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DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

the Case of SAUDI ARABIA

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
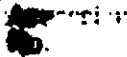Doctor of Philosophy
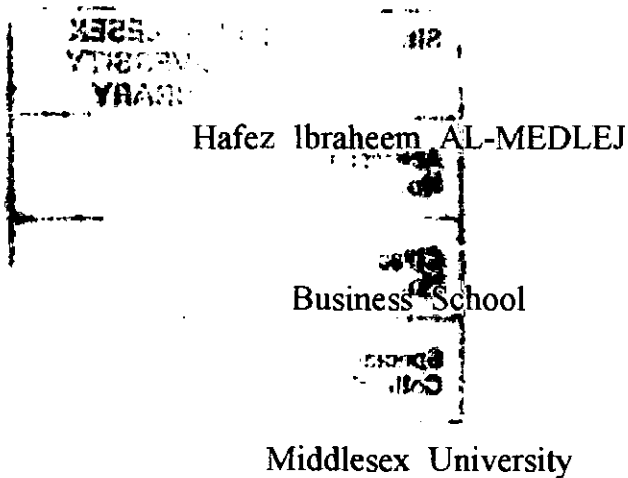
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To My Father ;   *Ibraheem Nasser Al-Medlej*

For above all support, patience and understanding .

Abstract

The aims of this research is to identify the factors that influence the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions and to find the way to manage these factors so that they exert a positive influence on this process. Based on a pilot study, field work and literature review, the thesis identifies and explores five cultural factors and five structural factors. The cultural factors are: organizational environment, nepotism, innovation, social change and professionalism. The structural factors are: centralization, formalization, routinization, communication and coordination. This thesis studies the influence of these factors using a multi-method approach in order to develop and propose a new approach toward a more efficient decision making processes.

The outcome of this research reveal the lack of efficiency in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Recommendations for the development of a new approach are made because of the negative influence of the factors identified. Through an understanding of cultural and structural factors, the data gathered suggests that the adaptation of this approach would lead to greater efficiency of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions by managing the identified factors as a mean of improving the decision making process. A further outcome is an increase in our knowledge and understanding of those factors which influence the decision making process in Saudi Arabia.

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Acknowledgment

At first I would like to thank the three educational establishments that have stood beside me during this academic journey; these are Middlesex University, Imam Mohammed Ibin Saud Islamic University(IMISIU), and the Saudi Cultural Bureau.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   _INTRODUCTION_

This introductory chapter aims to help the reader by giving some background and structural information. The reader will be taken through the thesis by way of its essential outlines and argument.

An examination of the factors that affect the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions is the work of this thesis. The factors were identified on the basis of the literature and historical background, the pilot study and fieldwork. The way in which the studied factors are implicated in the "efficiency" of the decision making process is a focus throughout the text. The degree of efficiency could be determine by factors such as the time taken, the flexibility of the process and the effectiveness of final decision. However, it is the researcher's view based on literature review, pilot study and the fieldwork that any decision reaches the highest degree of efficiency when all the important cultural and structural factors have a positive influence upon the outcome of that decision.

The researcher aims to develop an approach towards a more efficient decision making process to be presented at the end of the thesis. Developing such an approach in any milieu requires an awareness of a number of important issues.

Firstly, it requires an awareness of the development of knowledge taking place in the field, in this case, the field of decision making processes in Saudi higher education institutions. Secondly, it requires an awareness of the cultural and structural features of the milieu in question. Thirdly, it requires discovery of those factors believed to be significant in the eyes of those affected by the resulting decisions. Finally, any proposed new approach should be implementable within the organizations under study, so they can apply the results of this research to improve the decision making process. The researcher took all these issues into consideration throughout this thesis.

1.2. ORIGINS OF THE RESEARCH

Growing up in a fast developing country such as Saudi Arabia and spending part of his youth in the environment of higher education institutions as a student and then as a member of the teaching staff made the researcher aware of how extremely important is the role of higher education in the development race. That realization became stronger as the researcher spent time in the environment of higher education institutions in the West between the years of his Masters Degree study in the United States and his Ph.D. study in the United Kingdom.

It is reasonable to suggest that there is a relationship between strength in higher education and a faster development process. Higher education institutions, like any other organization, grow and produce through the vast range of decisions to be taken that affect every aspect of the organization's life. Therefore, the more efficient the decision making process in higher education institutions the better the quality of higher education and the faster the national development process.

This argument was the subject of a final paper by the researcher in one of his Masters Degree classes. Professor Warren Schmidt, a well-known and very distinguished lecturer in the field of public administration at University of Southern California, encouraged the researcher to explore it further in his Ph.D. study. Thus, looking at cultural and structural features of Saudi universities, the researcher determined to help his country in the development race by developing an approach to more efficient decision making in order to strengthen higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.

1.3. FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis focuses primarily on three questions:-

- What are the factors influencing the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions?

- How are they affecting the decision making process?

- Is it possible to manage the same factors for positive influence in order to improve the degree of efficiency in the decision making process?

Ten factors were identified on the basis of an analysis of the information emerging from a three stage process: literature review, pilot study and field work. These factors are listed on the following page. Initially, the researcher studied the work of theorists related to the subject of decision making in higher education which indicated the influence of a number of factors, and especially organizational environment and centralization. During the pilot study, the researcher found that most decision makers in Saudi higher education institutions do not know about the theory of types and styles of decision-making. On the other hand, they were very familiar with factors that affect decision making in their institutions. The ten factors were mentioned most frequently, which helped the researcher to focus on those factors which were relevant to these respondents. These factors are the major focus of the field work. Thus the information gathered from decision makers centred on these factors.

1.4. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE VS. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Both the literature review and the field work identified a strong relationship between organizational culture and organizational structure. This relationship is evident throughout the thesis. As the reader will discover, this research is built upon both the cultural and structural factors and it is very difficult to separate totally the two.

Five significant factors of organizational culture were identified, namely, organizational environment, nepotism, innovation, social change and professionalism. These bear relationships with five significant structural factors. These are centralization, formalization, routinization, communication and coordination. Together these ten factors strongly influence the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

The researcher concludes the study by drawing the ten factors together in an approach to a more efficient decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

1.5. METHODOLOGICAL FOCUS

Because of the limitations of previous research on the subject of decision making in Saudi higher education institutions, field work became the back-bone of this thesis. Therefore, despite difficulties experienced in getting access to data, the researcher went beyond the usual use of one, two or three methods of research, to work with six methods to identify and explore the influence of the ten factors. These methods are; questionnaires, interviews, attending meetings, following decision cases, document study and general observation. The researcher used these six research methods for three reasons.

Firstly, to gather as much information as possible, working in combination to collect all the relevant data on each factor studied. Secondly, because the methods are able to complement each other, fuller understanding of the role of each factor in the decision making process can be developed. Finally, the use of six methods makes it possible to check comprehensively the validity of the results of one method against the other.

The researcher will highlight how the use of these various methods of research together provides the study with the sufficient and significant data to enable a clear

picture to be drawn of the role of each of the ten factors (Chapter 3).

Information regarding each factor will be given by presenting the data gathered via each research method.

1.6.   STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis comprises seven further chapters.   Chapter Two looks at the orientation and insights of the literature. The chapter is divided into three sections: the first gives a review of the Western literature, the second highlights the literature of the developing world, whilst the third reviews the literature on Saudi Arabia.

In Chapter Three the methodology of the field work carried out in all seven Saudi universities is presented through highlighting the six research methods used in the investigation of the ten cultural and structural factors. Questionnaires, for example, were designed in a way which would make them easier to analyse.   They covered all the factors   under study and were distributed throughout all academic and managerial levels.   Some difficulties   in distributing   and   collecting   the   questionnaires   are highlighted in Chapter Three.   However, despite these difficulties, the researcher was able to cover each factor

under study and determine its relation to the decision
making process.

Chapter Four focuses on the relationship between
organizational environment, both external and internal, and
the degree of efficiency in the decision making process in
Saudi universities.

A brief background of Saudi culture is given, its
effect on organizational culture and its relation to the
decision making process in the universities studied.

The internal environment is examined and found to be in
need of much improvement. These improvements are extremely
important to increasing the efficiency of decision making
processes.

Chapter Five highlights four cultural factors which
influence decision making. They are: nepotism, innovation,
social change and professionalism. A background to each is
given in relation to other aspects of Saudi culture and the
reader will be shown how influential these factors are upon
the decision making process. The inter-connection of these
factors convinced the researcher to treat them together in
one chapter.

Chapter Six describes the first part of a study of the relationship between organizational structure and the efficiency of the decision making process. (The second part of that study is carried out in Chapter Seven.) The focus of the chapter is centralization, the chief structural factor. The study is divided into two parts: firstly, an examination of the level of participation in the decision making process and secondly, of the hierarchy of authority through levels of management.

Because of the extreme importance of centralization as a factor affecting the decision making process it will be referred to in every chapter of the thesis. At the end of Chapter Six, the reader should see clearly the relationship between the level of centralization and the efficiency of the decision making process.

Chapter Seven highlights four structural factors: formalization, communication, routinization and coordination and their role in the decision making process. Centralization is seen to determine each of these structural factors. A clear picture of the relationship between organizational structure and the efficiency of the decision making process should be gained by reading of Chapters Six and Seven.

Finally, Chapter Eight summarizes all the findings of the research to draw a comprehensive picture of decision making in Saudi universities as an addition to the knowledge in the field. In conclusion, suggestions and recommendations are made that are not such as would cause any major conflict within Saudi culture. On the basis of these suggestions and recommendations, a new approach to a more efficient decision making process in Saudi universities is introduced in Chapter Eight. This thesis will be concluded by identifying areas for further studies.

1.7. *CONCLUSION*

In concluding this Introduction, the researcher would like to remind the reader of five important points.

Firstly, the main objective of this research is the development of an approach to more efficient decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

Secondly, both organizational culture and organizational structure play an important role in determining the level of efficiency in the decision making process under investigation. Each are represented through five key factors.

Thirdly, the selection of factors under study was based on a literature review, pilot study and field work. They were carefully chosen on the basis of the evidence of their note-worthy influence upon the level of efficiency in the decision making process. Moreover, the researcher was able to suggest ways of managing these same factors so that they may exert a positive influence through a new approach leading toward more efficient decision making process.

Fourthly, social and political pressure are partly responsible for the current state of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. The research will not attempt to challenge such pressure. Instead, the researcher invites both political and social leaders to understand the objective of this study and take the initiative to adopt the approach proposed which is advanced for the benefit of outcomes of higher education in Saudi Arabia. Such changes will therefore be for the benefit of the Saudi national future as indicated above.

Finally, this introductory chapter highlights general aspects of this thesis, leaving the specific details and the answers to the readers' questions to be found in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. *INTRODUCTION*

Pin pointing the most effective organizational decision making process has been a central concern of the schools of thought cited in literature on organizational behaviour. As the main theme of this thesis is to explore factors affecting the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions, this chapter will focus upon literature which, in the researcher's view, illustrates the principal factors. No attempt will be made to review all the literature pertaining to decision theories, or to trace their various antecedents; rather, the researcher will concentrate upon literature which highlights particular cultural and structural factors.

In concluding this chapter, the researcher will present his starting thought of efficient decision making process in relation to cultural and structural factors. Meanwhile, this chapter describes the work of some of the recognized theorists whose works relate directly to this thesis, divided into three sections, as follows:-

- western literature,

- developing world literature,

- Saudi literature.

2.2. WESTERN LITERATURE

The literature available on decision making is extremely broad and differentiated, encompassing several academic fields and disciplines. Thus, the researcher will highlight specific works which have provided the background for this thesis, divided into three sections as follows:-

- decision making in general,
- culture vs. structure,
- decision making in higher education.

2.2.1. *Decision Making in General*

In any academic study concerning decision making, the work of Herbert Simon must figure strongly. In his study of the decision making process in administration organizations, "Administrative Behavior", Simon (1976) presents valuable theoretical perspectives. He explains decision making in administration processes by stating that when any task requires the efforts of several persons, it is necessary to develop a process in order to organize effort to the group task; this he terms the administrative process.[1] Simon discusses the role of politics and administration in government, arguing that Goodnow (1900)[2] fails to draw a true line between the two. Goodnow, he suggests, comes perilously close to identifying "policy" with "deciding" and

"administration" with "doing". Also, Simon argues that neither Freund (1928)[3] nor Dickinson (1927)[4] is able to find a justification for administrative discretion, except as an application of decisions to concrete instances, or as a transitory phenomenon confined to a sphere of uncertainty within which the rule of law has not yet penetrated.[5]

On the subject of rationality in administrative behaviour, Simon talks about the objective environment of the decision within the actual consequences that follow from choice, where both organizations and individuals fail to attain a complete integration of their behaviour through consideration of these means-ends relationships. Nevertheless, what remains of rationality in their behaviour is precisely the incomplete, and sometimes inconsistent, hierarchy.[6] Moreover Simon defines rationality as concerned with the selection of preferred behaviour alternatives in terms of some system of values, whereby the consequences of behavior can be evaluated.[7] In fact, he looks at various meanings of rationality such as: objective, subjective, conscious, deliberate, organized, and personal. For a more genuine understanding of the concept of "rationality", which has been connected with the name of Max Weber, Merton (1940)[8] questioned Weber's idea of rational bureaucracy by stressing the importance of personality in the equation, and calls for more studies on the relationship between structure and personality. On the other hand, Rice (1980)[9] states

that those writers who criticize decision theory seem to attack it at the point where most writers in the field of decision making define rationality as "the use of the complete decision model".

In general, theorists often adopt either prescriptive or descriptive approaches toward managerial decision processes.[10] Mintzberg (1973) investigates and codifies the existing research in administrative behaviour, by summarizing the schools of thought regarding the manager's job.[11] Ansoff (1965)[12] and Porter (1985)[13] represent the prescriptive approaches which assume that managers can make optimal choices by collecting information, generating alternatives, and evaluating alternatives; while, Cyert and March (1963)[14] represent descriptive approaches which indicate that managers rarely make optimal choices, because of factors affecting the decision making process. These factors are the main focus of this study.

2.2.2. *Culture vs. Structure*

As a result of this study, five cultural factors and five structural factors were found to have the most influence on the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions as mentioned in chapter 1. Organizational environment was found to be the main cultural

factor.   Unless   indicated   otherwise,   organizational

environment means both internal and external environments.

Simon touches upon the concept of internal organizational

environment by stating that:

> "...an individual acts as a member of a group
> when he applies the same general scale of values to
> his choices as do other members of the group, and
> when his expectations of the behaviour of other
> members influence his own decisions."[15]

In the researcher's view, group influence over individual

choice operates in any organization and this internal

environment goes to shaping the decision making process.

However, in a traditional society such as Saudi Arabia, the

external and internal environments have an effect on the

decision making process distinct from that in modern

society.

The   importance   of   organizational   environment   is

highlighted by Meyer & Scott (1992).[16] They emphasize the

strong relationship between organizational environment and

organizational structure. Although Whittington (1988) has

argued against the prevailing stark dichotomization of

organizational studies between environmental determinism and

strategic voluntarism,[17] Miller et.al (1982) focus upon the

control of top executives and the strong relationship with

strategy-making, structure, and environment.[18] The locus of

control of top executives was found to bear a direct and significant relationship to the nature of corporate strategy, but an indirect relationship to environment and to structure.[19]

The above suggests that there is a note-worthy connection between organizational culture and organizational structure. In fact, the control of top executives was found to be the main structural factor affecting the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Also, a strong tie was found between the Saudi organizational culture and the level of centralization.[20] A similar perspective is provided by Child (1984)[21] who develops an understanding of organizational choices and changes, by identifying the role of organizational environment and organizational structure. This is an important debate in organizational literature, as Levinthal (1990) states, addressing the importance of organizational adoption and environment selection in determining the range of organizational structures and behaviours.[22] Moreover, Burns & Stalker (1961) stressed the importance of external environment in shaping the organizational structure.[23] They describe two types of structure: mechanistic and organic, where the mechanistic structure is more suited to a stable environment, while the organic structure is more suited to a changing environment.[24] Finally the relationship between

organizational culture and organizational structure, Simon &
March (1965) state that:

"1. The more similar the social standing of the
   two institutions, the more similar the
   norms they enforce.

