education; these are the holy Quran, Hadeeth, Tafseer, Tawheed, and Fiqah (Alhamed et al., 2005; Alhoqail, 1994).

Students should develop their skills in many aspects, such as observation, meditation, scientific thinking and research (Alsunbal et al., 1997). The objectives of the education policy are to improve students' skills, which are very important, because these skills enable them to fulfil an active role in building a social life and steering it in the right direction.

Universities fully funded by the Saudi government

Name of University	Year of Establishing	Location	Number of Colleges	Students In 2003	Teaching Staff In 2003
Um Al-Qura	1980	Makkah	15	26,559	1,305
The Islamic	1961	Medina	6	6,473	471
Imam Mohammed Bin Saud	1974	Riyadh	14	28,401	1,333
King Saud	1957	Riyadh	28	60,868	3,093
King Abdulaziz	1972	Jeddah	17	57,899	2,284
King Fahad	1975	Dahran	11	9,764	933
King Faisal	1975	Al-Ahsa	14	15,659	904
King Khalid	1999	Abha	17	11,146	811
Qassim	2004	Buraidah	15	14,650	562
Taibah		Almadinah	12	8,486	362
Taif		Taif	9	8,686	165
Jazan	2005	Jazan	6	Not applicable	Not applicable
Al-Jouf	2005	Al-Jouf	5	Not applicable	Not applicable
Hail	2005	Hail	5	Not applicable	Not applicable
Al-Baha	2005	Al-Baha	4	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tabuk	2006	Tabuk	4	Not applicable	Not applicable
Najran	2006	Najran	4	Not applicable	Not applicable
Girls	2006	Riyadh	6	Not applicable	Not applicable
King Saud Bin Abdulaziz		Riyadh	4	Not applicable	Not applicable
Alhudood Alshamaliyah Colleges		Alhudood Alshamaliyah	6	Not applicable	Not applicable

Source: (Abalhassan, 2007)

Higher education by geographical region

Region	Number of higher education colleges
Riyadh	47
Makkah	38
Madinah	20
Qasim	14
Eastern	28
Asir	16
Tabouk	6
Hail	5
Northern Border	3
Jizan	6
Najran	5
Al-Baha	4
Al- Jouf	10
Total : 13	Total :202

Private universities and colleges

Name of institute	Establishment of Year	Location
Prince Sultan University	2001	Riyadh
Prince Mohammed bin Fahad	2006	Alkhuber
The Arab/British Open University	2004	Riyadh
Dar Elhekmah College	2001	Jeddah
Effat College	2001	Jeddah
Prince Sultan College for Tourism & Business	2001	Abha
Al-Baha College of Science	2001	Al-Baha
College of Business Administration	2005	Jeddah
Fakeih College of Nursing & Medical Science	2005	Jeddah
Riyadh College of Dentistry and Pharmacy	2005	Riyadh
Ibn Sina National College for Medical Studies	2005	Jeddah
Al-Yamamah College	2005	Riyadh
Qassim College	2006	Qassim
Prince Fahad bin Sultan College	2006	Tabuk
Prince Sultan College for Tourism& Business	2006	Jeddah
Batterjee Medical College	2007	Jeddah
Saad College	2007	Al-Khobar

Source:(Abalhassan, 2007; Education, 2005)

Focus group questions

1-What are the most important problems that university students face?

2-What are the most important services that the university provide for the student?

3What are the procedures that the students have to go through to get that service in the university?

4-How do the students become satisfied with the presented service?

5-Does the student have enough information about the university before they apply?

6-Thank you for your co-operation and your interaction, we have covered a lot of services through this good discussion. So can we classify the provided services to students from universities in order to the name the services?

7-We have successfully classified the services, do we agree that we make all the problems into groups under a category?

Selection and acceptance

1. Was your subject your first choice?

2. Career prospects were taken into consideration?

3. University's acceptance procedures were simple?

4. Before you applied did university provide you with information?

5. What do you know about the labour market?

Programmes

1. How about the programs in your area of study?

2. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the courses?

Skills and attributes

1. Can we describe the methods that the university used to prepare students for the future?

2. Can we name the skills that we feel the most important to student?

Communication and Sources of information

1. Information from university was trusted by student?

2. Are you satisfied with the services; that provided by university?

3. Student as customer what does this word mean to you?

Library

How we would describe the library?

Deanship of Student Affairs

How we would describe the Deanship of Student Affairs?

General

How would we describe the general quality of services at university?

Summary of the focus group finding:

There was list of many problems that students faced at universities the researcher after categorised them as result of Focus group interviews

The categories of the services were the following:

 Academic; administrative; sportive; culture; hosing; catering service buildings; facilities financial; other. Also there were some issues such as time management, the fairness, and coop with life, employment, the relationship between students and teachers, exams system, teaching. And the order of these services   was :The Deanship of Students affairs ; such as (Activities, Housing, Allowances, Catering);The Deanship of Students affairs ; such as (Activities, Housing, Allowances, Catering) ;Teaching ; such as (curriculum, teachers, technology, teaching style, exams, research);Library ; such as (Lending, photocopying, Availability of References, another facilities);Deanship of admission and registration ; such as (admission, registration, Timetable, Add and drop, Postponed),General ; such as (Buildings, Parking, Rest areas, prayer rooms)medicines, consults, refer to the hospital)and Motivation of distinguish students such as (rewards, special ;, bonuses)

 - Students are not satisfied with; of allowance and its management also it does not meet the student needs
- Students are not satisfied with hosing and catering
-students are not satisfied with courses
-students are not satisfied with specialists because they forced to study   program upon on their percentage in high school
-students are not satisfied with academic counselling
-students are not satisfied with registry procedures

-students are not satisfied with the teachers' behaviour against the student

-students are not satisfied with teachers' overemphasis on memorization

-students are not satisfied with need more development and recreation on the campus

-students are not satisfied with no regular transportation to the university

-students are not satisfied with roommate such as make fun, bothered by peers smoking habits and noisy

-students are not satisfied with school is far from dormitory

-students are not satisfied with worrying of the future regarding not find job, needing to training, not graduation or let graduation

-students are not satisfied with university teaching of the dialogue

-students are not satisfied with difficulty getting books required references

-students are not satisfied with simple guides to use library

-students are not satisfied with difficulties to gain hand notes to the curses

-students are not satisfied with write note with lectures because they are very speed

-students are not satisfied with the teachers' performance because they are very upset and not active at classes

-students are not satisfied with their subject because it's not welcome from society

-students are not satisfied with the university role to build the student confidante to ask questions and discuss issues

-students are not satisfied with the annoying environment beside teaching building which prevent student to concentrate as a result of instructors works

-students are not satisfied with the language used by teacher to teach courses such English language even students are not good at English language

- -students are not satisfied with the teachers hesitated when they explain
-students are not satisfied with have difficulties communicating

-students are not satisfied with privacy in housing halls and some staff inter to the room with out advance notes

-students are not satisfied with tidy laboratories and time of the laboratories

Tools to measure students satisfaction

Also some students suggested that it's very important factors to success to gain student satisfaction on the provided students; is to find tools to measure this satisfaction such as questionnaires.