2. The greater the cultural centrality of the
   organization, the greater the similarity of
   its norms to those professed by other
   groups in the same culture.

3. The greater the organizational control over
   the evocation and evaluation of
   alternatives in the group, the more similar
   will be organizational and group norms."[25]

In conclusion, it appears that external environment
influences internal environment, and in turn, both influence
organizational structure and both culture and structure play
a major part in the decision making process.

Figure 2-1 : the influential relations between organizational culture, structure and decision making.
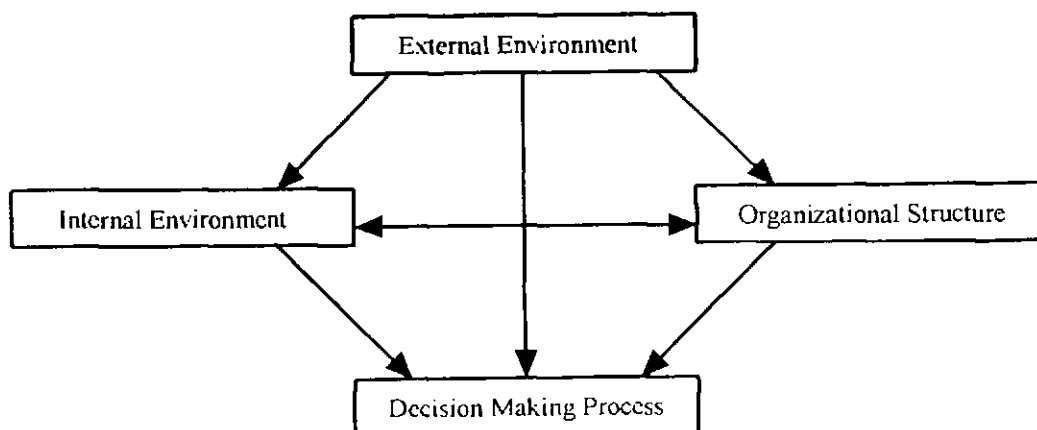
Thus, this thesis focuses upon the study of cultural and structural factors affecting the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

A review will now follow of selected literature on decision making in higher education institutions.

2.2.3. _Decision Making in Higher Education_

This section will focus upon decision making behaviour in the administration of higher education in relation to leadership and look at concepts such as: social changes, innovation, communication and professionalism.

March and Cohen (1974) published what the researcher considers as one of the most important books in this field, "Leadership and Ambiguity",[26] which is an essay on the American College/University presidency. It examines the position, the people who occupy these positions, and the interaction between the two. They conclude that:

> "The American college presidency is a reactive job. Presidents define their role as a responsive one. They worry about the concerns of trustees, community leaders, students, faculty members, law enforcement officials. They see themselves as trying to reconcile the conflicting pressures on the college. They allocate their time by a process that is largely controlled by the desires of others."[27]

In Western universities, these seem to be among the most important factors affecting the decision making process. However, as will be seen in this study, this is not the case in Saudi universities, where presidents have full power to control universities without undue interference from other levels within the organization. This is mainly due to the absence of union groups (students or staff). However, any friction usually comes from higher level of government hierarchy or from factors relating to the sensitive issues of Saudi cultural and religious values.

Lindblom (1959),[28] (1979),[29] spent 20 years trying to understand and analyse policy making, by focusing upon incrementalism, that is, making change by small steps. He stated that:

> "Many critics of incrementalism believe that doing better usually means turning away from incrementalism. Incrementalists believe that for complex problem solving it usually means practicing incrementalism more skillfully and turning away from it only rarely."[30]

In the researcher's view, changing some of the cultural aspects of decision making processes in Saudi higher education institutions should be achieved by taking small steps in order to avoid cultural conflict.

Argyris and Cyert (1980)[31] highlight some characteristics of the 1980's trying to predict how these characteristics will affect the future of higher education institutions. For example, they suggest that university presidents become leaders rather than managers:

> "...The president will need to write more and speak more to the faculty in large and small groups. Only through such intense activity can the university remain a viable institution in the society.....It will clearly be a time for presidents who can lead and act, and the prize is the continued life and progress of the university itself."[32]

Similarly, Neumann (1989) suggests that presidential strategy has become more complex, and more influenced by the university's external environment.[33] Also, Alder and Alder (1988) have argued that there is a strong relationship between organizational loyalty and the type of leadership within that organization.[34] In fact, the researcher agrees with the general view that people's involvement in the decision making process makes them feel more involved in the running of the organization, which, in turn, increases loyalty.

Vught (1989) studied governmental strategies and innovation in higher education by focusing upon decision making and government regulation.[35] Within the strategy of rational planning and control, Vught assumes that the

innovative capacities of higher education institutions can be triggered by detailed regulations and comprehensive control mechanisms.[36] This linkage appears in chapter five of this thesis when the researcher highlights the concept of innovation as a factor affecting the decision making process.

March and Olsen (1976)[37] summarize the most important potential of rational decision making, stating that:

> "Through the paraphernalia of modern techniques, we can improve the quality of the search for alternatives, the quality of information, and the quality of the analysis used to evaluate the alternatives."[38]

The use of computer technology is a note-worthy issue highlighted in this thesis, mainly in relation to an organization's internal environment and the quality of communication and professionalism influencing the decision making process.

Lockwood & Davies (1985)[39] stated that managers in the universities should improve managerial structure and role in order to meet external obligations whilst retaining the essentials of the internal environment. In the researcher's view, the unique characteristics of public universities requires different leadership qualities from those required

within other public organizations. Further, different types of university need different types of leadership. As Morris (1970) stated:

> "The pattern of governance originally designed for the small liberal arts college administered by a president who was both the administrative and educational leader with great 'centralized' authority **changed** to meet the needs of the complex modern university, with its great variety of goals, objectives, and administrative and academic functions."[40]

In contrast, modern Saudi universities are still highly centralized and run by managers rather than leaders, despite their complexity. Green (1988)[41] sees training as a possible way to develop leaders for higher education institutions. This thesis addresses this issue when considering professionalism in chapter five.

Moreover, Birch (1988)[42] calls for a more interactive and open system of higher education which requires committed, clear-minded and resolute leadership. Also, Middlehurst (1988), emphasises the need for evaluating leadership/management development in universities and considering future requirements in this field.[43] In this study, evaluation of decision making behaviour is central to developing an approach to more effective decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

To conclude, Heald (1991) argues that the academic
literature on decision making has not developed educational
decision theories much beyond experience-based models that
prescribe how educational decisions should be made.[44] In
fact, the researcher anticipates that even in administrative
decision making, what works in the Western organizational
setting might not work in the Saudi higher education
institutions, because of a set of cultural and structural
factors which are the main focus of this thesis. Thus, a
review of the literature in developing countries provides
important background knowledge for this thesis.

2.3. DEVELOPING COUNTRY LITERATURE

This section will review literature relating to
different social settings. The researcher believes, as do
many others, in the importance of national culture which
affects both the culture and structure of any given
organization. Thus, the decision making process has a
different aspects according to the social setting.

Thus, the researcher highlights the work of some
writers who address the subject of Management within the
higher education system of developing countries, and
particularly the decision making processes in higher
education institutions.

Unlike the extensive literature that covers the subject in western countries, the researcher found it difficult to collect similar data on higher education institutions in developing countries. In fact, most literature available is essentially a review of western theories, with an attempt to apply them to management in developing countries. However, a few note-worthy references were identified. This section highlights literature relating to the following issues:

- management in developing countries,
- decision making in higher education,
- review of the Arab World literature.

2.3.1. *Management in Developing Countries*

To highlight the unique features of successful management in developing countries, Jaeger & Kanungo (1990)[45] point to the significant difference between the organizational external environment in developing countries and that in western countries, by stating:

> "Since the external environment of organizations in the developing countries is different from that of the western industrialized countries, management theories and practices developed in the developed country context may have only limited applicability in the context of the developing world... It becomes clear that there is a need to develop indigenous management theories and practices for use in the developing country context."[46]

They go on to investigate the interaction of organizational environment, including two case studies, and attempt to develop a model of organizational configurations suitable to local cultural features. One of the case studies is carried out by Hardy who points out that a university in Brazil, "Unicamp", appears to be very successful in adapting the US university model. By applying the method of decentralized decision making it increases the quality of decisions and staff commitment.

It is the researcher's view that with the necessary adjustment to cultural features, many western managerial models could be successfully adapted in developing countries. This thought reverts to the main theme of Jaeger & Kanungo's book, which is the limitation in using western management techniques in developing countries, and the attempt to develop a culturally appropriate discussion about two concepts of management: work motivation and managerial leadership. Differences between Western culture and Saudi culture were taken account by this researcher when producing the suggestions that could be applied within the Saudi higher education institutions.

Austin (1990)[47] sees the distinctive nature of the external business environment as the fundamental difference between managing in the developing countries and managing in the developed world. A clear example of these differences

is government control within the management of Saudi higher
education institutions, since Saudi universities are totally
dependent upon government financial support. Moreover,
Austin points out that cultural diversity in developing
countries dictates the need for distinct strategies. In
some Islamic countries, for example, the charging of
interest is prohibited by religious norms; thus, different
approaches to financial transaction are called for.[48] In
relation to the religious norms, one can observe that in
Saudi universities, integration of men and women is
prohibited. Thus, female staff and students have separate
buildings, and are excluded from participating in decision
making bodies. This is an example of a cultural difference
between Saudi Arabia and developed countries. Such
differences will be highlighted throughout the thesis to
demonstrate their influence upon the decision making process
in Saudi higher education institutions.

Understanding the external and internal organizational
environment plays a key role in understanding the structure
of the decision making process. For example, knowing the
cultural background of the hierarchy of authority in the
Saudi family and bureaucratic system helped the researcher
to understand the over-centralized decision making process
at Saudi higher education institutions.[49]

Austin *op.cit,* highlights the subject of organizational structure and decision making, which has a direct relevance to this thesis. One study found that 95% of the surveyed Pakistani employees visualized their relationship with their immediate superiors as that of father and son.[50] In Saudi higher education institutions, this kind of relationship was found throughout the field work in almost every institution; however, age makes a note-worthy difference, although the relationship would still be visualized as a family relationship whether it was father to son or brother to older/younger brother.

In his study of Middle Eastern countries, particularly Turkey, Yucelt (1984) links cultural and social background, as well as behavioural and economic factors, to explain their influence on management style in developing countries.[51] Thus far, this review indicates a strong relationship between culture and structure, which supports the study methodology of focusing upon cultural and structural factors that affect the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. What follows is a review of the literature on decision making in higher education in the developing countries.

2.3.2. _Decision Making in Higher Education_

More specifically this section focuses upon decision
making in higher education in developing countries. The
researcher found two principal sources which relate strongly
to the subject of this thesis: Oshagbemi (1988)[52] and Hardy
(1990).[53]

Oshagbemi identifies ways in which universities could
improve their management policies and practices through an
examination of the job characteristics and perceptions of
their academic leader.[54] Although Oshagbemi's book
represents a comparative study between British universities
and Nigerian universities in terms of management and
leadership, he suggests that, with regard to some cultural
and economical differences, one can apply the case of
Nigeria to most other developing countries:

> "This study aims to contribute to a greater
> awareness and a better understanding of the
> activities of academic leaders, a group that seems
> to have been hitherto neglected, though whose
> potential for significant contribution to social
> development is not in doubt."[55]

What is important is Oshagbemi's discussion of the
nature of the academic leaders' jobs. He discusses not only
the activities which the academic leaders perform and with
whom, but also the object of their activities, their

location and duration, and the contacts which the academic leaders make. The author also focuses upon the perception of academic leaders. He highlights the aspect of communication in the leaders' work, and how and where they spend their time, with a comparison between British and Nigerian leaders. The author refers to the cultural differences between the two social settings as a main reason behind the difference in leadership behaviour.[56]

The other source which will be cited in this section is: "Managing Strategy in Academic Institutions: Learning from Brazil". As Hardy states in her introduction:

> "This book is not just about Brazilian universities. It is a book that uses the example of Brazilian universities to learn more about strategy making in universities in general."[57]

Whilst the researcher agrees with the above, there are nevertheless important differences between higher education institutions in Brazil and those in Saudi Arabia. Throughout this thesis, the unique features of Saudi universities will be noted in terms of history, structure, culture, regulation, leadership, and over all, the decision making process. These differences should be taken into account before applying Hardy's findings to decision making in Saudi higher education institutions whether at the strategic or operational level.

Hardy's book deals with a set of problems that exist in managing strategy in academic institutions; for example, the "centralization" problem, which exists in the administration of most organizations in the developing countries. In fact, "centralization" is one of the most common administrative behaviours in Saudi higher education institutions. Thus, the reader will find Chapter Six of this thesis dealing exclusively with the concept of centralization in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

Hardy reviews the literature of decision making and governance in higher education. Much of her book relies upon the concept of the professional bureaucracy to describe university structures. It also elaborates four models of decision making processes which she identifies as: 1) bureaucratic/rational, 2) collegiate, 3) political and 4) garbage can. Hardy studies these four models, plus what she calls the Mixed model.

Also, in Hardy's view, the political factor is a very important one, and this is illustrated in her description of each decision-making model. Hardy emphasises the concept of leadership, with special focus upon the relationship between leadership and strategy making.

In conclusion, Hardy's book shows a strong relationship between the quality of strategy making and the outcome of higher education institutions. Such a relationship supports the researcher's argument that this thesis should serve to help Saudi Arabia in the race of development by improving the quality of higher education throughout improving the quality of the decision making process.

2.3.3. *Review of the Arab World Literature*

Third world management literature, including that from the Arab world, concentrates upon aspects of management behaviour influencing the decision making process. Most of these studies, that is, Hilmi (1979);[58] Adwri (1979);[59] Alkabisi (1975);[60] and Fadhelallah (1983),[61] are based upon the Arabic translation of the theoretical perspectives of western writers, making it difficult to find originality. However, some writers suggest the need for a different approach to management because of cultural differences. For example, Berger (1956) states:

> "When we try to compare bureaucratic and professional predisposition in the East and the West, we find that there may be differences of attitude and behaviour in spite of the similarity in structure. As in other realms, similarity in structure and form, often the result of culture diffusion, does not mean similarity of institutional or behaviour patterns."[62]

It appears that without considering local needs, many Western management ideas may fail to reach the intended goal when they are adopted toward organizational management in developing countries. Ayubi (1986) adds to this the nature of the political system found in the Arab world.[63] In fact, political interference in the bureaucracy is repeatedly mentioned as one of the main reasons behind the lack of efficiency in the Arabic bureaucracy. Moreover, Jabbra (1989) relates the failure of bureaucracy to the strong influence of some of the traditional Arab culture values, such as "kinship".[64]

From another perspective, Assaf (1976) sees the instability of the organizational environment in the Jordanian social setting as causing uncertainty that leads to failure in the operation of bureaucratic structure.[65] On the other hand, Hassan (1972) blames the pressure of higher level management in a highly centralized structure for adversely affecting the decision making process in Arabic organizations.[66] In a comparative study between Egypt and the US in regard to centralization, Melikan (1959) finds that differences in cultural and social background, such as the family structure and rate of acceptance of authority in the society, are the main reasons behind differences in the managerial style between the two nations.[67] Moreover, Meade & Whittaker (1967) considers Middle Eastern managers to be authoritarian rather than democratic.[68] In fact, Yucelt

(1984) states that research results show that authoritarianism in the Middle Eastern nations is caused partly by their educational systems and family structure, and partly by their culture and social values.[69]

In general, it can be stated that in the Arab world, the strong relationship between culture and structure determines the management style in most organizations, including higher education institutions. Such a relationship makes it important for the researcher to identify and study cultural factors and structural factors in order to develop an approach to more effective decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

In the field of higher education management, Alawy (1980) criticizes Arabic theorists for not distinguishing between the university and any other public organization. He recommends in-depth studies of the university hierarchy and distribution of authority.[70] He commenced by carrying out a comparative study of Arabic universities and Western universities, comparing the authority distributions in the two organizational settings. Alawy highlighted the academic side of the bureaucratic system within Arabic universities concluding that academic staff lack authority to make academic decisions in spite of the high level of responsibilities they hold.[71]

In a field-work study of Almansora University in Egypt, Moawadh (1986) studies the internal organizational environment in higher education administrations.[72] He attempts to answer two questions:

- What is the common internal organizational environment in higher education?

- Does the type of college(theoretical/practical) affect the organizational environment of that college?[73]

First, he lists six types of organizational climate, introduced by Halpin & Croft (1962), as follows: Open; Autonomous; Controlled; Familiar; Parental and Closed Climates. However, Moawadh finds it difficult to determine what kind of climate subsists in college. In other words, he finds some colleges with more than one of these climates, and some colleges with a climate that is not among the six types.[74] In fact, these findings further support the contention that the unique organizational culture in the developing countries in general and in the Arab world in particular, requires specific management studies rather than adoption of ready-made western theories. In general, Almaney (1981) states that:

"Despite the apparent economic, social, and political differences among the Arab countries, the basic 'Bedouin' traits continue to exert, in varying degrees, certain behavioural influences on all Arabs, irrespective of their educational level, economic status, political philosophy, and religion."[75]

After all, most Arabs speak the same language, worship the same God, and share a similar historical and cultural tradition. Furthermore, the same architecture, the same sense of heritage, and the same passions and temperaments are evident throughout the Arab World.

In conclusion, one can argue that most of the literature of organizational behaviour in developing countries reviewed above can be applied to Saudi higher education institutions. However, due to the unique cultural setting of Saudi organizations, a special review of selective Saudi literature regarding the topic of this study is set out below.

2.4. SAUDI ARABIAN LITERATURE

As a fast developing country, and a very traditional one, Saudi Arabia has provided a unique external environment for Saudi organizations to work within. Trying to adopt some Western management styles on the one hand, and performing under the influence of Saudi culture on the other, Saudi management has its own characteristics. In describing the relationship between organization and external environment, Aldrich (1992) states that most studies suggest that environments dominate or overpower organizations.[76] Thus, because of the unique external environment of Saudi higher education institutions, this section will review three aspects of Saudi literature:

- management and decision making in Saudi Arabia,
- development of Saudi higher education,
- management of Saudi higher education.

2.4.1. *Management and Decision Making in Saudi Arabia*

Just as it was natural for Max Weber to discover bureaucracy and develop its indicators, it was natural for Arab scholars to discover "Bedoaucracy", as the sociological indicators of the Arab organizational model featuring:[77]

1. A moderate degree of vertical and horizontal specialization.
2. A low degree of co-ordination stemming from the exercise of personal authority and extensive use of committees.
3. A low degree of behaviour formalization and highly "bendable" rules.
4. Personnel decisions based on flexible criteria, subject to wide personal preferences and judgments, leading to overstaffing and disincentives to work efficiently.
5. A high degree of centralization of decision making.

The term "Bedoaucracy", derived from "Bedouin", has been introduced by Al-Awaji (1971),[78] who describes Saudi Arabia as a fast developing country, endeavouring to adopt modern administration theories developed in the west; however Saudi administrative behaviour remains traditional, which has led to the current Saudi bureaucracy. Therefore, Saudi organizational culture needs more careful study in order to set up a suitable managerial model.

Kassem (1989), emphasising the importance of understanding the external organizational environment in Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf States, points out that to create a compatible organizational structure, one needs to understand the cultural biases of the particular model used in the analysis. Moreover, one should be mindful that Arab organizations in the Gulf operate in an entirely different environment.[79] In his call for, "better system not better people" Kassem states:

"There exists a myth in the Arab Gulf States that a lack of indigenous talent is what is slowing down the development process. Perhaps this was the case in the 60s', but no longer today. There is considerable native talent in most fields, but it stays hidden and under utilized. One pillar of the Weberian bureaucratic model is that personnel decisions should be made on the basis of merit. Regrettably, this principle is not always followed in the Arab world even though Islamic teachings warn against violating this rule. In practice, the most qualified person does not always get the job, and the most productive employees do not always end up with the top reward."[80]

Assabaq (1991) agrees with Kassem and adds that most theorists and researchers believe that the current Arabian managerial system needs a cure if not an operation, despite the latest developments in management.[81] He calls for better administrative leadership throughout, improving the following personnel issues: selection; training; evaluation and motivation.[82]

In the studies of decision making in Saudi organizations, Abdulwahab (1982) researched 80 Saudi managers, where he found out that those who attend management training are more likely to follow a scientific method of decision making.[83] On the other hand, he found that most managers were without proper management training, yet they agreed on the importance of such training.[84] Also, in studying organizational behaviour, Khashogjy & Yaqy (1989)[85] carried out a similar study of 191 Saudi managers,

where they achieved a result similar to that of Abdulwahab. In this thesis, the issue of training is discussed, particularly related to professionalism.

Khashogjy & Yaqy *op.cit,* identified the important issue of lack of participation in the decision making process and agreed with Abdulwahab's study of the basics of management (1982) which indicated a strong relationship between participation in the decision making process and job satisfaction.[86] On the subject of job satisfaction, Yaqy (1989) studied Saudi managers, where he found them particularly satisfied with the implementation of decisions they made, and particularly dissatisfied with the low level of their participation in the decision making process.[87] On the other hand, Khamees (1990) sees participation as the most important social need encouraging identity with the group and increasing loyalty to the organization.[88] Furthermore, Aseflan (1984), believes that the higher the level of education the higher the level of participation.[89] "Participation" attracts the attention of most writers in the field of Saudi management and this thesis will investigate it in the context of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

Anastos, Bedos, and Seaman (1980) are among many theorists connecting the centralized decision making process of Saudi management to the personal and rather subtle form

of leadership which is deeply-rooted in the Bedouin ethos.[90] Moreover, Pezeshkpur (1978) states that Arab group leaders typically have dynamic personalities and that in the Arab culture personalities superimpose themselves on issues to such an extent that personalities and issues cannot be separated.[91] Badaway (1980) sees the Saudi management style as a struggle between the authoritarian style and the consultative style.

The authoritarian style is linked to the authoritarian nature of traditional Arabic leadership, whilst the consultative style is linked to the Islamic and tribal values of *"Shura"* which encourage consultation.[92] Ali & Swiercz (1985), characterized the Arab's culture as authoritarian, whereby managers control the behaviour of subordinates through the manipulation and control of the environment in which the latter must operate.[93] The results of this study indicate that managers with a participative style tend to exhibit high satisfaction with people in their work group, while autocratic managers are less inclined to do so.[94] Also, a participative manager tends to have confidence and trust in subordinates, while the autocratic manager tends to lack positive attitudes toward subordinates.[95] Ali & Swiercz state that:

> "The findings clearly indicate that in spite of
> the fact that Saudi managers' decision styles and
> work satisfaction are largely determined by cultural
> values and norms, they also have similarities, in
> their approach and psychological aspects, to
> managers of other cultures."[96]

On the other hand, Al-Jafary & Hollingsworth (1983) studied the managerial behaviour of Saudi managers who work in multinational organizations operating in Saudi Arabia. They found Saudi managers enjoying a Western participative management style, which may suggest that the non-participative management style of Saudi organizations is a result of the influence of Saudi authoritarian culture.[97] They also found that organizational climate is the most potent determinant of effectiveness.[98]

Shiha (1987) talks about managerial "hypocrisy" as a major factor affecting the decision making process in Arab organizations. He sees some subordinates applauding their superior in any decision he makes, even if they believed that it was the wrong decision.[99] One explanation for such an act came from Pezeshkpur (1978), interpreting this feature of Saudi culture thus:

> "...the expression of opinions on controversial
> issues is perceived as an attempt to impose
> another's authority on one's self. Not being
> predisposed to compromise, the automatic reaction is
> to impose one's own ideas on others, and the
> continuation of this process would inevitably lead
> to disagreements. In order to avoid such
> complications, the individuals in a gathering very
> shrewdly talk about non-substantial subjects as a
> matter of making sure that harmony prevails."[100]

Respecting elders and valuing job security might also contribute towards the applauding of any decision that a superior makes. However, in the researcher's view, opening the door to others' opinions increases the level of innovation in the decision making process.

Al-Nimir and Palmer (1982) study innovation in the Saudi bureaucracy to discover reasons for low levels of innovative behaviour among Saudi bureaucrats.[101] Also, they show how difficult it is to bring about social change, even if it is for the benefit of Saudi bureaucracy.[102] Moreover, their study reveals a highly routinized decision making process in Saudi public organizations.[103] Lack of innovation and resistance to social changes are among the cultural factors under study in this thesis, while routinization is among the structural factors. Thus, the findings of Al-Nimir and Palmer will be subject to comparative study within this thesis.

In summary, Saudi management is highly influenced by traditional culture which enforces the Arab organizational model of "Bedoaucracy".

2.4.2. *Development of Saudi Higher Education*

This section highlights the historical background of Saudi higher education in order to show the rapid development and growth of Saudi higher education institutions. First, by building a background to higher education in Saudi Arabia, Al-Farsy (1978)[104] fills a noteworthy gap in the traditional literature on political development in the Middle East. He writes a historical and cultural background of Saudi Arabia which helps the reader to understand the overall external environment in which Saudi organizations operate. Written in the English language, Al-Farsy's book should help non-Arabic readers to understand the role of higher education graduates in the development of Saudi Arabia.

By way of background to Saudi higher education, Baghdadi (1982)[105] covers the early phase of education in the Islamic World and then educational development in Saudi Arabia. As for higher education, the first Saudi university was established in 1957, starting the first academic year with 21 students and 9 teachers. Twenty years later, this

university had 16 colleges and approximately 14,000 students. The most recent data indicates that on the campus of that university there are 6520 administrative staff, 2765 academic staff, and 32778 students.[106] These figures show the rapid development and growth of Saudi higher education institutions. The question that is raised by these figures for this thesis is: has there been an equivalent development in the managerial system in general and the decision making process in particular?

There are, in addition, specific articles dealing with management and decision making in Saudi higher education, which are highlighted below.

2.4.3. *Management of Saudi Higher Education*

Studying the organizational development of Saudi higher education, Alsaif (1985) submitted a paper asking: is "university" an ideal type of organization?[107] In fact, he does not answer the question, instead highlighting some managerial problems in higher education. Tenbak (1985) believes that, in the early years of higher education, it was logical for the Government to focus upon the quantity of higher education in terms of colleges and students and this affected the quality of the higher education products.[108] Tenbak calls for a different approach towards every aspect

of the higher education management. Ten years after the Tenbak article, the researcher anticipates that this thesis will help to develop such a different approach.

In an attempt to study the problems of coordination in higher education, Albader & Asaif (1988), found a lack of coordination inside universities, between universities, and between universities and government bodies.[109] Communication methods were partly blamed for their creation.[110] This thesis highlights the issues of coordination and communication and investigates their connection with the efficiency of decision making processes in Saudi higher education institutions.

Focusing on the issue of participation, Shegliah (1983) sees heads of department in Saudi colleges as participant members in the university decision making process.[111] Nonetheless, Al-Najim (1985) finds as a feature of Saudi bureaucracy, lack of participation in the decision making process in King Faisal University, where even heads of department do not participate in creating policies that affect their departments.[112] Shegliah states the theoretical point of view, while Al-Najim demonstrates the practical point of view. The concept of participation will be discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

Dhaher (1979), studied the relationship between bureaucracy and social alienation in King Abdulaziz University and discovered that academic staff are neither cooperative amongst themselves, nor cooperative with the students or the administration.[113] In Dhaher's opinion, most academic staff have no faith in efficient bureaucracy mainly because of the high level of centralization which prohibits them from participating in the decision making process.[114] Moreover, "nepotism" or what Dhaher calls "intermediates", creates a privileged few who possess a ticket to opportunities not available to the majority.[115]

In the same university, Madani (1978), studied the hierarchy and found more evidence of a highly centralized system with lack of coordination between its administrative elements.[116]

In summary, the inefficient nature of bureaucracy in Saudi universities was highlighted in most of the above literature. This thesis will take into consideration those factors affecting the efficiency of the decision making process in order to assist towards its improvement.

2.6. *CONCLUSION*

It can be seen that several factors are regarded as relevant to the efficiency of decision making processes in the work of many theorists, writers, and administrators. Western literature indicates a strong relationship between cultural and structural factors and decision making in any organization. The external environment plays a major role in determining the leadership and management style of higher education institutions.

In the literature of the developing countries, the significance of the influence of culture makes the external environment most important in shaping the organizational structure and affecting the decision making process. In Saudi Arabia, the literature review reveals how traditional culture affects the imported structure, to produce a uniquely characterized bureaucracy, which Arab theorists termed "Bedoaucracy". The researcher will use some of the above mentioned work to analyse and study five cultural factors and five structural factors in Saudi higher education institutions in an attempt to develop a new approach for more efficient decisions.

In the researcher's opinion, the highest degree of efficiency in decision making is reached when all the important cultural and structural factors have a positive influence upon its process. The aim of this research has been to identify factors which are thought to be note-worthy by authors in the field and to assess their significance for members of Saudi higher education institutions.

This chapter highlights the earlier work carried out relevant to this thesis. The next will highlight the methodology employed in this study. The researcher will introduce the pilot study which led to the adoption of the six research methods used to gather relevant information.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

3.1. *INTRODUCTION*

As mentioned in the previous Chapters, little could be found in the literature on the subject of decision making in Saudi higher education institutions; thus, the majority of the information had to come from comprehensive field work (Foster,1962),[1] and consequently additional care had to be taken in the design of the field work of this study. In fact, the researcher frequently found it necessary to redesign the strategy of the field work in order to meet the needs of this investigation.

In this chapter, the reader will find information regarding the pilot study and the stages involved. Most importantly, this chapter highlights the research methods that were used to gather data and highlights data collection and analysis procedures.

Before the first field trip commenced, three important questions had to be answered regarding the following:-

- subjects to be covered

- methods of studying chosen subjects

- data collection and analysis

First, how to determine the important issues to cover in the study?

The answer was the use of a pilot study. The pilot study was used to explore the views of participants and to identify the issues that needed to be investigated in order to determine the level of efficiency in the decision making process.

Secondly, what methods should be used to cover the issues chosen?

The answer was to apply a variety of methods in order to gather as much relevant information as possible. The absence of previous studies in the field of decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions, makes field work the back-bone of this study.