Recurring themes from interviews

number	Topic
1	Students career and labour market
2	Curriculum
3	Student career and student study at university
4	Extracurricular programmes and practical training
5	Preferred sector
6	University and the labour market
7	Employment services
8	Employers
9	university knowledge in relation with labour market
10	skills by students and staff
11	Differences between students and staff perceptions in skills issue
12	universities services
13	administrative services
14	administrative services and the gap
15	academic (teaching) services
16	students learning
17	services provided by Deanship of Student affairs
18	Role of the Deanship of Student Affairs
19	Sport services
20	Cultural services
21	Housing services
22	Catering service
23	financial services
24	The relations office in Deanship of Student Affairs
25	Facilities services
26	Buildings services
27	Car park services
28	Transportation services
29	University Website services
30	Library services
31	Universities management
32	Ambiguity
33	Transparent
34	External agency
35	Control and assessment universities
36	Universities and other agencies
37	University Role
38	Role of the teacher's at university
39	Evaluation system of the services at universities
40	Strategic planning at the university
41	Resistance
42	University commitment (leadership)
43	Total quality management (TQM)

44	University annual Reports
45	Students
46	Student representative at universities
47	The role of students
48	Students as customers
49	Students' expectations
50	The relationships between the student and the university
51	Competition
52	Competition by staff
53	Choice of a university
54	Student services
55	The concept of student services
56	Mechanism of students services
57	Differences between universities and managing students services
58	Fund of student services
59	Assessment of student services
60	Student Services provided at the faculty level Model
61	Student Services provided at the Deanship of Student Affairs level model
62	Stakeholders

86 item survey (English)

First: general information

1- Age

☐18-less than 20 ☐20-less than 22☐ 22-less than 24 ☐24-less than 26 ☐More than 26

2- Gender

☐ Male   ☐ Female

3- Year of entering the university

☐2004   ☐2005   ☐2006   ☐2007

4-Studing level

☐First ☐second ☐third ☐fourth ☐fifth ☐sixth

5- The college type

☐ Islamic ☐Humanities ☐ Management ☐ Science ☐ Agriculture ☐Medicine

☐ Engineering ☐ Education ☐ Social Science ☐ Other

6- The university

☐King Saud University ☐King Abdul-Aziz University   ☐King Faisal University ☐King Khalid University

SECOND: THE SERVICES LIST

Could you please put the services below in order according to the most important to you so that number (1) opposite the most important and number (2) opposite the following important service and then number (3) and so on opposite the following important service and then number (3) and so on

Kind of Service	Category
The Deanship of Students affairs services such as (Activities, Housing, Allowances, Catering)	
Teaching services such as (curricula, teachers, technology, teaching style, exams, research)	
Library services such as (Lending, photocopying, Availability of References, another facilities)	
Deanship of admission and registration services such as (admission, registration, timetable, Add and drop, Postponed	
General Services such as (Buildings, Parking, Rest areas, prayer rooms)	
Medical Services such as (Medical examination, medicines, consultations, referrals to the hospital)	
Motivation of distinguish students such as (rewards, special services, bonuses)	
Dealing with students with a good behaviour by staff	
Availability of internet services	
Others (please write it)	

Third: Evaluation of quality of services

Please put (✓) In front of the item that represents your satisfaction

To what extent are you satisfied with the quality of student services provided at your University as bellow?	(1) Not very satisfied	(2) Not satisfied	(3) Not satisfied to some extent	(4) satisfied	(5) Very satisfied
services of deanship of admission					
1-Quality of admission procedures					
2- Quality of registration procedures					
3-suitability of Timetable with student needs					
4-Simplicity of the procedure of adding and dropping the courses					
5-Simplicity of the procedure of suspending and re-enrolment					
6-The commitment of improving the quality of services					
7-Time-consuming to gain admission and registration services					
8-Quality of teacher performance in his subject					
9-Teaching style of the subject teacher					
10-Quality of teaching technology					
11-Covering of all course syllable in the time					
12-The evaluation system of students in the university					
13-Attending of teaching member to the class on time					
14-Attending of teaching member for all the classes					
15-Time –consuming in checking student attendance in the class					
16-Quality of teaching member in treatment with students					
17-Quality of teaching member efforts to solve students academic problems					
18- quality of teaching member in engorging students to do research					
19- quality of university curriculums out put to help you after your graduated in work marke					
20-The developing of your subject curriculums					
21- the developing of performance of teaching member by university					
22- the college follow up to the student progress					
23- quality of program to motivate					

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the distinguish students					
24- the number of students in the class					
25- the exam time to each course					
26- the number of computers to the students					
27- the determine of references by teaching member for the course					
28- the comply of teaching member in office hours					
29- the term time					
30- the quality of university curriculums t o develop the student critical thinking					
31- the quality of university curriculums t o develop the student innovation thinking					
32- the implementation of team work by teaching member in the class					
33- the role of student by evaluating teaching member					
library services					
34- the new books in university library					
35- the availability of needing references in the university library					
36-the quality of lending system in the university library					
37- the new periodical in university library					
38- the quality of the computer system in library job at university					
39- librarian performance by helping and directing the students					
40- librarians knowledge to the library content at university library					
41- the student treatment by the library staff at university					
42- the work hours at university library					
43- the library location and size at university					
44- the quality of research services provided by library at university					
services of deanship of students					
45-Quality of sport activities					
46-Quality of cultural activities					
47-Quality of social activities					
48-Allowance delivery time					
49-Student housing appearance					
50-Criteria of choosing students in the rooms					
51- Quality of housing service					
52-Quality of housing cleaning					
53-Housing distance from the					

university					
54- Number of students in the room					
55- Closing time of the housing gates					
56- the role of the student deanship by solving student problem					
57- quality of administrative procedures in the student deanship					
58- the student treatment by the student deanship staff at university					
medical services :					
59-Quality of available medical services needed to students at university					
60-medical services time to students at university					
61-Quality of medical services provided to students at university					
62- the student treatment by the medical staff at university					
general services:					
63- the university dealing with me as a customer					
64- the close distance to all student services buildings at university					
65- the availability of the internet services at university					
66- quality of the guidelines to gain the services at university					
67- the quality of the provided services at university with the exact expectations					
68- the quality of the role of the university to consult me about my needing of services					
69- the quality of evaluation tools at the university to study my satisfaction about the provided services					
70- the university role of avoiding mistakes with the student services					