Six methods of research were used, namely:-

- questionnaires
- interviews
- attending meetings
- following some decisions as case studies
- document studying
- general observation

This chapter describes these methods in terms of their design, their role, and their contribution to this study. Also, the researcher will explain why these six methods have been chosen and how they are complementary, providing complete coverage of the subject under study. Moreover, these methods will be critically evaluated and justified throughout awareness of their problems.

Thirdly, how are we to collect and analyse the data?

The answer depends on the type of data that needs to be collected and analysed. In fact, because six different methods of research were used, different methods of data retrieval and data analysis were required. For example, questionnaires need a particular method of collection and analysis because of their special nature, as compared with other methods of research. The reader will find in this chapter a full explanation of all the methods of data collection and data analysis.

The research procedures adopted throughout this study are perfectly ethical, bearing in mind that such a claim varies according to time, culture, and other circumstances (Bernard,1988).[2] For example, it is important to draw the reader's attention to the nature of the personal relationships that helped the researcher to carry out this fieldwork. Some of these relationships were established in

the past while the researcher was studying and working in a Saudi higher education institution, but the majority were established during the fieldwork process by gaining the trust of many participants who voluntarily provided their services to help the researcher.

3.2. THE PILOT STUDY

As field work was the main source of information, the researcher had to choose carefully the areas to be studied and the methods of such study. A pilot study seemed critically important; in other words, a well-executed pilot study would indicate the direction that this field work should take (Oppenheim,1984).[3] Thus, the researcher had to deal very carefully with carrying out the pilot study, which went through four stages:-

- first draft questionnaire

- phone interviews

- redesigned questionnaire

- test of the research methods

3.2.1. *First Draft Questionnaire*

The use of communication technology was very important in saving time. In the first stage of the pilot study, the researcher used a facsimile machine to send a pilot questionnaire to two major universities in Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire was chosen because it could be easily sent and distributed. The aim was to identify the issues that should be covered, but also those that could not be covered and the reason for this.

A random sample of **50** participants in each university was chosen through the university computer centres. Most of the questions in the pilot questionnaire were general questions about many specific issues. In responding, the participants avoided dealing with certain issues such as leadership and management style. Thereby they avoided what Roskin (1989) identified as controversial issues and a source for useful ideas.[4]

Throughout the first stage of the pilot study, it became clear that participants at Saudi higher education institutions try to avoid questions that ask them to directly evaluate the leadership style in their organization. Moreover, participants did not feel comfortable in dealing with questions that required some knowledge of management theories, such as questions about

aspects of decision making, whether descriptive, normative, or prescriptive (Bell *ed.al*,1988).[5]

Unfortunately, most questions that discuss the theoretical framework of decision making came back either unanswered or answered with, "Not known". On the other hand, questions probing personal opinions regarding organizational culture or structure were answered fully. The researcher tried to clarify the picture in the second stage.

3.2.2. *Phone Interviews*

This stage of the pilot study was carried out via lengthy overseas telephone conversations with nine senior officials at all seven Saudi higher education institutions. The main objective of this stage was to fully brief the senior officials as to the content of the study, in the hope that they would assist the researcher in carrying out the field work on university campuses. The researcher took account of their views before finalising the areas to be addressed by the field work. For example, the need to acknowledge the importance of Saudi culture in designing the field work was apparent. Thus, one should not cross the uncrossable boundary lines of the Saudi cultural and religious values by for example not showing the highest

respect to elders' opinions even when one totally disagrees. Previous studies, in fact, suggest that Middle-Eastern managers favour a traditional approach influenced by their culture and history (e.g. Badawy, 1980).[6]

Another important point which emerged was to encourage participants' cooperation by focusing on issues that made sense to them. Merton (1936), stated that:

> "the most obvious limitation to a correct anticipation of consequences of action is provided by the existing state of knowledge."[7]

Thus, in order to work around this limitation, the researcher had to redesign the questionnaire in a way that made it very simple and easy to understand. The redesigned questionnaire formed the basis of the third stage.

3.2.3. *The Redesigned Questionnaire*

On the basis of what had been learned from the previous two stages of the pilot study, structural factors and cultural factors determine the degree of efficiency in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Indeed, as Hofstede *ed.al* (1990) stated, in studying organizational behavior, a researcher should be

aware of the relationship between structural factors and cultural factors. They affect each other in a way that make them equally important to the study.[8] Thus, the questionnaire was redesigned to concentrate on these factors.

The researcher sent the redesigned questionnaire by fax to the two major universities in Saudi Arabia. This time, it was distributed by the department of administrative affairs amongst a random sample of **70** employees in each university, covering the three levels of management (higher, middle and lower) and the teaching staff.

An evaluation of the findings of the literature review in conjunction with the results of these questionnaires, the researcher found that organizational environment, both internal and external, is one of the most important cultural factors influencing the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions, as well as the issues of nepotism, innovation, social change, and professionalism. Centralization is the most important structural factor, along with formalization, communication, routinization, and coordination, all of which play a key role in determining the level of efficiency in decision making. These **10** factors were tested in the fourth and final stage of the pilot study.

3.2.4. *Test of the Research Methods*

The fourth and final stage of the pilot study focused on testing the redesigned questionnaire and other methods of field work. The main objective of this stage was to test the effectiveness of the intended field work. Moreover, it was important to ensure that the chosen methods of research were capable of addressing the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions by distinguishing between descriptive study (which tells only what happened), and explanatory study (which tells why or how it happened) (Bailey, 1978).[9] In fact, having the wrong tool for the task may be no better than having no tools at all (Downey & Ireland,1979).[10] In fact, Gill & Johnson (1991) argued that:

> "Multiple and independent methods, should, if reaching the same conclusions, have greater validity and reliability than a single methodological approach to a problem....(therefore), for students undertaking extended pieces of work such as research degrees....multi-methods may be especially appropriate."[11]

The use of six methods of research allowed the researcher to cover comprehensively the topic under study (Sayer,1992).[12] Different methods combined to complete the task and gather additional data (Bastin,1985).[13] A very important argument was made by Handy (1991) as follows:

> "Management of organisations is not a precise
> science, but more of a creative and political
> process, owing much to the prevailing culture
> and tradition in that place at that time.
> Organisations, like tribes and families, have their
> own ways of doing things, things that work for them
> and things that do not work. You have to **read** them
> right to be effective."[14]

As a means of achieving this "reading", the researcher
combined the quantitative approach which deals with scales
and numbers and the qualitative approach which asks people
what they think, which allowed the researcher to be
physically and socially close to the subject under study
(Jones,1988).[15]

At this stage, the researcher had the opportunity to
negotiate access for the application of all six methods of
research. The result was very positive in terms of applying
the methods, covering the issues, collecting the data, and
validating it. The validity of the data was determined
through triangulation (Denzin,1970),[16] which means in our
case what Jill & Johnson (1991) stated as:

> "the use of different research methods in the
> same study to collect data so as to check the
> validity of any findings."[17]

Below is a full explanation of the research methods used and how data was retrieved and analysed starting with the questionnaires.

3.3. THE QUESTIONNAIRES

When studying higher education institutions, one should be aware of the diverse groups in such organizations, namely: administrative staff, academic staff, and students. During the pilot study, some officials argued that in studying decision making processes, research should only focus on the decision makers. However, the researcher believes that, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture, everybody who is affected by the outcome of these decisions should have the option to participate in this study. In fact, Conrad (1989) contends that higher education should be viewed as a field of study in which the major scholarly peers, administrative staff, academic staff and educated public, provide the lodestar for enquiry.[18] In this enquiry, the researcher aims to gather data through covering the three main groups in Saudi higher education institutions. Two different questionnaires were designed: a shorter questionnaire for distribution amongst students and the main questionnaire, for distribution amongst administrative and academic staff.

3.3.1. *The Student Questionnaire*

In the researcher's view students are what a university is about. Thus Saudi students' evaluation of the decision making process that affects their academic lives is most valuable.

Unfortunately, the student questionnaire was rejected by senior officials, who believed that it would cause conflict. However, as an alternative, the researcher used personal contacts to obtain help from the security officers in two universities. Their task was to hand the questionnaire to students who had graduated and came to the security officers to obtain a deposit refund in exchange for their car parking stickers.

The researcher was unable to select a random sample from the population of all the students in the Saudi higher education institutions. However, he was able to highlight the views of students who had spent at least four years on campus without violating senior officials' orders which might have jeopardized carrying out the fieldwork on any campus. The result of the student questionnaire is presented in appendix 3.

3.3.2. *The Main Questionnaire*

Reverting to the main questionnaire, it is important to mention that the questionnaire is the main research method for many reasons. Firstly, because of the large population, it is the method that enables the researcher to cover a large sample with minimal time and effort. Secondly, a well-designed questionnaire could cover all the issues under study without taking too much of the participant's time to complete. Thirdly, a questionnaire preserves the confidentiality of participants even from the researcher, which made them more comfortable and open when answering the questions. Fourthly, using scaled questions which have been tested and used in similar studies increased the researcher's accuracy when presenting the results of the study. Finally, the results of a questionnaire are easy to display through tables or graphs, which gives the reader a readily grasped representation of those results.

Thus, the researcher spent extra time designing this questionnaire in order to maximise its results. The following pages will highlight aspects of the questionnaire's construction and focus on the method of survey sampling, questionnaire distribution and collection. Some of the difficulties faced during that process will be discussed.

3.3.2.1. Construction of the Questionnaire

As mentioned earlier, the questionnaire should cover
all the issues under study. The pilot study indicated that
the researcher needed to cover **10** factors affecting the
decision making process in Saudi higher education
institutions. The researcher studied western literature for
existing scaled questionnaires. Price (1972)[19] and Miller
(1983),[20] were the most important references. Additionally,
Al Nimir & Palmer (1982)[21] analysed some aspects of
organizational behaviour at some Saudi public organizations,
which the researcher used to make comparisons with Saudi
higher education institutions. Additionally, the researcher
created some questions of his own.

In general, the researcher avoided questions which
Bailey (op.cit)[22] terms as double-barreled, ambiguous,
abstract, leading, sensitive or threatening. Also, he
followed the advice of Babbie (1979)[23] in avoiding negative
or biased items and terms and ensured that participants were
enabled to answer by simplifying the language of the
questionnaire. Bearing in mind the Saudi conservative
culture, the researcher chose the wording of the
questionnaire carefully to encourage participants'
cooperation.

The questionnaire was in the form of a folder of six pages plus a covering letter which thanked the participant for his cooperation and stressed the importance of providing answers which were as frank as possible, to ensure the success of the study. Since questionnaires were distributed, answered and returned anonymously participants were assured of confidentiality, and the researcher asked for the questionnaire to be returned as soon as possible.

Each questionnaire was coded, identifying the number of the questionnaire, the university, type of job (administrative or academic), and management level (higher, middle, lower). The questions covered all the factors under study utilizing different types of questions to make the questionnaire more interesting (see Appendix 1.). The researcher mixed the questions in a way so as to keep the participant's interest. However, the questions were asked in a logical sequence. The questionnaire was redesigned several times based on consultations with supervisor, higher level managers and a graphic designer before being finally printed and ready for distribution.

3.3.2.2. The Survey Sample

It was evident, in this case study, that the sample should ideally represent the whole population involved in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions as shown in table(3/1);[24]

Table 3/1

Population of study	Ad. Staff	Ac. Staff	Total
King Saud University	6520	2765	9285
King Abdullaziz University	1983	1914	3897
Imam Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University	1975	1707	3682
King Faisal University	1457	695	2152
Umm Alqura University	799	1201	2000
King Fahad University for Petroleum and Mineral	902	652	1554
The Islamic University	528	361	889
TOTAL	14164	9295	23459

To ensure the confidentiality of this study, this will be the only table within this work showing specific universities.

The population, as shown in table(3/1), is **23459** people; which represents **14164** administrative staff and **9295** academic staff. On the basis of experience in western universities, researchers may be advised to differentiate between the objectives and management of administrative and academic staff. However, the pilot study of this research indicated that the decision making processes related to both groups are managed via the same bureaucratic system (see

Appendix 5), rather than being separated, leading the researcher to treat them as a homogeneous groups.

How should the survey sample be chosen? Babbie *op.cit* answers this question thus:

> "... a sample will be representative of the population from which it is selected, if all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected in the sample."[25]

The researcher used the method of random sampling, whereby any member of the population was equally likely as any other to be chosen for the sample (Bailey *op.cit*).[26] It was executed in different ways in different universities.

To ensure maximum cooperation, the researcher commenced the process of sampling by presenting a formal letter from the Secretary-General of the researcher's university to the Secretary-Generals of other universities. Some universities gave the researcher access to their computer which selected the sample, others gave a list of all the personnel and staff on the basis of which to choose the random sample, while others gave the job of choosing the random sample and distributing the questionnaires to their internal departments of public relations and personnel affairs.

At one university the Secretary-General did not have the authority to approve the distribution of the questionnaire in that university and had to consult the Rector himself, who rejected the idea without explanation. When the researcher asked for a written reason for the Rector's decision to take back to London to show why this major university had been omitted, it was refused.

The only solution was to use personal contacts to complete the assignment in that university. By using people who had graduated from that university, the researcher went randomly to offices within that university asking for help. In fact, the highest return rate of questionnaire was from that university. At other universities, after many visits during the field work, the researcher was obliged to make another field trip to Saudi Arabia to collect more questionnaires. It is important to mention that the researcher was asked by higher level managers to distribute similar numbers of questionnaire amongst all the Saudi universities regardless of their size differences. The researcher agreed to this to ensure maximum cooperation. The affect of this requirement will be consider later in this chapter, under evaluation of the research methodology. In total, the researcher distributed **1000** questionnaires, and **451** were returned completed. The table below indicates the distribution and return rates for each university.

Table 3/2   "DISTRIBUTIONS"   "RETURNS"

University	HLM	MLM	LLM	TS	total	HLM	MLM	LLM	TS	total
Uni.1	7	46	46	46	145	4	24	18	19	65
Uni.2	7	46	46	46	145	3	27	23	25	78
Uni.3	7	46	46	46	145	5	20	19	17	61
Uni.4	7	46	46	46	145	4	22	19	20	65
Uni.5	7	45	44	44	140	3	21	17	18	59
Uni.6	7	45	44	44	140	3	19	21	19	62
Uni.7	7	45	44	44	140	3	20	18	20	61
TOTAL	49	319	316	316	1000	25	153	135	138	451

The general evaluation of the decision making process in the eyes of the study participants is presented in Appendix 2.

In summary, the questionnaire is the main research method. The starting point for other methods usually comes from a questionnaire's results. Most of the researcher's knowledge about decision making in Saudi higher education institutions stems from the answers to the questionnaire. As Handy (1990) stated:

> "The wheel of learning starts with questions which are jolted into being by curiosity, or the need to know. Those who ask no questions get told no lies - maybe - but they also add nothing to their understanding of the world."[27]

Additional methods of research have made a major contribution to turning the wheel of learning. This section has dealt with the quantitative method of questionnaire; the following pages will highlight the qualitative methods of research.