1- العمر

☐ (1) 18_أقل 20   ☐ (2) من 20 _ أقل من 22   ☐ (3) من 22 _أقل من 24

☐ (4) 24_ أقل من 26   ☐ (5) من 26 _ أو أكثر

2- الجنس

☐ (1) ذكر   ☐ (2) أنثى

3- سنة دخول الجامعة

☐ (1) 2004   ☐ (2) 2005   ☐ (3) 2006   ☐ (4) 2007

4- المستوى الدراسي

☐ (1) الأول   ☐ (2) الثاني   ☐ (3) الثالث   ☐ (4) الرابع   ☐ (5) الخامس   ☐ (6) السادس

5- مسمى الكلية

☐ (1) دراسات إسلامية (الشريعة/الدعوة وأصول الدين)

☐ (2) علوم إنسانية (الآداب/ اللغة العربية / العلوم الاجتماعية)

☐ (3) علوم إدارية (الاقتصاد والإدارة / الإدارة الصناعية)

☐ (4) علوم طبيعية (العلوم التطبيقية /علوم الحاسب والمعلومات)

☐ (5) علوم زراعية (الزراعة / الزراعة والطب البيطري / الطب البيطري والثروة الحيوانية / الزراعة والاغذية)

☐ (6) علوم طبية (الطب / العلوم الطبية المساعدة /الصيدلة / طب الاسنان/ العلوم الطبية)

☐ (7) علوم هندسية (الهندسة / تصاميم البيئة / العمارة والتخطيط)

☐ (8) تربية

☐ (9) علوم اجتماعية

☐ (10) أخرى(.................)

6- الجامعة

☐ (1) جامعة الملك سعود   ☐ (2) جامعة الملك عبد العزيز   ☐ (3) جامعة الملك فيصل   ☐ (4) جامعة الملك خالد

ثانياً : قائمة الخدمات

فضلاً رتب الخدمات الأتية حسب اهميتها للطالب بحيث تضع رقم (1) امام الخدمة الأهم حسب وجهة نظرك

ورقم (2) للخدمة التي تليها بالأهمية ثم رقم (3) وهكذا ...

الترتيب	نوع الخدمة
	خدمات عمادة شوؤن الطلاب مثل: (انشطه،اسكان،مكافأت،تغذيه)
	خدمات التدريس مثل:(مناهج،اساتذه،تقنيات،اسلوب التدريس،اختبارات،بحوث)
	خدمات المكتبة مثل:(الأعاره،التصوير،توفر المراجع ،تسهيلات اخرى)
	خدمات عمادة القبول والتسجيل مثل:(القبول،التسجيل،الجداول،الحذف،الاضافة،التأجيل)
	الخدمات العامة مثل:(المباني،المواقف،الإستراحات،التجهيزات،المصليات)
	الخدمات الطبية مثل:(الكشف،الأدوية،الأستشارات،التحويل للمستشفى)
	تحفيز الطلاب المتفوقين مثل:(منح جوائز ،خدمات مميزه،مكافأت تشجيعية)
	حسن التعامل مع الطلاب من قبل منسوبي الجامعة
	توفر خدمات الأنترنت للطلاب
	اخرى(فضلا اذكرها)

ثالثاً : قياس الرضا عن الخدمات

فضلاً ضع اشارة (✓) امام العبارة التي تمثل درجة رضاك عن كل خدمة

(1) غير راض أبداً	(2) غير راض	(3) غير راض الى حد ما	(4) راضي	(5) راضي تماماً	العبارة
				الرأي	
					أ- خدمات عمادة القبول والتسجيل :
					1- هل انت راض عن جودة اجراءات القبول
					2- مامدى رضاك عن جودة اجراءات التسجيل
					3- هل انت راض عن مناسبة الجداول الدراسيه مع احتياجات الطالب
					4- مامدى رضاك عن سهولة اجراءات الحذف والإضافة
					5- مامدى رضاك عن سهولة اجراءات التأجيل واعادة القيد
					6- مامدى رضاك عن وفاء عمادة القبول والتسجيل بما تعد به الطالب من جودة لخدماتها
					7- هل انت راض عن الوقت المستغرق في الحصول على خدمات القبول والتسجيل
					ب- خدمات التدريس :
					8- مامدى رضاك عن جودة اداء عضو هيئة التدريس في مادته العلمية
					9- مامدى رضاك عن مناسبة الاسلوب المتبع من عضو هيئة التدريس في تدريس المادة
					10- مامدى رضاك عن جودة الوسائل التقنية المستخدمة في التدريس
					11- مامدى رضاك عن تغطية كامل المنهج للماده في الوقت المخصص من قبل عضو هيئة التدريس
					12- مامدى رضاك عن نظام تقييم الطلاب بالجامعة
					13- مامدى رضاك عن التزام عضوهيئة التدريس بالحضور الى القاعة في الوقت المحدد
					14- مامدى رضاك عن التزام عضو هيئة التدريس في حضور

الرأي					العبارة
(1) غير راض أبداً	(2) غير راض	(3) غير راض الى حد ما	(4) راضي	(5) راضي تماماً	
					جميع محاضراته
					15- مامدى رضاك عن الوقت الذي يستغرق في تحضيرالطلاب في كل محاضرة
					16- مامدى رضاك عن جودة تعامل عضو هيئة التدريس مع طلابه
					17- مامدى رضاك عن جودة جهود عضو هيئة التدريس في حل مشاكل الطالب الأكاديمية
					18- مامدى رضاك عن جودة تشجيع عضو هيئة التدريس لطلابه على ممارسة البحث العلمي
					19- هل انت راض عن جودة مخرجات مناهج الجامعة للوفاء باحتياجاتك العملية بعد التخرج
					20- هل انت راض عن تطوير مناهج تخصصك
					21- هل انت راض عن الجامعة في تطوير اداء عضو هيئة التدريس
					22- هل انت راض عن الكلية في متابعتها للتحصيل الدراسي للطالب
					23- هل انت راض عن جودة برامج تشجيع الطلاب المتميزين بالجامعة
					24- مامدى رضاك عن عدد الطلاب في قاعة المحاضرات
					25- مامدى رضاك عن الزمن المخصص لأداء امتحان المواد
					26- مامدى رضاك عن تناسب عدد اجهزة الحاسب الالي مع عدد الطلاب
					27- مامدى رضاك عن المراجع التي يحددها عضو هيئة التدريس لمادته
					28- مامدى رضاك عن التزام عضو هيئة التدريس بالساعات المكتبيه
					29- مامدى رضاك عن مدة الفصل الدراسي
					30- مامدى رضاك عن جودة مناهج الجامعة في تطوير التفكير الأنتقادي لدى الطالب
					31- مامدى رضاك عن جودة مناهج الجامعة في تكوين الدور الأبداعي لدى الطالب
					32- مامدى رضاك عن تطبيق اعضاء هيئة التدريس لأسلوب الفريق في قاعات الدراسة
					33- هل انت راض عن دور الطالب في تقييم عضو هيئة التدريس
					ج ـ خدمات المكتبة .
					34- مامدى رضاك عن حداثة الكتب في مكتبة الجامعة
					35- مامدى رضاك عن توفر المراجع التي تحتاجها في المكتبة المركزية بالجامعة
					36- مامدى رضاك عن جودة نظام اعارة الكتب في المكتبة المركزية
					37- مامدى رضاك عن حداثة المراجع في قسم الدوريات العلمية في المكتبة
					38- مامدى رضاك عن جودة نظام الحاسب الالي المستخدم في المكتبة للحصول على المعلومات
					39- هل انت راض عن اداء الموظفين في المكتبة بمساعدة وارشاد الطلاب

	الرأي				العبارة
(1) غير راض أبداً	(2) غير راض	(3) غير راض الى حد ما	(4) راضي	(5) راضي تماماً	
					40- هـل انـت راض عـن معرفـة المـوظفين الكافيـة بماتحتويـه المكتبة
					41- هل انت راض عن تعامل الموظفين بالمكتبة مع الطلاب
					42- هل انت راض عن ساعات العمل بالمكتبة
					43- هل انت راض عن موقع ومساحة مبنى المكتبة
					44- هـل انـت راض عـن جـودة الخـدمات البحثيـة التـي تقدمها المكتبة للطالب
					د-خدمات عمادة شؤون الطلاب :
					45-ماامدى رضاك عن جودةالأنشطة الرياضية
					46- ماامدى رضاك عن جودةالأنشطة الثقافية
					47- ماامدى رضاك عن جودةالأنشطة الأجتماعية
					48- ماامدى رضاك عن وقت تسليم المكافأت
					49- ماامدى رضاك عن مظهر مباني اسكان الطلاب
					50- ماامدى رضاك عن جودة معايير اختيار الطلاب في الغرف
					51-ماامدى رضاك عن جودة خدمات السكن
					52- ماامدى رضاك عن جودة نظافة السكن
					53- ماامدى رضاك عن قرب السكن من مقر الجامعة
					54- هل انت راض عن عدد الطلاب في الغرفة الواحدة في السكن
					55- ماامدى رضاك عن مواعيد إغلاق بوابات السكن
					56- ماامدى رضاك عن دور عمادة شؤون الطلاب في حل مشاكل الطلاب
					57- ماامدى رضـاك عـن جـودة الإجـراءات الاداريـة فـي عمـادة شوؤن الطلاب
					58- ماامدى رضاك عن تعامل العاملين بعمادة شوؤن الطلاب مـع الطلاب
					هـ الخدمات الطبية :
					59- ماامدى رضاك عن جودة ما يتوفر للطالب من الخدمة الطبية المطلوبه
					60- ماامـدى رضـاك عـن سـرعة حصـول الطالـب علـى الخدمـة الطبية التي يحتاجها
					61- ماامدى رضاك عن جودة الخدمات الطبية المقدمة للطالب
					62- ماامـدى رضـاك عـن تعامـل العـاملين بـالإدارة الطبيـة مـع الطلاب
					و ـ الخدمات العامة
					63-يرى بعض المتخصصين بادارة الجودة الشاملة ان الجامعـة يجب ان تعامل الطالب كزبون لها ماامدى رضاك عن تعامل الجامعة لك كزبون
					64- هل انت راض عن تقارب مبـاني الخدمات التـي يحتاجها الطالب
					65- ماامدى رضاك عن توفر خدمات الآنترنت للطلاب
					66-هل انت راض عن جودة الأدله والأرشادات داخل الجامعـة لمعرفة الحصول على الخدمة
					67- ماامدى رضـاك عـن تطـابق جـودة الخدمـة المقدمـة لـك مـن الجامعة مع ماكنت تتوقعه
					68-هل انت راض عن جودة دور الجامعة المتمثل في استشارتك لمعرفة حاجاتك من الخدمات
					69- هل انت راض عن جودة اليات التقييم بالجامعة التي تهدف

الرأي					العبارة
(1) غير راض أبداً	(2) غير راض	(3) غير راض الى حد ما	(4) راضي	(5) راضي تماماً	
					لمعرفة رضاك عن الخدمة المقدمة
					70-هل انت راض عن دور الجامعة في تلافي الأخطاء في خدمات الطلاب

Supervisor's and researcher's

letters

School of Education and School of Management
CHEMPaS
Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at Southampton
Centre Director: Professor John Taylor

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Highfield	Fax +44 (0)23 8059 3844
Southampton	Email chempas1@soton.ac.uk
SO17 1BJ United Kingdom	Web www.chempas.soton.ac.uk

30 July 2007

Dear

Implementation of Total Quality Management in Saudi Arabian Universities

The Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at Southampton (CHEMPaS), University of Southampton, UK, is a leading international centre for research on management in higher education. The Centre is currently undertaking a research project on the implementation of Total Quality management (TQM) in universities in Saudi Arabia. This project is being undertaken by Mansour Alharbi, who is currently studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under my supervision.

TQM has become an important, practical tool to drive the achievement of enhanced performance in higher education. TQM is a strategic management system that can be cascaded down from strategic to operational level, mapping performance in readily measurable and understandable performance indicators, and linking and integrating procedures necessary to achieve the overall improvement of performance.

A major part of the study is to assess the success factors in implementing TQM. For this purpose we are approaching a number of higher education institutions to invite them to participate in a survey relating to their experiences in quality management and in implementing the TQM. The intended outcome is to develop a TQM model which can assist institutions with their quest for creating a competitive advantage implementing the TQM.

It would be very much appreciated if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire in relation to the experience of your own institution in the implementation of TQM. The analysis of all the questionnaires will provide the basis for identifying best practices, highlighting the key critical factors, and building a proposed model for the implementation of TQM.

We would very much appreciate your participation, since the success of the research is dependent upon the receipt of a maximum number of responses. Your answers will, of course, be treated in strict confidence and the information will be used only for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire has been designed to make completion simple, easy and speedy.

We will be pleased to send you an executive summary once the key research findings are finished. If you would like to receive one, please fill in the box at the end of the questionnaire.

**University
of Southampton**

We look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire in the near future and thank you in anticipation of your kind support and cooperation. Please let me know if any further information is required.

Yours sincerely

Professor John Taylor
Centre Director

Mansour Alharbi
PhD Research Student

Researcher's letter

School of Education and School of Management

CHEMPaS
Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at Southampton
Centre Director: Professor John Taylor

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30 July 2007

Dear

Implementation of Total Quality Management in Saudi Arabian Universities

My name is Mansour Alharbi. I am a PhD research student in the Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at Southampton (CHEMPaS) in the School of Management at the University of Southampton, UK. This survey questionnaire has been designed to investigate the feasibility, practicality and desirability of implementation of total quality management in higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The researcher's aim is that the outcomes of this study will generate appropriate recommendations that will assist in improvement of quality management in higher education institutions.

I am requesting your help in allocating a few minutes of your valuable time to complete the attached questionnaire as fully as possible and to hand it back to your department secretary after completing it. All the data you provide will remain confidential and will be used for research purposes only. If you are interested in the findings of this questionnaire, I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the main conclusions.