3.4. THE INTERVIEWS

The questionnaire covered all the factors under study through multiple choice questions. Some issues required follow up and more explanation and the interview was the method most suited to accomplishing this task. Through interviews, the researcher tackled all the factors under study by follow up on the detail of issues that had been omitted in the questionnaire. Through the flexibility of an interview, the researcher could probe for more specific answers and tackle different issues with different participants (Bailey,op.cit).[28]

Researchers such as Yin (1979)[29] and Pennings (1987),[30] use telephone interviews to cover a wide geographic area. However, the researcher chose to use face-to-face interviews, even when that involved traveling long distances to visit different universities. In a face-to-face interview, the researcher was better able to understand the participants' feelings and actions at a personal level (Smircich,1985).[31] Moreover Webb et.al (1981) acknowledges the great advantage of the interviewer's power to introduce and reintroduce certain topics.[32] Also, Bryman (1989) stated that the researcher could collect additional relevant observational material.[33]

Although the researcher had the approval to carry out these interviews, he had sometimes to use personal contacts to gain the confidence of the interviewee. It was clear to the researcher that when he had been introduced to the interviewee by another member of the organization, the interviewee seems more comfortable and more trusting. In fact, participants felt relief when they received the assurance of confidentiality, and that no names would be mentioned in the study (Cameron, 1982).[34] Trust was especially required when asking interviewees to allow the researcher to use a tape-recorder (Hesseling, 1973).[35] In fact, only a few interviewees consented to a recorded interview. Others suggested that they speak slowly to enable the researcher to write down their answers.

In an interview, most procedural problems result from the interviewees' inability to respond appropriately, in some cases because they did not understand the question; in other cases, they understand the question but either could not, or chose not to, respond (Briggs, 1986).[36] Also, as Lawrance (1988) has stated, one important pervasive problem with interviewing is the difficulty of getting interviewees to share discrediting data about individuals or organizations that the interviewer suspects.[37]

To overcome this problem, the researcher used two different techniques. First, to say, as Lawrance suggested, that the researcher had come across certain phenomena in another Saudi university, and ask if this was a problem they experienced in their own organization.[38]   If this did not work, the researcher followed the advice of Pezeshkpur (1978)[39] by explaining how important for his study was the frank participation of the interviewee.

Bailey *op.cit*, sees time and money restraints as the main disadvantage of interview studies.[40]   In the case of this study, the researcher had to travel between seven campuses in six Saudi cities.   However, he was able to minimise the time and cost through pre-arranging a schedule of interviews.   At the end of the fieldwork, **67** interviews had been carried out.

3.5.   ATTENDING MEETINGS

In the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher collected the data according to how people responded. However, by attending meetings, the researcher provided himself with a back-cloth which greatly facilitated his understanding of Saudi universities (Bryman, *op.cit*).[41]   It also provided data on substantive matters, provided diagnostic material on how these meetings had been conducted

and how the group's culture had been created and re-created (Frame,1991).[42]

Schwartzman (1989)[43] has worries about the way that people go to meetings, complain about them and then proceed to set up more of them. She also points out that while we think that meetings are for making decisions, decisions are often the last thing to emerge. Instead, she says, the obvious, but ignored component of the organization is the meeting itself. Schwartzman's thesis is that we hold meetings in order to create organization, to display its membership, to demonstrate its power, its status, its rhetoric. Relying on Schwartzman's argument, Professor Turner suggested that:

> "students who are intent on changing decision
> making in non-Western organizations should be
> thinking of changing meetings in non-Western
> organizations."[44]

In fact, according to Golde(1972), various studies argue that managers spend up to 50% of their time in meetings.[45] Schwartzman believes that it is the meeting and how it produces and reproduces power relationships and systems of control that should be the subject of attention when studying organization.[46]

In fact, this method was the most difficult to apply, because of the difficulty in obtaining approval for attending meetings. However, **8** higher level managers, **3** middle level managers and **4** heads of academic departments were very helpful in allowing the researcher to sit in on **15** meetings and to observe. Whilst the main aim of this research method is to study the functioning of the meetings to gather more information regarding the decision making process, the researcher took account of a mixture of the meetings which had different foci.

Because of the variety and number of meetings attended, this method provided a useful insight into how decisions were made. The researcher attended **3** examples of regular monthly meetings, **2** emergency meetings to deal with immediate issues such as a fire and **10** other committee meetings scheduled to discuss specific managerial and contractual issues. In this way, the researcher was able to take note of the structural and cultural factors that affected the process and outcome of those meetings. For example, the researcher could observe in a meeting a microcosm of the span of control that existed in that organization. Although it was difficult to implement, attending meetings proved to be a very important method in the gathering of data and illustrates the advantage of multi-method research (Denzin, 1970).[47]

3.6. <u>Following Decision Cases</u>

Although theorists have tried to explain and describe the process of decision making, tracking an actual decision through the process of being made is considered to provide the most realistic picture of the decision making process (Cary et.al,1991).[48]   For that reason, this method was included among the research methods in this study.   In addition, the researcher could inspect particular aspects of the decision making process, such as the work of gathering information in support of the making of a certain decision (Cyert & March,1963).[49]

In order to gain familiarity with the decision making process in each institution and to gather as much relevant information as possible (Cary et.al,1988),[50] it was important to follow different decision cases in each organization under study.   The researcher followed some decisions from the first stage, such as the decision with regard to carrying out this field work, which was taken by each of the seven campuses.   In addition, other decisions were picked up in the middle of their process and were followed on from that point.   Interviews, meetings, and general observation were the starting point for picking up the decision cases.   The aim was to follow the progress of

variety of decisions, rather than assess their importance to those involved in the process. These decisions were as follow:-

- **7** financial decisions regarding contractual payment, one in each of the seven universities.

- **3** decisions regarding the hiring of new employees,

- **2** decisions regarding application for membership of the university's sports centre,

- a decision to change the teaching system in four universities from the American Hour Credit System to the fixed schedule system,

- a decision to grant a scholarship,

- a decision to extend a scholarship,

- a decision to promote a member of staff,

- a decision to refurbish a students' housing unit,

- a decision in regards to hold a conference on the impact of western housing design if applied in Saudi cities,

- a decision to grant an educational trip,

- a decision to extend the working hours of the university Sports Arena,

- a decision in regards to close a student's file,

In total 28 decisions were followed, however, because of time constraints during the fieldwork period, and the delay in making some decisions, a few were not followed up to the point of action. Nonetheless, the main reason for

adopting the following of decision cases as a research method was to spot the factors that affect the process. Thus, even in the case of decisions that had not been finally made and put into action during the fieldwork, the factors that slowed down the process in these cases were identified.

By following these decision cases the researcher was able to assess the knowledge he had gained from other research methods. For example, questionnaire and interviews results support the literature's identification of the existence of "nepotism" as a part of Saudi organizational behaviour, and the researcher put these findings to the test to see whether or not such behaviour existed in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. On the other hand, some important information that the researcher gained from following decision cases was taken into interviews for greater clarification. In some decision cases, the researcher was also able to refer to organizational documents to compare official procedure with the practice of decision making.

3.7. <u>DOCUMENT STUDYING</u>

In seeking to gather as much relevant information as possible, the study of documents seems to be one of the most important methods of research. It is true that social researchers are very dependent upon information provided by documents of various sorts (Dunkerley,1988).[51] However, one should be very careful when applying this research method, to avoid some of the disadvantages of depending on it as a main source of information. Frame (1991) stated that:

> "Reservations about the use of written material as a source of data often focus on the disadvantages of retrospection when no one involved either in producing or receiving them is available to interpret their meanings except with hindsight. This criticism often also applies to recent documents in cases where the researcher has no access to the producers and their intended meanings, nor the recipients and their interpretations. But such criticism is less relevant if the researcher has access to producers and recipients, as I did."[52]

The researcher of this thesis also had access to producers and recipients, and in fact was very selective in choosing the documents for study. Thus, the documents chosen had to meet two main requirements:

- a document should be strongly connected to the decision making process.

- the researcher should be able to communicate with the producer of such document in order to avoid misinterpretation.

Several documents were selected in each Saudi higher education institution. The chart of the organizational structure was one of the main documents that the researcher focused upon. In the hierarchy chart of each Saudi higher education institution, there is a graphic representation of the organizational structure. Another important document was the book of authority, which gave the researcher an indication of the distribution of authority in each institution as well as the opportunity to compare the organizational structures of different institutions. In addition, other documents and official memoranda were studied such as budget reports and recruitment papers to highlight some aspects of the decision making process.

On a broader scale, the researcher studied documents regarding the development plan of Saudi higher education. These documents were published by the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, and the Ministry of Planning, and provide the researcher with a general idea of the Government's influence over the decision making in higher education institutions. It is important to note that the Saudi Government controls all the institutions under study; there are no private higher education institutions.

3.8. GENERAL OBSERVATION

Carrying the fieldwork inside the Saudi universities gave the researcher an opportunity to use observation as an important research method. Observation methods are always important in the analysis of organizational data (Dutka & Frankel,1993),[53] allowing data on a number of topics to be addressed by another method (Bryman *op.cit*).[54] For example, certain organizational behaviour observed by the researcher can be highlighted in an interview. On the other hand, the validity of evidence coming from other methods can be checked by observation (Bryman *Ibid*).[55]

Once inside the organisation, the researcher made notes and regarded himself as always 'on duty' (Turner,1988).[56] In order to understand the cultural aspects of Saudi higher education institutions, the researcher talked to people, observed people, and deployed himself to 'be around' (Turner *Ibid*).[57] Subsequently, these notes were transferred into either questions that could be answered through other methods, or furnish information about factors that affected the decision making process.

General observation allowed the researcher the vital flexibility to achieve insights. For example, it enabled him to discover the inter relations between elements of the whole, such as the influence of peer pressure among those who work in the same environment (Light,1979).[58] This method opened the door to unexpected information. Each day in field work, the researcher watched and made notes without knowing exactly what sort of information was coming next whereas in other research methods, the researcher gleaned information by asking specific questions or searching along certain pre-defined lines.

Through observation, the researcher acquired the knowledge of the organisations necessary to understand incomplete references to the sites in other settings, and to talk informally to members as he walked around, a method similar to that adopted by Frame (op.cit).[59] In fact, general observation was directly connected to the other research methods in two ways. In some cases, it was the starting point for information to be followed up and focused upon by other methods and in other cases, it confirmed or disconfirmed the information that other methods brought to the attention of the researcher.

3.9. DATA RETRIEVAL AND ORGANIZATION

Different methods of research require different methods of data retrieval (Smith & Cantley,1985).[60] However, the retrieval of relevant information required time and effort. For instance, the researcher had high expectations of the questionnaire's response rate because of the nature of the organizations under study and the fact that most people there were highly educated and familiar with fieldwork studies. However, questionnaires distributed by mail or similar methods are known to have a rather limited response rate (Heller,1973).[61] Thus, in order to increase the response rate of the study questionnaire, the researcher started by telephoning participants, and ultimately visited many. Finally, **451** questionnaires were collected out of **1000** distributed.

As methods of organising data vary according to methods of research (Shrivastava & Lim,1989),[62] the researcher created special files for each method of research. For example, interviews had a file that contained cassette tapes and a notebook, in which the researcher wrote down all the information which he gathered throughout interviews. For each interview, the notebook indicated dates, interviewee position, and questions and answers. A similar notebook was placed in the files of meetings, decision cases, and general

observation, with necessary adjustments according to the nature of the research method.

In the document study file, the researcher gathered hierarchy charts, books of authority, development plans, and other documents that related to the subject of decision making. It is the researcher's belief that a well-organised data base has a positive impact on the analysis of that data. In other words, the researcher's job of analysing the data becomes less difficult when he is dealing with well-organised data.

3.10. DATA ANALYSIS

Different methods of analysis were used, depending on the methods of research. Quantitative methods were used for the questionnaire analysis, while qualitative methods were used to analyse the information gathered from other research methods.

In the quantitative analysis, a special computer programme was designed in Imam Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University's Computer Centre. As Whisler (1964) argued:

> "It would be immensely convenient to have a numerical index of control so that one could test statements of the kind: "A Company is more highly centralized than B Company."[63]

At the researcher's suggestion it was designed by a computer programmer to analyse the questionnaire results. Put simply, the programme design was based on that of the questionnaire. Thus, the researcher entered the answers in each returned questionnaire digitally. After entering the responses of **451** returned questionnaires, the researcher was able to ask the computer about who answered what and to analyse the answers in terms of number and percentage. The computer also gave the percentage at each university or level of management. Throughout the quantitative analysis using the computer programme the researcher was able to obtain useful tables and graphs to express visually the study findings.

It is important to draw the reader's attention that the results of all the *six* research methods suggested a high level of homogeneity between Saudi universities. Thus, the researcher will present the results of each university when dealing with the main cultural and structural factors whilst he will treat the whole sample as a one unit when analyzing the cultural and structural sub-factors.

In regards to the test of significance, the researcher used the cross tabulation to find most of the presented tables with chi-square scores

of   < 0.001 or   < 0.01. The exception were those table with small population that made such a test inappropriate such as those regarding higher level management. Therefore the researcher relied on the combination of the results of different methods as the main measurement of the validity of the findings.

As quantitative analysis associates with the questionnaire, qualitative analysis is appropriate to the other five methods of research. It is fair to say that by the best of current standards, analysis of qualitative data is a mysterious, half-formulated art (Miles,1979).[64] In fact, the researcher created a file for each of the **10** studied factors, and then moved the information from the research method files into the factor files. He then combined all the data in order to understand each factor and determine its effect on the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

Jick (1979) argued that more than one method should be used in the validation process so that the convergence or agreement between two methods enhances our belief that the results are valid and is not a methodological artifact.[65] In this regard, the reader can see that the researcher has used six different research methods in order to gather as much relevant information as possible and to enhance the validity of that information.

3.11. EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Looking back at the field work, the researcher feels confident that, given the restrctions imposed by the specific organizations being studied, he did the best he could, by combining six research methods to explore the ten influential factors. Nonetheless, the researcher would like to draw the reader attention to three points.

Firstly, when distributing the questionnaires, the researcher was persuaded by higher level managers to ignore the different sizes of universities' populations. This he did in order to increase their cooperation. The researcher is aware that this raises a question as to the representativeness of the data collected. The size of the sample, which as indicated(p.74) was **451**, gives grounds for confidence that the research data provides sufficient meaningful evidence for this aspect of the methodology.

Secondly, the researcher is aware of the importance of statistical tests of significant with regard to questionnaire responses. In some instances the number of respondents, such as higher level management, was below five. In other instances, the number of responses to a particular questions, was again below five. In these

circumstances, such statistical tests were deemed inappropriate. As a result it was not possible to apply them with any consistency. Rather the researcher chose to rely on the multi-method approach (Gill & Johnson, 1991)[66] and (Jick, 1979)[67].

Finally, attending meetings as a method would have been improved had the researcher been able to sit in on the full-range of meetings, especially at the higher level management. Nevertheless, because of the limitation in time and access, the researcher feel fortunate to be able to attend the 15 meetings mentioned earlier.

Despite these shortcomings in the application of the indicated methods, the researcher's use of six different research methods has resulted in overcoming the effect of the above problems, and as recommended by the above authors.

3.12. CONCLUSION

There is a great shortage of earlier studies that handle topics related to the subject of decision making in Saudi higher education institution. The particular cultural setting of Saudi Arabia makes this study so unique that it has to depend heavily on fieldwork. Thus, the researcher invested much time and effort in designing and carrying out

the fieldwork in all the seven Saudi higher education institutions. Each enquiry requires careful selection of the proper tools in order to achieve maximum understanding of case under study. As a means of achieving this "maximum understanding", the researcher used the six methods of research which have been highlighted in this chapter in addition to the methods of data retrieval, data organisation, and data analysis.

In summary, quantitative and qualitative methods have been combined to investigate five cultural and five structural factors that affect the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. The questionnaire (the quantitative method), was emerged through the four stages of the pilot study. It was mostly based on scaled questionnaires that been created and used by Western theorists for organizational measurement. However, to take account of the unique social setting of Saudi Arabia, a few changes in the language and form of questions were made. A computer programme was designed to analyse the data of the questionnaires.