This work is being undertaken under the supervision of Professor John Taylor, Director of CHEMPaS. Professor Taylor would be happy to provide further information if required.

Your sincerely,

Mansour Alharbi
Research Student: CHEMPaS
School of Management
University of Southampton

**University
of Southampton**

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Geographic location of the four universities

Source: http://gis.mohe.gov.sa/EN/default.aspx?h=1024

Source:(http://www.saudinf.com/main/b33.htm, 2006,P)

Interview questions for staff, students and employers

Staff interview questions

Date   **Time**

Participant   **Contact information**

Interview venue

Notes:

A. Demographic information
1. Can you inform me of your age please?
2. How long have you been working at this university?
3. What is your current position?

B. The university

1. How would you describe the characteristics of your university?

2. How would you describe management characteristics?
3. What do you perceive as the influences on how your university operates?

C. The work of the participant

1. Can you describe your understanding about the services for students in the university please?
2. Do you have any administrative position? If yes please describe your role and responsibility in this position?
3. What do you think is the university's expectation of you, as part of the university's operations?
4. How do you see yourself responding to these expectations?
5. Can you describe how you prioritise your work please? What are considered as influences of doing so? Why?
6. What do you consider as difficulties in performing your work?
7. How do you see as your role in improving students' awareness of the university policies?

D. Vision, mission and culture

1. Institutions generally have a clear vision, mission and culture to implement quality strategies. Could you tell me how the institution views its vision, mission and culture?

2. In terms of quality of teamwork, are all staff members involved in the quality team?

E. Time management

One of the main elements of quality is time management.

1. How do you see your institution in this respect? Is time managed well and how is that achieved?

F. Rewards

To motivate personnel is a good strategy to achieve excellent performance

1. May I have your opinion please, regarding the rewards system in your institution?

2. Are staff motivated financially or by other means?

3. Are rewards offered for excellent performance?

4. What rewards are most appreciated by staff at your institution?

G. Retention

Some institutions are currently facing big problems regarding staff and students retentions. Some staff move to other agencies to improve their financial position.

1. What is your institution's policy in the face of this problem?

H. Organizational issues

Some organizations have strategies to resolve conflicts in the work environment.

1. How does your institution co-ordinate it's different sections' goals?

2. Do you think the actual structure of your institute helps communication between all sections?

I. Management

Strategic Planning is a very important route for successful universities, and the right process to build such strategy is essential to ease its implementation.

1. Could I know please how your institution has developed processes for both short and long term plans based on external and internal factors?

2. Institutions of higher education have a Council as their main decision–making body and policy maker. What is your view about its autonomy and authority?

J. Recruitment

1. In terms of recruitment I would like to know what skills the institution focuses on and how does the institution recruit its staff?

2. Dose quality issue play a role in appointing academic and management leaders?

K. Training

1. Are there any training and development programmes in your institution?

2. Are there specific programmes for training and developing the skills needed for quality?

L. Finance

1. Implementing TQM requires financial procedures. Are they in place in your institution?

2. Does the budget in your institution take TQM into consideration?

M. Facilities

1. Do your facilities give a good first impression in terms of appearance?

2. Do high quality facilities necessarily mean high quality services?

N. Admission

Admission procedures

1. Some analysts recommend that a higher education institution is good as its admission procedures. Do you think that quality strategy implementation such as TQM helps in this aspect?

2. Where do you see your institution? Is it moving towards improvement of its admission systems?

3. Are there many elective options for students in their programmes?

O. Enrolment

1. What kind of problems do students or staff face in the enrolment system?

P. **Accreditation**

 Curricula

1. Does the institution have its own curricula which are compatible with its goals?

2. Is there a specific committee for curriculum affairs?

3. Are your curricula compatible with international accreditation?

4. Do all your teaching staff participate in setting and developing the curricula?

5. Is the quality of curricula reviewed all the time?

Q. Competition Ranking

 The rating for Saudi higher education has been unsatisfactory, incurring debate amongst officials responsible for higher education.

1. Do you pay attention to this matter in your institution?

R. Benchmarking

Does your institution evaluate itself and try to improve through a process of competitive comparison and benchmarking?

S. Teaching

Some higher education institutions focus on teaching, some focus on research, while some do both. In your experience,

1. Are there tools to measure the quality of teaching

2. Are there written targets that you want to reach by teaching?

3. How is the teaching staff prepared to teach?

4. How are teaching programmes evaluated and improved?

5. What is the role of the teachers in the university?

T. Research

1. Could you explain the research policy your institution follows?

2. How is the research funded?

3. Is there any link between research and teaching?

4. How are you able to evaluate the quality of research in your institution?

U. Library

How would you describe the library services?

V. Deanship of Student Affairs

1. How would you describe the Deanship of Student Affairs services?

W. General Services?

How would you describe the general services at university?

X. Measurements

1. What are the best indicators of performance in your institution?

2. How is performance assessed in your institution?

Y. Accountability

Some institutions implement a clear system of accountability and this system is reviewed from time to time.

1. Could I know what kind of accountability system your institution follows?
2. Is there an external agency to monitor the system?

Z. Co-operation with other institutions

Most higher education institutions have agreements with other institutions whether national or international.

1. Does your institution have this kind of co-operation?

University management often establishes committees to obtain collective opinions. Staff who participate in these committees are willing to share in decision making and in implementing the management's decisions. However, in some universities, the management feels that committees are delaying issues and taking a long time to discuss matters without conclusions.

2. May I have your opinion please, and what are the roles of committees in your University?
3. Does your university build relationships with the labour market? If so, how is this process undertaken?
4. Does the private sector cooperate with the University to design proper courses?
5. Social activities are ways to build the University's relations with the public and to build or exchange ideas with different sectors in the society.What type of activities did your University host during the academic year?

AA. Students

1. What is the extent of the relationship between university as provider to student services and their students?

2. How the students are representative at university?

3. Do you think the university deals with students as customer?

AB. Programs

1. What is your opinion regarding the knowledge that university graduates gain during their studies at university?

2. Is your curriculum closely related to the needs of the labour market?

3. Do you think it is important to add more programs or update your programs?

AC. Skills and attributes

1. To what extent do you think that graduates from you university are ready to join the labour market?

2. What kind of skills do you think that students acquire during their studies at university?

3. What kind of skills should the university be developing?

4. What do you think is more important, assessing skills or subject knowledge?

AD. **Communications and Sources of information**

1. What do you believe to be the main barriers to student's learning?

2. What sources of information do you use to find out about students needs?

3. Do you have either direct or indirect contact with the labour market?

AE. Quality of Student Services

1. What do you think of first when I say the words "quality of student services in university"?

2. Could you please put the services below in order according to the most important to you? (list to be presented to the interviewee)

3. Is the quality of student intake a key indicator in determining the quality of university?

4.Do you think the assessment and grades obtained by students are important in evaluating quality?