Additionally, five qualitative methods were used to study the 10 chosen factors; interviews, attending meetings, following decision cases, document studying and general observation, each playing a different and important role in studying these factors. Quantitative and qualitative

methods of research work combine to support and complement each other.   Results from each can be used to validate results from the others.   All six research methods have made a major contribution to gathering the necessary data and information.

Finally, this study depends heavily on the information that the researcher gathered through the fieldwork which was designed to be suited to the social setting of Saudi Arabia. It is the researcher's belief that he gathered all the information necessary to execute the study.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE MAIN CULTURAL FACTOR ;

"ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT "

4.1. _INTRODUCTION_

This chapter investigates the influence of "organizational environment" on the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Using the indications of the pilot study and fieldwork of the most influential elements of the organizational environment, the researcher has divided this chapter into two major sections dealing in the first with the external environment and in the second with the internal environment.

Child (1984) argued that:

> "The kind of environment in which an organization is operating determines the tasks and production it undertakes, and these have implications for its structural design and choice of personnel."[1]

Thus, the organizational environment influences all aspects of organizational activities including the decision making process. Meyer & Scott (1992) asked:

> "What boundaries are we to draw in defining the environment of an organization?."[2]

In an answer to that question, the researcher agrees with Al-Said (1992) who identifies two main aspects of the environment: the social environment, consisting of the interpersonal and inter group organization, and the physical environment, consisting of the terrestrial or geographical setting.[3] Thus, this chapter will focus on the following:

I) *External environment;* this refers to Saudi culture and social ethics which form the external social environment while city structure forms the external physical environment.

II) *Internal environment;* this refers to the inter-relations between individuals and their organizations and forms the internal social environment while campus facilities form the internal physical environment.

The researcher will present the information regarding organizational environment, both external and internal by examining the results of the research methods individually. The chapter will be concluded by considering the current state of the organizational environment and its relevance to the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

4.2. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

This section will focus on the influence of the external environment upon the decision making process. The strong relationship between external and internal environment makes it difficult to separate the two (Schwenk,1988).[4] Plante (1987) argued that every decision made by an administrator reveals his values as influenced by the national culture and he should also, if wise, take into consideration a campus's culture.[5] The balance of these pressures can be seen in the degree of coincidence between the organizationally correct and the socially correct decisions (Simon,1976).[6] Handy (1991) stated that:

> "Each culture works on quite different assumptions about the basis of power and influence, about what motivates people, how they think and learn, how things can be changed. These assumptions result in quite different styles of management, structures, procedures and reward systems."[7]

Al-Jafary & Hollingsworth (1983) argued that Saudi culture is the main factor affecting the internal environment.[8]

Many management researchers view culture as a set of ideas shared by members of a cultural group. Indeed, culture is not an individual characteristic but, rather, rests on a set of common theories of behaviour or mental programmes that are shared by a group of individuals

(Anyasi-Archibong,1988).[9] The external environment plays a major role in shaping an individual's behaviour. Gruenfeld (1873) stated:

> "A child raised in an environment that values independence, achievement and impulse control is more likely to be active and task-oriented... He values achievement. A child raised in an environment that values strong family ties is more likely to be passive and socially dependent in his behaviour. He is more likely to deal passively with tasks and is easily distracted, especially by his social environment upon which he relies for both definition of task and approval. He values affiliation."[10]

The Saudi social setting values strong family ties and this affects individual behaviour in Saudi higher education institutions. Individual behaviour influences the internal environment and the decision making process in such organizations. Badawy (1980) suggests that Mid-Eastern managers favour a traditional approach because of their culture and history.[11] Also, Atiyyah (1992)[12] argued that research in Arabic management indicates that national culture has a strong influence. He stated that:

> " Researchers generally regard some of the practices and the leadership style of Arab managers to be culture bound. Thus, the low priority assigned by Arab managers to planning is linked to the strong fatalistic attitudes in the Arab culture. Also, whether the leadership style is found to be authoritarian or consultative, culture values and norms are brought forward by the researcher to justify either finding."[13]

The literature review indicates that the external environment influences organizational structure. For example, Mintzberg (1989) stated that:

> "..the greater the external control of an organization, the more centralized and formalized its structure."[14]

Also, Williams, et.al, (1970) argued that:

> "The democratic ideology encourages a pattern of relations which de-emphasizes the authority of the supervisor and legitimizes the direct thrashing out of differences between the supervisor and the work group."[15]

In this section, the researcher will highlight the role of the external environment, both social and physical, in affecting the decision making process by presenting and analysing data and information gathered across the six research methods.

4.2.1. *Questionnaire Analysis*

In a study of bureaucracy and development in Saudi Arabia, Al-Nimir and Palmer (1982)[16] used a three question scale generated by (McClelland,1961)[17] in a questionnaire which they distributed amongst middle level managers in the

Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Finance, Petroleum, Social Welfare, Information and Health and Municipal Affairs. In the questionnaire (Appendix 1), the researcher followed their steps to test attitudes of personnel at Saudi higher education institutions toward their external physical environment. By comparing the results of Al-Nimir & Palmer with the results of this study the researcher aimed to measure the variation in the Saudi bureaucrats' attitudes, considering the time lapse between the studies and the differences between the organizations being studied.

In this section the researcher will focus upon the two questions that related to the external physical environment, leaving the third one to be addressed in the section dealing with the internal physical environment. These questions were presented in the following manner:

QI. Given the option, which of the following would you prefer:
a. a position with high pay in a rural area.
b. a position with adequate pay in a major city.

QII. Given the option, which of the following would you prefer:
a. a position with high authority and responsibility in rural area.
b. a position with low authority and responsibility in major city.

Figure 4-1 :   The importance of external physical environment.

QI   QII
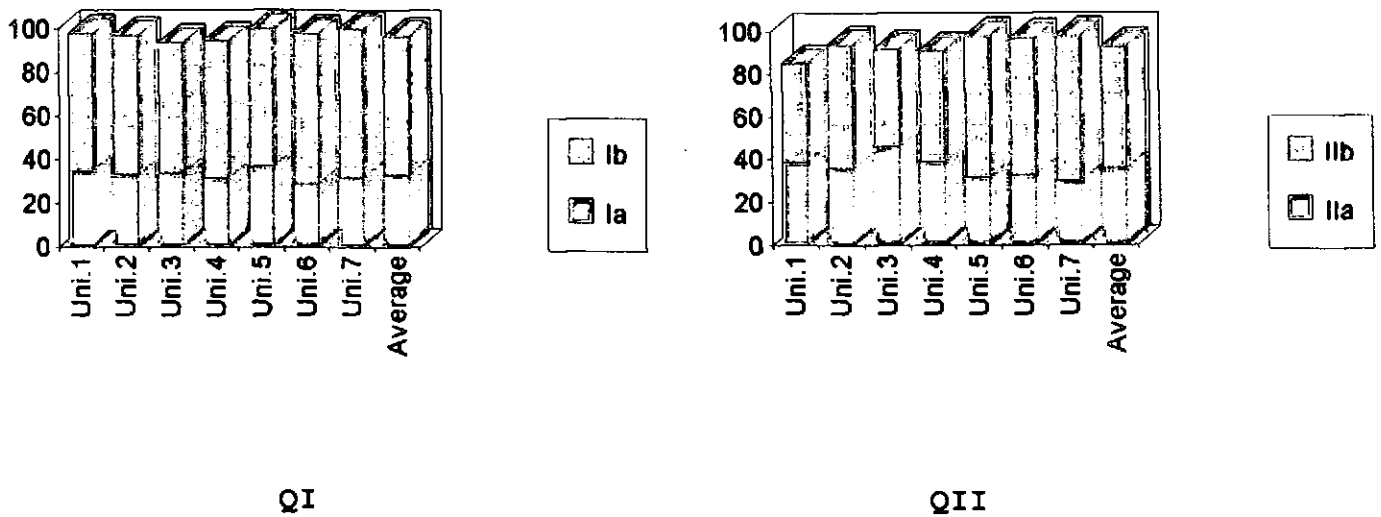
Looking at the above figures, the external physical environment appeared more important than a high level of pay and authority which indicates the significance of the former for performance. It should be borne in mind that in a fast developing country such as Saudi Arabia, a major city provides a better environment than a rural area, in contrast with the developed world where a major city tends to be considered an unpleasant environment.   In fact, Saudi universities are only located in major cities, as were the organizations in the Al-Nimir & Palmer study.   Are there similarities between the results of the two studies?

One important note, before answering this question, is that Al-Nimir & Palmer did not account for non-response in the total.   Thus, in order to compare the two studies, the

researcher revised their method of calculation, by counting non-response as the missing part of the total **100%.**(see figure below & table 4/3 in Appendix 4.)

Figure 4-2 : **The comparison between the two studies in regard to the importance of external physical environment.**
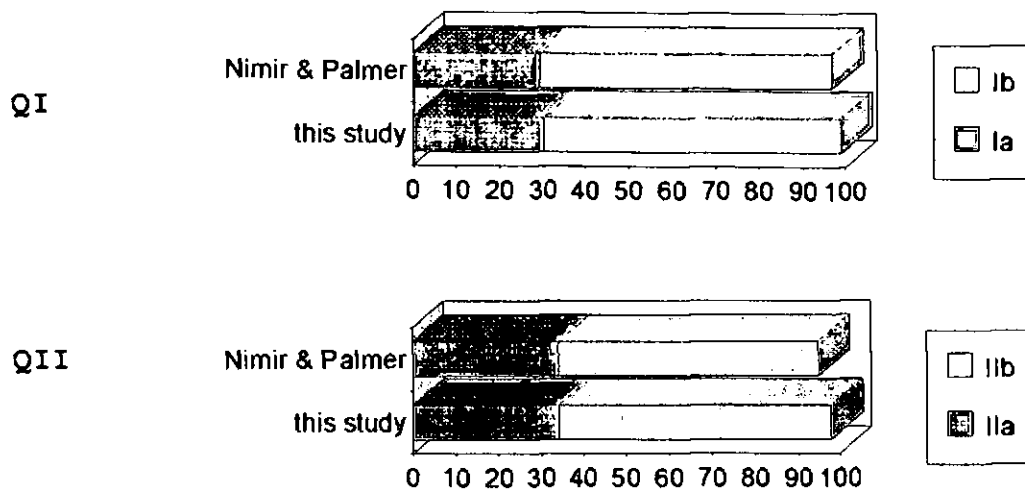
The above figures show a clear similarity in the results of the two studies despite the thirteen year lapse between them. The two studies agree upon the greater importance of the external physical environment over high pay and authority. These results were used as a starting point for examining the influence of the external environment through a set of interviews.

4.2.2. *Interviews Analysis*

Throughout the interviews, participants stated the importance of the external environment and its influence upon their performance. Many interviewees also believed that the external environment influenced the decision making process.

They pointed to the influence of Saudi culture, that is, the external social environment. Upon asking how influential Saudi culture is in the management of higher education, participants agreed on its significance, especially traditional values. A General Manager of Personnel Affairs stated:

> "As the father in a Saudi family controls all the family affairs and his decision cannot be challenged, the President of the Saudi university plays a similar role."

In his view, through cultural pressure, personnel applaud the Rector's decisions even if they disagree with them.

Similar thoughts were expressed by a Head of the Economics Department. Being only 34 years old, he explained how difficult it is for him to criticize or challenge any decision of the Dean who is twice his age. He said:

"As part of our culture we take respect for the elders so seriously that it affects the decision making process."

He also pointed out that the national policy of appointing Saudis to leading positions was the reason for his being the Head of the Economics Department because he was the only Saudi member of staff, even though he was not the most expert.

A Secretary-General acknowledged the influence of the external environment on organizational structure when he indicated that centralization in the Saudi family and political systems led to centralization in Saudi organizational structure. He said:

"the university system is only a small part of the whole system of the country."

Hofstede (1983) supported this view:

"It slowly became clear that national and even regional cultures do matter for management. The national and regional differences are not disappearing; they are here to stay. In fact, these differences may become one of the most crucial problems for management."[18]

Indeed, Almaney (1981) believes that understanding the external social environment of any Arabic organization is the starting point for understanding its management style.[19]

As regards the external physical environment interviewees expressed their appreciation of facilities in Saudi cities which make their job easier and have a positive influence on their performance. As an Accountant stated:

> "living in a Saudi city brings every thing I need within my reach. For example, I do not worry about my family health and education, which makes me relaxed and able to concentrate on my job, which in turn improves my performance."

An Egyptian Computer Programmer pointed out the difference a Saudi city makes in comparison with his previous job in Egypt. He acknowledged the fact that:

> "work in a small Egyptian city could be easily disrupted by weather changes such as floods. While, in contrast, three year's work in the Saudi capital has shown me that the strong urban structure of the city stabilized the work process of Saudi universities."

Responses to a direct question about the influence of the external physical environment upon the decision making process, indicated general agreement that Saudi cities have facilities that help universities in carrying out their responsibilities. A Vice-Rector explained:

> "The modern transportation and communication systems help in speeding up the process of decision making. While in a rural area delay in shipment and lack of technology tend to slow it down."

A General Manager of a Warehouse pointed to the fact that the open market in Saudi cities provided universities with the goods they need fast and most effectively.

In summary, interview results suggest that the external environment has a note-worthy influence upon the decision making process. The external social environment shapes the organizational behaviour of individuals and influences the decision making structure through social, religious and political values. The urban environment and the modernization of Saudi cities have had a positive impact on the decision making process by providing all the necessary facilities and creating what personnel consider as a pleasant external physical environment.

4.2.3. *Meetings Analysis*:

Whilst attending meetings as an observer, the researcher was able to experience the effect of the external social environment on the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. For example, people seemed to be "passive or reactive" and saw themselves as unable to influence events within the organization (Jaeger,1990).[20] In a departmental meeting, one of the main items was the rescheduling of events that were due to take place during the month of Ramadan. Due to fasting through the day-time of Ramadan, the work load became lighter, and the decision making process became slower; that some events were carried on at night, illustrates the significance of external social influence.

In another meeting, the influence of the external social environment was clearly present. The main issue was the committee's concern about social reaction to a conference to be held at that university. The conference was to discuss the positive impact of western housing design if applied in Saudi cities. Because of uncertainty about social acceptance of the idea, the committee decided to conduct a pilot study before taking a final decision. In similar regard, Pfeffer *et.al* (1978) have argued that:

>"Social influence operates not only through the individual's need for social referents and social comparison but also has an effect on decision outcomes when uncertainty is present that can not otherwise be resolved. In the absence of universal bureaucratic standards or criteria, particularistic criteria, deriving from existing social relationships, are more likely to influence decision outcomes."[21]

In Saudi universities, like other Saudi public organizations, cultural and social influence can militate against bureaucratic standardization. In fact, Anastos et.al (1980) argues that the cultural and political environment of Saudi Arabia poses a unique challenge for Saudi organizations.[22]

For example, nepotism is a result of external social influences and affects the decision making process in Saudi universities. In meetings, some mentioned "Wasta" when expressing their wish to free the decision making process from some of the traditional values. Nepotism is a part of the Saudi organizational culture because "Wasta" is a very common feature of Saudi society ("Wasta" will be discussed in detail in the following chapter).

4.2.4. *Decisions Analysis*

The power and influence of traditional culture, being the principal feature of the external social environment, was observed in many aspects of the organizational behaviour of Saudi universities. The following decisions illustrate its impact.

One of the major decisions in the history of Saudi higher education was taken in response to social pressure. Four Saudi universities were adopting the American Hour Credit System, whereby students choose to sit their classes either in the day time or in the evenings. Social pressure was brought to bear when many families thought it unsuitable to leave their daughters at the university campus between classes for long periods.