5. What according to you are the most important issues that affect the quality of student services?

AF. Stakeholders

How do the stakeholders play a role at the university?

Student interview questions

Date   **Time**

Participant   **Contact information**

Interview venue

Notes:

A. Selection and acceptance

1. What was your first choice?

2. Did you take career prospects into consideration?

3. Were you aware of university acceptance procedures?

4. Did you have any ideas about university before you applied?

5. What do you know about the labour market schemes?

6. Would you prefer to join the private or public sector workforce after you graduate?

B. Programmes

1. What do you think about the programs in your area of study?

2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the courses?

3. How do you feel about the role of extracurricular programmes in terms of their importance in enhancing your future employability?

C. Skills and attributes

1. To what extent do you think that the substance of the courses improved your intellectual skills?

2. How would you describe the methods that the university used to prepare you for the future?

3. What kind of skills do you feel are most important to you?

D. Communication and sources of information

1. How did you know about extracurricular activities at the university?

2. To what extent do you trust information from university?

3. What obstacles were there to communicating with the labour market?

4. What sources of information did you use to find out about university services?

5. Are you satisfied with the services that are provided by university?

6. Are you representative at university?

7. Do you feel that university deals with you as customer?

E. Services

Library

How would you describe the library services?

Deanship of Student Affairs

How would you describe the Deanship of Student Affairs services?

General Services

How would you describe the general services at university?

Other questions

What are the services that you are most satisfied with at university?

What the most services you are most dissatisfied with at university?

Employer's interview questions

Date   **Time**

Participant   **Contact information**

Interview venue

Notes:

A. General

1. What is the main business of the company?

2. Do you recruit any graduates?

3. To what extend do you think that you are aware of what the universities do?

4. How do you feel about students' awareness of the recent labour market changes and the universities policy towards the labour market?

5. What do you know about universities?

B. Skills

1. How would you assess the universities as a work force provider?

2. To what extent do you believe that the skills and qualification profiles of university graduates match the skills and qualifications required in the labour market?

3. What kind of skills and attributes are you looking for in university graduates?

4. What are your selection criteria for students from university?

C. Programs

1. How do you assess your knowledge about universities programs?

2. How would you describe the relationship between the programs at universities and their students' preparation for the labour market?

D. Extracurricular programs

1. To what extent do you think that extracurricular programs are important in enhancing students' employability?

E. Communication and sources of information

1. Do you think it is important to know about students' acquirements during their time at university?

2. How do you know about universities and what are the main barriers to knowing about universities?

F. Stakeholders

Do you feel that universities deal with you as stakeholder at university?

Sample approval letters

Letter from Saudi Cultural Bureau

Letter from King Abdul Aziz University

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
Ministry of Higher Education
KING ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY
Vice President For Post-Graduate
Studies & Academic Research
Deanship of Graduate Studies

Ref. : ....

Date : ....

Encl. : ....

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم العالي
جامعة الملك عبد العزيز
وكالة الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي
عمادة الدراسات العليا

الرقم : ٣٦١٣٥/خ/٢/٨٨

التاريخ : ٤ / ١١ / ١٤٢٨هـ

المرفقات :

سعادة عميد القبول والتسجيل   حفظه الله
سعادة عميد شؤون الطلاب   حفظه الله
سعادة عميد معهد البحوث والاستشارات   حفظه الله
سعادة عميد البحث العلمي   حفظه الله
سعادة عميد شؤون المكتبات   حفظه الله
سعادة عميد خدمة المجتمع والتعليم المستمر   حفظه الله
سعادة عميد تقنية المعلومات   حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته...

إشارة إلى مذكرة سعادة وكيل الجامعة للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي برقم ٣٦١٣٥/خ وتاريخ ١٤٢٨/١١/١٢هـ بشأن موافقة سعادته على الطلب المقدم من طالب الدراسات العليا من جامعة ساوث هامبتون- المملكة المتحدة (بريطانيا) – في مجال (إدارة الجودة الشاملة) / منصور بن جهز الحربي والذي يقوم بالتحضير لرسالة الدكتوراه بعنوان "تطبيقات الجودة الشاملة في الجامعات السعودية ".في القيام برحلة علمية بالجامعة.

نأمل من سعادتكم التكرم بتعميد من يلزم نحو تسهيل مهمته وتوفير المعلومات الأزمة .

شاكرين ومقدرين لكم كريم اهتمامكم،

وتقبلوا خالص تحياتي وتقديري "

عميد
الدراسات العليا

أ.د. عدنان بن حمزة محمد زاهد

صورة لسعادة وكيل العمادة للبرامج والتطوير
صورة لوحدة المعلومات والإحصاء
ط(تعميم) ١٤٢٨/١١/٢

Letter of confirmation of interview

المكرم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

الحاقا للمحادثه التلفوينه معكم بخصوص فبولكم اجراء مقابله معكم فيما يتعلق بموضوع بحثي

اود ان اوكد لكم ان موعد المقابله سيكون يوم..... بتاريخ...... الساعه ...... وسيكون مكان المقابله........

وافيدكم انني اتطلع للقاءكم واجراء المقابله معكم حسب ماهوا موضح في هذه الرساله.

وتقبلوا خالص تحياتي

الباحث

منصور الحربي

جوال رقم

0505605965

Dear

Further to the phone conversation I had with you in aspect of carrying out an interview with you to talk about my research.

I would like to confirm to you that the meeting will be on... the... at... and it will be in...

I would like to say that I am looking forward to the meeting and interviewing you as it is explained above.

Yours Sincerely,

Mansour Alharbi

Mobile Number

0505605965

Note of appreciation

المكرم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

اشكر لكم قبولكم اجراء مقابله معكم فيما يتعلق بموضوع البحث

واود ان اؤكد لكم انني استفدت كثيرا من المعلومات التي قدمتموها لي والاجابات على اسئلتي مما سيسهم في تحقيق نتائج مهمه في الاجابة على تساؤلات البحث وتحقيق اهدافه.

مرة اخرى اشكركم واتمنى لكم مزيد من التوفيق.

وتقبلوا خالص تحياتي

الباحث

منصور الحربي

جوال رقم

0505605965

Dear

I would like to thank you for accepting to take part in the interview about my research. And I would like to inform you that I benefited a lot from the information you provided me and your answers to my questions, which will contribute in achieving important results in answering a lot of questions about the research and achieving its goals.

Again I would like to thank you and I wish you the best in the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Mansour Alharbi

Mobile Number

0505605965

Participant information sheet

Research Title: Quality of services in Saudi universities

Participant: Staff

Session duration: 45-60 minutes

Type: semi-structure interview

Method: face-to-face interview. Semi structure interview based on pre-determined questions but with the opportunity for further questions and discuss.