Saudi culture encourages political leaders to apply an open-door policy where any person can go to the "Majles" to meet the King or the Prince. Many fathers took that opportunity to ask for a change to the academic system. Religious leaders also made a similar demand in meetings with the top authorities and through their speeches at Friday prayers. The result was a decision by the King himself to change the system to the fixed schedule system, which already existed in the three Islamic universities.

With regard to the external physical environment, the researcher found evidence of its importance in two decision cases.

In one decision, a university was under pressure to take speedy action to refurbish a students' housing unit after the furniture had been destroyed by fire. Being in a major Saudi city that has an open market the university had access to many alternatives and was able to make a quick decision and to act.

In the other decision, a university held a conference on the impact of western housing design if applied in Saudi cities. The conference was successful because many western companies have a base in that city and it attracted more participants as a consequence. The reader may recall that the decision to hold off the same conference was taken because of the social concerns. In fact, words in the title of the conference were changed from "the positive impact" to "the impact" in order to avoid any social conflict.

In summary the external social environment influences decision making: it tends to slow down the process. The external physical environment has a positive impact by providing both organization and individual with necessary facilities.

4.2.5. *Documents Analysis*

In the study of official documents identified in Chapter 3, the researcher's findings were as follows:-

Firstly, there is a strong relationship between culture and structure. Saudi culture has great influence on the internal environment where organizational rules, norms, and habits influence organizational structure (March & Olsen,1984).[23] In most Saudi families, authority lies with the father, who makes most decisions including those relating to his children's education, marriage, and future. Aspects of the authoritarian Arabic culture were found in the Authority book, which shows the distribution of authority amongst university personnel. Most authority lies in the hands of a few people at the top of the institution.

Secondly, social pressure influences the decision making process (Whittington,1988).[24] In an internal memorandum the Rector explained the reason for changing the Academic System described earlier, by stating that: "it is an answer to a social demand."[25] In that case, the university adapted to the demands of the external social environment (Tierney,1987).[26] Simon & March (1965) stated that:

> "a group that controls a large part of the
> environment for an individual, can exert more
> pressure on him than can a group that controls only
> a small part of his environment."[27]

In the case of Saudi higher education institutions,
government and religious leaders are clearly controlling
large parts of the environment.

One could argue that, in any university, decisions of
the President reflects adaptive strategy (Neumann,1989).[28]
In fact, running the university is a dynamic process as
Clifford (1976) argues:

> " a dynamic process involves taking a series of
> decisions which are themselves affected by pressures
> from inside and outside the organization. This
> makes the decision process complicated and a central
> problem in managing or controlling organizations is
> that most decisions concern the future and therefore
> involve considerable risk."[29]

The major difference, however, is that in western
organizations the institutional setting for policy making
has a major influence on policy ideas, choices, and actions
(Maynard-Moody,1989),[30] while in Saudi organizations,
traditional kinship groups, whether tribal or familial,
remain of prime importance (Kassem & Habib,1989).[31]

4.2.6. *Observation Analysis*

Throughout the fieldwork the researcher had the opportunity to observe the influence of the external social environment upon the decision making process. The researcher saw examples of Saudi cultural values wherever he went on the university campuses.

In Saudi organizations, it is common to find several generations of the same family and related cousins working in the same organization, as well as living next door to each other, or even in the same house (Pezeshkpur,1978).[32] The researcher observed the shared values which represent the core of a corporate culture (Hofstede,ed.al,1990).[33] For example, all the staff and students at noon go to the campus mosque to pray. Saudi men dress in the same way (white Thoop and red scarf) and they behave similarly.

Saudis are also known for their long greeting conversation which includes asking about one's personal affairs, that is, health, family, and financial matters. Whilst being mindful of the positive impact on social interaction of greeting each other, the researcher observed that repeating these long traditional conversations in every office consumes valuable time and thus, amongst other effects, reduces the time available for decision making.

As regards the external physical environment, the wide range of facilities provided to make the lives of individuals and organizations much easier can be observed. Housing, mosques, hospitals, schools, hotels and shopping centres are only a few examples of such facilities. Having all this within reach eases the presser of life and encourages the employee to concentrate on work and improves performance.

4.2.7. *Implications*

One topic of current debate among organizational theorists is whether environments are objective or socially constructed phenomena (Tierney,1987).[34] Chaffee (1985) believes in the objective environment thesis. He sees organization as dominated by the external environment; as this often changes, the organization has to change with it,[35] while other theorists believe in the enacted environment whereby organizational members create their own environments (Weick,1979).[36]

In general, both organizational process and outcomes are influenced strongly by enviromental factors (Kimberly,1979).[37] Culpan (1989) has stated:

> "Management does not take place in a vacuum, but
> inan environment, and external factors have a profound
> impact on a process of management."[38]

Looking at the external environment of Saudi universities,
the researcher discovered that these organizations have
always to respond and adapt to the external social
environment. For example, during the month of Ramadan major
changes occur, including alteration to working hours and
class schedules. On the other hand, the external physical
environment had a positive impact upon the performance of
both individuals and organizations and hence, the decision
making process.

Moreover, the external social environment appears to
have a strong influence over the Saudi organizational
structure. For example, Mintzberg (1979) stated that the
more complex the internal environment, the more
decentralized the structure.[39] However, in the case of
Saudi universities, the environment is becoming more
complex, yet the decision making process remains centralized
because of an authoritarian culture. It is clear that, as
Ali & Swiercz (1985) have stated:

> " In an authoritarian culture there is a
> phenomenon of "non-decision making", whereby
> superordinately situated managers control the
> behavior of subordinates through the manipulation
> and control of the environment in which the latter
> must operate."[40]

The authoritarian culture has always been part of the external social environment and is expected to be so in the future. The data gathered in regards to the external environment leads the researcher to believe that a strong national culture influences and produces a strong corporate culture. The latter will be considered in the following section which looks at the internal organizational environment.

4.3. INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

In this section, "internal social environment" refers to how Deal & Kennedy (1982) defined organizational culture: "the way we do things around here."[41] Hall & Hall (1990) stated that:

> "Organizational culture is many things, but it is primarily a system for creating, sending, storing, and processing information."[42]

With regard to the decision making process, Simon (1973) argued that:

> "...when many persons in specialized roles participate in making an organization's decisions, the total system is not likely to be monolithic in structure. Individual roles will differ with respect to the number and kinds of communications they receive and the parts of the environment from which they receive them."[43]

Thus, in the broad sense, internal social environment means "organizational culture" and specifically it means the inter-relation between individuals on one hand, and between individuals and their organizations on the other. This internal social environment could be said to consist in, with Schein (1985):

" a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[44]

The internal physical environment, on the other hand, refers to the campus facilities including architectural design and technology. Marx (1990) believes that:

"The physical environment is also important to well-being and productivity."[45]

Both kinds of internal environment will be highlighted in presenting the research data.

4.3.1 *Questionnaire Analysis*

To begin the analysis, the researcher presents the results of the question that tested the importance of the internal physical environment, which was put as follows[46]:

QIII. Given the option, which of the following would you prefer:(see Table 4/5 in Appendix 4.)

    a. a <u>low</u> paying job with a <u>pleasant</u> internal physical environment.
    b. a <u>high</u> paying job with an <u>uncomfortable</u> internal physical environment.

Figure 4-3 : **The importance of internal physical environment.**
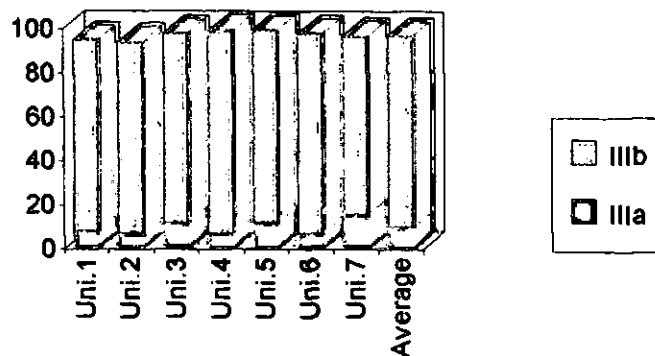
As the reader may recall, in the first section of this chapter, almost two thirds of the sample felt that the external physical environment was more important than a high level of pay and authority. However, when the question was related to the internal physical environment (QIII), a margin of **87%** to **10%** resulted in favour of a comfortable environment. As the following figure shows, there is a great similarity in this respect to the results of the Al Nimir & Palmer study (1980).

Figure 4-4 : **The comparison between the two studies in regard to the importance of internal physical environment.**

In the researcher's view, these results indicate the importance of the internal physical environment in the eyes of personnel at Saudi higher education institutions and that this has been consistent over time. Thus, the condition of the internal physical environment will have an impact on general performance, including decision making.

The importance of the internal social environment was investigated by asking about its effect on performance;

QIV. My social environment at work has a great effect on my performance.

Figure 4-5 : **The importance of internal social environment.**

The above figure shows that **84%** of the sample (Appendix 4.) agreed on the major effect that the internal social environment has upon their performance. One can also see the similarity in the results for the different institutions.

Next, the researcher investigated participants' attitudes toward the internal social environment, by asking simple questions about ambiance in their departments, relationship with their bosses, and how comfortable they feel in their work environment (Appendix.1.). Figures 4/6, 4/7, and 4/8 present the results of these questions in the seven institutions.

QV. We have a friendly ambiance in this department;

Figure 4-6 : Attitudes toward the internal social environment (1).
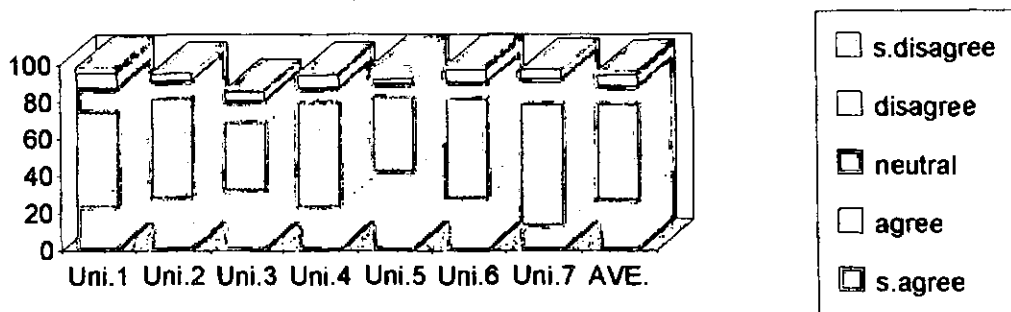
As shown in the above figure, **79%** of the sample believe that they work in friendly surroundings indicating a positive attitude toward the internal social environment whilst only **8%** of the sample disagreed with the statement. One can see

also the similarity in results across the seven institutions. The following question was directed to the relationship between boss and subordinate:

QVI. I have an excellent relationship with my boss.

Figure 4-7 : **Attitudes toward the internal social environment (2).**
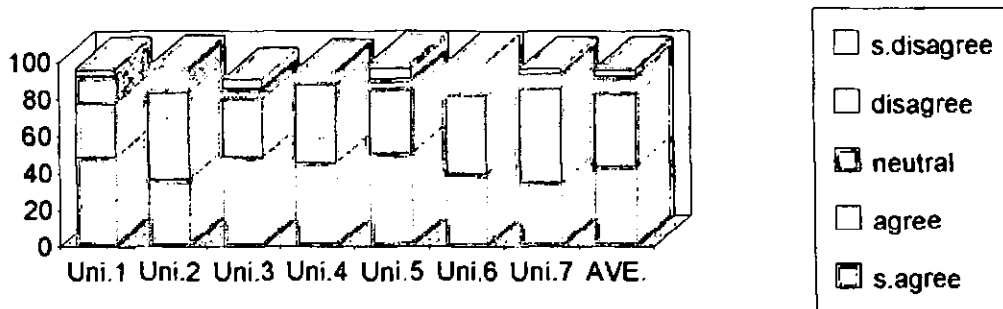
The above figure shows that **83%** of the sample believe that they have an excellent relationship with their bosses. While only **4%** of the sample disagreed with the statement. Again the concordance of results is clearly shown. This leads to the third question about the internal social environment:

QVII. I feel very comfortable in my work.

Figure 4-8 : **Attitudes toward the internal social environment (3).**
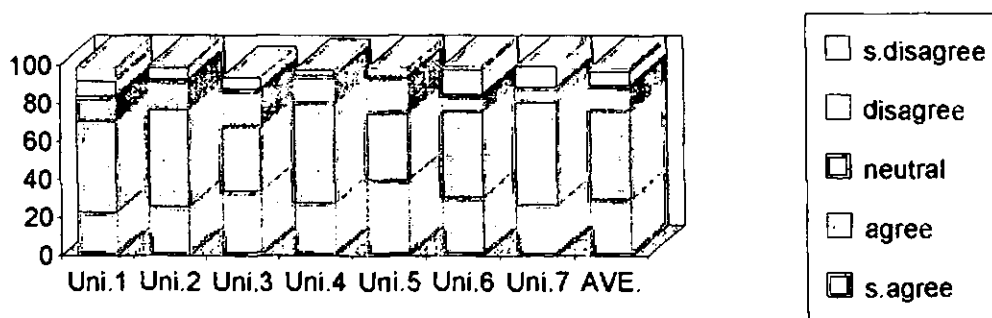
The above figure shows that **76%** of the sample feel very comfortable in their work, whilst **9%** disagreed with the statement. Looking at the three sets of figures above, it could be reasonably argued that there is a positive feeling about the internal socio/emotional environment. However, when asked about internal social environment in relation to their job process and how that could be improved, they showed a different attitude when they visualized an improved future as shown in the following question. The researcher investigated the quality of the internal social environment by asking:

QVIII. In your opinion, what are the things that need to be done in order to improve your job environment? (you can choose more than one).

Table 4/1	U. 1	U. 2	U. 3	U. 4	U. 5	U. 6	U. 7	Avr
A wider distribution of authority	65%	69%	72%	75%	81%	67%	65%	71%
Informal meetings to freely discuss new ideas	60%	64%	60%	41%	74%	71%	62%	62%
More participation in decision making process	51%	56%	45%	72%	46%	58%	57%	55%
Improve communication between departments	60%	47%	55%	54%	57%	49%	51%	53%
More use of the computer	52%	48%	48%	49%	54%	49%	59%	51%
other than the above.......(state please)	11%	8%	11%	3%	15%	11%	27%	12%

In spite of the positive feeling about the internal social environment, all the suggestions were strongly supported and other suggestions were made which will be highlighted in the interviews analysis.

An average of **71%** of the sample of participants thought that a wider distribution of authority was needed to improve

the internal social environment. As the researcher
mentioned earlier there is difficulty in separating the
external and internal environments. Austin (1990) links the
attitude towards distribution of authority to the external
environment:

> "Societies vary in their values and attitudes
> toward authority and equality, which in turn
> influence how they structure relationships in
> organizations. Those countries that prefer more
> authoritarian relationships tend toward hierarchical
> organizational structure; those that prefer more
> equal distribution of power are less accepting of
> such structures."[47]

Whether high demand for wider distribution of authority
indicates anything about the level of centralization will be
discussed in Chapter 6. Meanwhile, the above table
illustrates that there is a considerable demand amounting to
62% of the sample for creating informal meetings to enable
employees in Saudi universities to talk freely about new
ideas. Employees in Saudi universities evinced a need for
their voices to be heard.