Recording: hand writing

Aim: This research aims are to assist in guiding policy and to guide higher education institutions seeking to improve the quality of HE

Interview structure: this interview will be exploratory in nature; the participant is assisted by a given outline of interview topic and questions to generate data from his perspective

Outline of interview topic: the interview is to cover the following areas:

Demographic of the participant:

1.   The demographic information required includes the participant's age and personal and professional backgrounds

2.   Questions about the university the participant work for:

The researcher intends to make inquiries about the quality of student's services at the university and the management of these services and operation from participants' perspective.

3.   Issues regarding the topic:

Questions in this area intend to obtain information about the terms quality, 'services engagement, and staff involvement with student perceived by the participant.

4.   Questions concerning the work of the participant:

The participant is questioned about the way in which he performs his work at the university. Factors influencing the performing of work are also made

5.   Inquires about the performing of academic work of relevance to the students: questions in this area guide the participant to discuss his recognition about the importance of working to fulfil with student services engagement. The participant is expected to share his experience, if applicable, in performing the work that results in labour market impacts.

6.   Information gained during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and all results will be anonymised.

First Stage coding in NVIVO8

University web sites

Difference and similarity between students and staff

Car parking services

The role of the Relations Office in the Deanship of Student Affairs

The student and university relationship

Theoretical learning

University management

Financial services

Practical training

Perception about differences between universities in managing student services

Shortages of skills

Students as customers

Laboratory facilities

Teaching services

Centralisation versus decentralisation

University knowledge in relation to the labour market

Student and teacher interaction

University facilities

The role of the Deanship of Student Affairs

Employers' methods to select applicants

External agency to control and assess

Total Quality Management (TQM)

Strategic planning

Staff and students about the concept of student services

Acceptance and selection

Student needs

University annual reports

Employers methods of evaluating university graduates

Student choices

Assessment of student services

Employers as stakeholders

About the research topic

Student services fund

Relationships between the universities and other agencies

Resistance

Information systems

Job satisfaction

University commitment

Employment services

Students and staff about skills

University and the labour market

Sources of information

Student expectations

Practical training

Admissions services

Building services

sources of information

Curricular content

Role of students

Careers and student study at university

Inaccurate information provided

Preferred job sector

Interviews coding

Deanship of Student Affairs services

Student services provided at the faculty level model

Ambiguity versus transparency

Selection of the department

Transportation services

Student services provided at the Deanship of Student Affairs level model

Library services

Student representatives

Students with disabilities

The relationship between admission services and the labour market

Curricular places

Staff communication

extracurricular programmes

Curriculum with the labour market

Student communication

Coding of the interviewees participants from universities

University	Student numbers	Staff numbers
A	1	1
	2	2
	3	3
	4	4
	5	5
	6	
	7	
B	8	6
	9	7
	10	8
	11	9
	12	
	13	
C	14	10
	15	11
	16	12
	17	
D	18	13
	19	14
	20	
	21	

Coding of the interviewees participants from labour market sector

Employer	1
Employer	2
Employer	3
Employer	4

Matrix detailing existing student services

Student Services

Admission and registration

1. Admission
2. Registration
3. Schedules
4. Course Add/Drop
5. Course postponed/ reenrolment
6. Promises commitment
7. Procedures duration

Teaching

1. Faculty performance
2. Teaching methods
3. Technical use
4. Curriculum coverage
5. Student assessment
6. Faculty Attendance
7. Attendance time obligation
8. Students Attendance mentoring
9. Faculty/students deal
10. Problem solving
11. Students encouragement
12. Curricula outcomes
13. Curriculum development
14. Faculty development
15. College following-up
16. Students motivation
17. Students # in class
18. Exam time
19. Student/ computer #
20. References
21. Office hours commitment
22. Semester duration
23. Students critical thinking
24. Students creative thinking
25. Team work
26. Student/faculty assessment

Library

1. References availability
2. References update
3. Loan procedures
4. Periodicals update
5. Staff cooperation
6. Staff knowledge
7. Staff/student deal
8. Working hours
9. Library location & size
10. Research tools quality
11. Technology use

Deanship of student affairs

1. Sports activities
2. cultural activities
3. Social activities
4. Allowance delivery
5. Housing appearance
6. Rooms allocation criteria
7. Accommodation services
8. Cleaning services
9. Accommodation location
10. Rooms/ students #
11. Accommodation closure/opening hours
12. Problem solving
13. Administrative procedures
14. Staff/student deal

Medical services

1. Medical services availability
2. Medical services delivery time
3. Medical services quality
4. Staff/ student deal

General services

1. Student as a customer consideration
2. Distance between buildings
3. Internet availability
4. Guidelines availability
5. Expectation gaps
6. Students consultation
7. Student satisfaction assessment
8. Mistakes repetition avoidance

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Student services building recommendation

Here the researcher proposes the design of a building for student services at every university. The building shall be composed of four levels and shaped as the letter "C" which is the first letter of the word "care". This symbolizes the care for the students and this building should be ideally located in the middle of the campus. The building should contain the following:

➢ **First Floor**: The entrance doors are made of glass. They open and close automatically with the proper adjustments for people with special needs. Elevators to the right of the entrance and a big reception counter to the right. The counter should be a round-shaped C (inverted) with a representation of services officer from each service sector. The counter should be equipped with proper computers connected to the university's central network. There should also be a suitable number of terminal computers at the sides of this floor so that students can use these systems to further enquire about additional services or to submit a request for a service online. These can be used before the student approaches the services staff at the counter. The rooms behind the counter include an archive and it is a continuation of the counter where further service officers do more office work. To the left of counter, there shall be a small branch for the bank that the university uses for its financial dealings. The first floor should also have a small post-office, a small shop for selling office supplies, light meals, a travel office, and bathrooms along with a buffet.

➢ **Second Floor**: The right side comprises more offices and the headquarters of the student union and student organisations so that each college or department at the university has a representative and an office and staff. They would have suitable powers within their respective department or college to coordinate the tasks. To the left side, there would be more offices and headquarters for the cultural and sporting student activities. Each specific activity will have a designated office and all the offices are equipped with the necessary equipment. Bathrooms are to the left.

- ➤ **Third Floor**: The right part includes management, finance, academic advising offices. To the left is a large auditorium, a theatre and more bathrooms.
- ➤ **Fourth Floor**: The right side comprises the office of the Deanship of Student Affairs Services, his/her assistants, associates, and secretaries. There would be also a conference room that is linked via an audio-visual connection to the university president. The dean of student services works under the direct supervision of the university's president, and he/she is a member of the university board. The left side of this floor comprises offices for the: representative of the university president, president of the student union, TQM monitoring and implementation, liaison coordinating between the university and the labour market. Additionally, it is proposed to have an additional office housing an external contractor who is responsible for monitoring the performance of this deanship. There shall also be an office for alumni relations, career advice, and some bathrooms.

First floor   **Second floor**
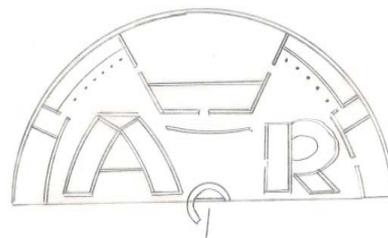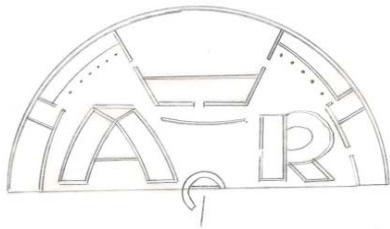
Third floor   **Fourth floor**
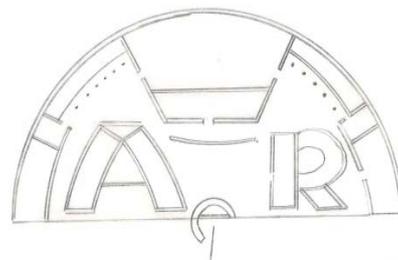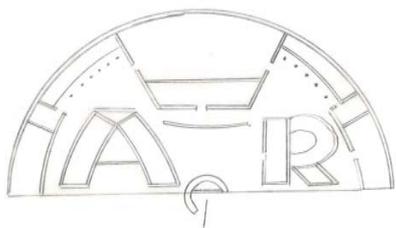
A model for the evaluation of teaching by observation

Form of Teaching Observation (FTO)

Please complete this page before the teaching observation takes place.

Name of teacher	Date of observation
Name of observer	Place of observation
Module	Period of observation
Type of session	Date/time for feedback
Number of students	

Aims of teacher

Learning objectives

Outcomes

Particular factors or problems taken into account when planning the session   321
The new aspects of this session
Suggestions made previously
Particular aspects of feedback

Observer's Comments

Teaching characteristics – comments
1.   Planning and start of session
2.   Presentation
3.   Student participation

Observer's Comments (continued)

Teaching characteristics – comments
4.   Methods and approaches
5.   General
6.   Observer's view of strengths of teacher as demonstrated in the teaching session
7.   Observer's recommendations as to future areas for attention

Record of the Form

This form should be agreed by the observer and the observed teacher, signed where indicated and a copy forwarded to the Department Office. Another copy should be retained by the observed teacher and the observer.

Name of teacher	Date of observation
Name of observer	Place of observation
Module	Period of observation
Type of session	Date/time feedback given
Number of students	

Signature of observed teacher: …………………………Date: …………………

Signature of observer: …………………………………………

My academic journey through PhD studies

English courses in UK

Number	Institute name	Courses title	Date	Comments
1	Greyland school of English	Intensive	14/7/2003-27/10/2003	Southampton
2	Colchester English study Centre	Intensive	27/10/2003-18/6/2004	Colchester
3	Language specialists international	Intensive	28/6/2004-8/10/2004	Portsmouth
4	University of Southampton (centre for language study)	English for Academic purposes	11/10/2004-25/6/2005	Southampton
5	University of Southampton (centre for language study)	Pre-sessional	1/8/2005-23/9/2005	Southampton
6	University of Southampton	Ph.D studies	5/10/2005- now	School of Management

Research training:

-Qualitative methods 15185, Southampton University

-Survey data analysis 12738, Southampton University

-Survey design methods 12735, Southampton University

-In addition to this, I had also attended and contributed with the following activities:

Date	Area of training
10/10/2005	writing your PhD- starting out
12/10/2005	programme induction
7/11/2005	using computer for qualitative
8/11/2005	managing your supervisor
8/12/2005	what can I do with my PhD
5/1/2006	computer assisted qualitative data analysis
11/1/2006	BETT Exhibition in London and I have joined some seminars there
16/3/2006	using power point for teaching
22/3/2006	face to face interview skills
24/3/2006	using creativity to solve problems
28/3/2006	assessment gutting started
4-6/4/2006	Graduated student conference at Oxford
20-21/4/2006	team and project development
10/5/2006	Lass graduate school conference
17-19/5/2006	university leading edge programme lead by John Taylor

18/10/2006	using computers to manage your references (Endnote & Reference M)
28/11/2006	using computers to organise your research
30/11/2006	2006 using computers to manage your references in depth (Endnote)
12-14/12/2006	Conference in Brighton with title: Beyond Boundaries: New Horizons for Research into Higher Education
12/1/2007	Nvivo 2 Research management
19/1/2007	ATLAS.T1 Research management
22/1/2007	WUN Ideas and Universities virtual seminar
5/2/2007	WUN Ideas and Universities virtual seminara
16/2/2007	WUN Ideas and Universities virtual seminar
19/2/2007	communicating your research to wider audiences
20/2/2007	writing and giving conference papers
26/2/2007	Rapid reading course
27/2/2007	how to organise a conference
16/3/2007	WUN Ideas and Universities virtual seminar
26/3/2007	Writing and giving conference papers
4/4/2007	Writing up, editing and letting go
18/4/2007	A project management
30/4/2007	The viva seminar
30/4/2007	WUN Ideas and Universities virtual seminar
14/5/2007	WUN Ideas and Universities virtual seminar
17/5/2007	LASS Graduate School Conference 2007
18/6/2007	CHEMPaS RESEARCH SEMINAR (inquiring into higher education)
20/6/2007	CHEMPaS RESEARCH SEMINAR (Changing Strategies)
17 /7/ 2007	the Postgraduate Workshop in Bristol , Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, 35 Berkeley Square, room 113

15/4/2008	Present Paper in the School of Management Conference
21/5/2009	Workshop of Voice and Pronunciation for Non- English Speakers, Southampton University
9 /2/ 2010	Seminar :The Truth about university Governance; lead by Professor Roger Brown (Liverpool Hope University) , at Nuffield Hall, Portsmouth University
2 /3/2010	Seminar: The truth about University Governance lead by Professor Roger Brown from the Centre of Higher Education Research Development at Liverpool Hope University, at School of Education, Southampton University
6-10/3/2010	Course in Total Quality Management, Headfield institute, Sheffield, UK
11/3/2010	Seminar Is H.E worth it? Higher education and lifelong learning Presented by Professor Sir David Watson, Professor of Higher Education Management at the Institute of Education, University of London.School of Education, Building 32, University of Southampton
12/03/2010	the LaTeX training course,in building 27/ room 3053 Southampton University.
17/03/2010	Thinking Skills'building 27/ room 3055 Southampton University.
22 /3/2010,	Workshop of Methodology Day: Action Research in Learning and Teaching: How do I get started? Lead by Prof Lin Norton,Liverpool Hope University, in Southampton University

Extra activities:

-Member of Saudi day committees in Southampton University

-Director of Saudi School in Southampton

-Chairman of Arab Management Group, School of Education, University of Southampton

-Member of Scientific Group, School of Education, University of Southampton

-Member of Regent Park College Governor Body in Southampton

-Member of Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)

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