Table 4/1 also indicates the variation in the needs at
each university. However, a wider distribution of authority
and the creation of informal meetings remain the principal
requirements of participants for improving their internal
social environment. In addition, **55%** of the sample stated
that Saudi universities needed to allow greater

participation in the decision making process. Here again, the centralization issue is raised. An average of **53%** of the sample thought that improved communication between departments was required and finally, greater use of computers attracted an average of **51%** in favour. This last figure, in the researcher's view, represents a note-worthy demand, especially so as it concerns the use of modern technology in universities. These figures imply that there is much to be done to improve the internal social environment in Saudi universities.

The table below relates to the same question but will be analysed by dividing the sample into levels of management; lower level management(LLM), middle level management(MLM) and higher level management(HLM). A column is added for the teaching staff(TS).

Table 4/2	LLM	MLM	HLM	TS
A wider distribution of authorities.	58%	74%	68%	74%
Informal meetings to talk freely about new ideas.	65%	66%	64%	64%
More participation in the decision-making process.	32%	49%	68%	72%
Improve communication between departments.	49%	51%	68%	58%
More use of the computer.	58%	55%	56%	44%
other than the above......(state please)...............	20%	13%	8%	4%

The figures in the above table show the overall relative demand for the five suggested improvements in all seven universities at all levels of administration and teaching staff. However, it is important to compare how each group

viewed each suggestion in order to gain a clear view of the different needs of different groups:

I. Lower level management: in column **LLM**, only **32%** of lower level management asked for more participation in the decision making process. Was that due to lack of self-confidence or because they believed that they already participated sufficiently? Studying other groups' answers to the same question leads the researcher to believe that it is more likely to be the former. More interesting, **58%** wanted a wider distribution of authority, and **65%** were looking for informal meetings yet they were not confident enough to ask for more participation in the decision making process.

Interestingly enough, although the majority of lower level management work as clerks and secretaries, **58%** support increased use of computers since this would make their jobs easier and better organized, similar to HLM and MLM.

II. Middle level management: in the **MLM** column, a very impressive **74%** asked for a wider distribution of authority. Middle level management is where a greater degree of authority should be sanctioned. This is especially the case in universities where some of the incumbents are general managers, deans, and heads of departments. Most of the supposed decision makers are in middle level management thus

it is interesting to note that **74%** of them feel that there should be wider distribution of authority. This challenges the notion of hierarchical authority, and it will be important to compare this finding with those made on the issue of centralization. Additionally, **49%** of middle level management wish to participate more in the decision making process.

66% of the sample of middle level management supported the institution of informal meetings. These meetings appeared to be an indirect way of making the voice of middle level management heard at the appropriate hierarchical level.

One might suggest a relationship between high demand for informal meetings and the quality of communication in any given organization. This argument finds support from the **51%** of middle level management wanting improved communication between departments. It may be noted that Weinshall (1973) argued that the behaviour of bureaucrats shows cultural differences including different rates of oral and written communication.[48] The issue of communication will be fully explored in Chapter Seven of this study.

The last figure in the middle level management statistics is the **55%** who believe that greater computer use would improve their work environment. Computers today play

an important role in organizing office life in any organization. More than half of middle level management in Saudi universities thought that insufficient use had been made of information technology on the university campus.

III. Higher level management: people in this group are the chief authorities in the university; rector, vice rectors, vice rectors' assistants, consultants, general secretaries, and top senior general managers. These are the officials occupying the highest management positions. It is interesting to note that **68%** of the sample asked for a wider distribution of authority. If higher level management is the body responsible for the distribution of authority within the university, then how is it that a large percentage asked for it to be wider? The answer to this question can be found in a set of interviews with higher level management which will be highlighted in the interviews analysis later in this section.

Another interesting statistic is that **68%** of higher level management wanted to see more participation in the decision making process. It is interesting that there is a lack of action despite the desire for change. Moreover, **68%** of the officials at this level wanted to see better communication between departments and **56%** wish to increase the use of computers. One could reasonably argue from this that, under the Saudi bureaucracy, people in higher level

management do not have sufficient power to make decisions regarding improvements in the university's internal social environment otherwise they would make decisions to improve communication between departments and to increase the use of computers.

IV. <u>Teaching staff</u>: the **TS** column produced interesting figures. **74%** of the sample of teaching staff were in favour of wider distribution of authority and **72%** for increased participation. These findings indicate that a wider distribution of authority would, in the eyes of the teaching staff, mean passing more authority into their hands. They strongly believed that they were not currently participating sufficiently in the decision making process.

64% of the teaching staff welcomed the idea of informal meetings. Again, the current level of centralization lies behind this need. Bearing in mind the percentage of the teaching staff who wished to participate more in the decision making process, one can infer that their objective would be to make their voice heard among the administrative staff of the university through these meetings.

58% of the sample of the teaching staff voted for improved communication between departments, that is, college departments (for example, Economics Department).

The last figure in the table is the **44%** of the sample of teaching staff who wished to see greater use of computers. Although it is a relatively high proportion, it is the smallest when compared with the other groups. The researcher will highlight the reason for this amongst the other points in the interviews analysis which follow.

4.3.2. *Interviews Analysis*

Generally speaking, participants seemed comfortable in their internal physical environment, especially those on new campuses. Others were waiting for their new campuses to be ready in the near future.

Buildings of modern design with high quality facilities have a positive impact upon the performance of participants as they indicated throughout the interviews. Comparing the old campus to the new one, an Electrical Engineer stated:

> "In the old days, we had endless technical problems which made my job very hard and made employees unhappy. It affected their morale and performance. Nowadays, we work in modern and comfortable offices which give me the time to create and improve facilities, rather than fixing the endless problems."

A General Manager for Administration Affairs who still works in an old building agreed that internal physical environment affects his performance. He suggested that lack of facilities slows down the work process and that he is looking forward to moving to the newly built campus. Many participants shared the perception that working in well-designed offices with modern facilities has a positive impact on the outcomes of their work.

As regards the internal social environment, interviewees had a positive feeling about their inter-relations with their colleagues, however they felt strongly about the need for improving certain aspects of that environment. These interviews were carried out after the collection of over 100 completed questionnaires, where some of the participants came up with suggestions other than the five given in the questionnaire. These suggestions were the starting point for many interviews.

In the main, interviews with members of higher level management focused upon clarifying the questionnaire finding that many of them wanted a wider distribution of the authority. The researcher encountered two points of view. Some wanted more authority, claiming that most of the authority lay in the hands of a few people at the top of higher level of management, whilst others wanted to delegate to lower levels making the decision making process swifter,

and, more importantly, leaving them more time to deal with the important issues.

A Secretary-General complained that it took most of his time and effort to be a member of a majority of the university's committees. He said that these committees sometimes discuss very minor issues which could be decided by middle level management if they were given more authority.

Other officials at higher level management were weary of dealing with trivial issues in the university. They suggested that the job of higher level management should be policy planning, leaving every-day issues to people at lower levels of management. Weiner & Mahony (1981) similarly argued that this would improve the internal social environment and would have a positive effect on productivity and increase the effectiveness of the decision making process.[49]

Amongst middle and lower level management and teaching staff, interviewees commented on the impact of the internal social environment and called for specific changes.

Boosting personnel morale was an issue of interest to many participants. They argued that rewarding personnel according to their productivity and showing appreciation of

hard-working employees motivates the creative personnel. Moreover, having a sociologist or an HRM specialist, to whom an employee can go to whenever he has a personal problem, is a new idea in Saudi organizations which is worth studying.

Other interviewees saw training as a tool for improving their internal social environment through introduction to new concepts that they could bring to their work.

Members of middle level management and teaching staff voiced more specific concerns about the distribution of authority. They claimed that the status of a member of the organization springs from the authority he is given and that they needed more authority to enable them to perform well and to take immediate action instead of consulting higher level management. Some wanted to feel more independent through possessing more authority. Others looked at the subject from a different angle and wanted to improve their internal social environment by reducing bureaucratic procedures involving signatures of approval; this would necessitate giving more authority to personnel at middle level management and to teaching staff.

It can be seen in the interviews analysis that the internal physical environment of the modern campuses has a positive impact upon the decision making process. The internal social environment is in need of significant change

in order to have a similar impact. As Withey & Cooper (1989)[50] argued, if an employee is unhappy at work, he may respond in a number of ways: he may leave the job, he may neglect the job and focus on his non-work interests, or he can stay and support the organization. The researcher found, as did Withey & Cooper, that most participants preferred to stay and try to improve their work environment by speaking out and working hard for change.[51]

4.3.3. *Meetings Analysis*

Whilst attending various meetings as an observer it was clear to the researcher that the internal environment has a great influence over the decision making process. As regards the internal physical environment, modern communication technology and visual aids were there to help the meeting process. However, greater use of these facilities would have a still more positive impact upon the decision making process.

Attending to the internal social environment, the researcher noticed a homogeneity in beliefs and feelings among groups in most meetings. As Fayerweather (1960) stated:

" The cultural attitudes of a group are broadly
defined as the integrated pattern of beliefs,
codes, and feelings on the basis of which the group
has learned to live with its environment."[52]

For example, in academic departmental meetings, one of the
most common topics was the lack of authority in the hands of
the department heads. Mitchell (1988) considered department
heads as first-line managers accountable for promoting
faculty productivity.[53] But in order to play this role,
chairpersons need authority, which the data suggests they do
not have.

In three meetings at different universities, middle
level managers wanted to see an annual survey about job
satisfaction in a bid to give the university leadership a
clear idea about the internal social environment with a view
to improving it. Others wanted to see their opinions,
complaints and suggestions collected through suggestions
boxes. The researcher agrees with Yucelt (1984)[54] that
Saudis are highly sensitive to face-to-face criticism and
this would account for the above suggestions.

In one academic department meeting before the final
exams, the issue was raised of the reservation of a large
room for an exam which would be taken by four classes
together at one time. The problem arose when they
discovered that the room they wished to have had been booked

by another department. Members of that meeting agreed that lack of communication between departments can cause major disruption.

Thus, attendance at the different meetings revealed on the one hand the positive impact of the internal physical environment and on the other, that the internal social environment required improvement in order to have a positive impact upon the decision making process.

4.3.4. *Observation Analysis*

The researcher observed that some aspects of the internal physical environment are now changing rapidly. For example, the size of the organization and the use of modern facilities. Roeber (1973) argued that such changes become an influential factor in the decision making process.[55]

Also to be observed is the pleasant physical environment in the new campuses where well-designed landscaping and comfortable surroundings exist. In a case study, Marx *op.cit*, described an interesting idea:

> "Fragrant aromas such as evergreen may reduce stress; the smell of lemon and jasmine can have a rejuvenating effect. These scents are introduced to all work spaces through the air-conditioning and heating systems. Scents are changed seasonally."[56]

In Saudi higher education institutions, one can smell the rich and expensive Indian Musk Oil and "Bokhoor" (a kind of wood that produces a powerful smell when burned). However, no study has determined its effect on the performance of personnel.

It is noticeable that most of the offices are fitted with computer units which remain unused. The researcher discovered two reasons behind this state of affairs. More than half the participants admitted that they are not computer-literate, while others indicated that even though they had the knowledge, they still used the machines as personal computers in the absence of a connection to the university library and other facilities inside and outside the university.

Similarly, western scholars have noticed offices which have computers installed which remain unused (Regan, 1995).[57] Other Saudi scholars such as Yaqy (1989) have noticed the lack of computer usage among Saudi managers.[58] Algosaibi (1995) may have the reasonable explanation:

> "With the development mentality, a lot can be achieved when emphasis is placed on the technology which is appropriate for the environment."[59]

The use of technology requires an internal social environment with training programmes suited to the facilities of the internal physical environment. Throughout the observation process, the researcher noticed that the internal social environment was in need of significant improvement to benefit from the high quality of the internal physical environment of Saudi universities. Such improvement would have a positive impact upon the decision making process.

4.3.5. *Implication*

The implications of the results obtained in this study of the internal environment of Saudi universities are set out below.

First, the influence of the internal social environment has been clear throughout this chapter. For example, **84%** of the study sample agreed that it had a great effect on their performance.

Secondly, the internal physical environment is of a higher quality than the internal social environment. On well-designed campuses with modern offices and advanced technology the decision making process suffers from some features of Saudi bureaucracy such as centralization, lack

of cooperation between departments and the insufficient use of computers.

Finally, in spite of the uniqueness of each institution (Handy, 1984),[60] they all render one important finding regarding their internal environment. That is the fact that participants in all the seven institutions studied believe that the internal social environment is in need of significant improvement.

4.4. CONCLUSION

The literature review of this thesis indicates a strong relationship between organizational culture and organizational structure. Chapters **4** and **5** focus upon the cultural factors that influence the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

In this chapter, the researcher has investigated as the main cultural factor, organizational environment, and highlighted a range of environmental factors that affect the decision making process, some of which are external and others internal. External factors were identified chiefly to be Saudi cultural values forming the external social environment and Saudi cities forming the external physical environment.

The internal factors were the values and inter-relations of personnel within the organization, forming the internal social environment. University buildings and facilities forming the internal physical environment.

The relationship between the external and internal environments is so strong that it makes it difficult to separate them totally. This research gives evidence for the proposition that the external environment influences the internal environment and shapes the decision making process.

Universities represent a typical example of organizations with complex/stable environments which should lead to structures that are bureaucratic but decentralized. However, it is clear from the findings of this chapter that the authoritarian Saudi culture makes the decision making process in Saudi universities highly centralized. Thus, most participants supported the suggestions for a better distribution of authority and more participation in the decision making process.

The data suggest that, in spite of the positive attitude shown towards the internal socio/emotional environment, when it comes to internal social environment in relation to the job process, there are various issues which need to be addressed in order to improve it. Wider

distribution of authority was the improvement most wished for. Participants also felt it was important to have informal meetings, more participation in decision making, improved communication between departments, and a better use of computers. These were the main factors which the participants felt would improve their internal social environment. It is the responsibility of higher level management to answer these demands on the one hand and to monitor the influence of the external environment on the other; how this can be achieved, will be dealt with in the final chapter.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CULTURAL SUB-FACTORS :

NEPOTISM ;
INNOVATION ;
SOCIAL CHANGE ;
PROFESSIONALISM .

5.1. *INTRODUCTION*

Having highlighted organizational environment as the main cultural factor, this chapter investigates specific factors related to it.

As identified in Chapter **4**, organizational environment has a note-worthy effect upon the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Saudi culture is the leading influence upon organizational environment. Thus, Badawy (1980) argued that traditional Arabic culture has a major effect upon the attitudes of the Middle Eastern managers and their leadership styles.[1] At a conference of university rectors in the Gulf States, the social environment was considered to be the main factor in shaping personnel and organizational behavior (Assafe,1985).[2]

In describing the relationship between organisation and environment most studies suggest that, in general, environments dominate or overpower organisations (Aldrich,1992).[3] This chapter will highlight specific organizational cultural factors which are conditioned by the social environment; nepotism, innovation, social change, and professionalism will be targeted as identified in the pilot study and supported by fieldwork described in Chapter 3.

5.2. NEPOTISM

The Oxford Dictionary defines "nepotism" as:

> "the practice, on the part of the Pope or other ecclesiastics, of showing special favour to nephew - or other relatives - in conferring offices, such as unfair preference of the nephew to other qualified persons."[4]

In relation to the decision making process in the Arab world, many researchers agree that nepotism has a noteworthy impact upon managers' decisions. Cultural factors such as strong kinship and family ties are frequently associated with the practice (Atiyyah, 1992).[5]

In Arab culture, nepotism is a well-known practice known as "Wasta" and embraces friends as well as relatives. "Wasta" has been likened to the "Latin" characteristics in Italian management by Gagliardi & Turner (1993) when they stated that:

> "As with the Arabic pattern of "Wasta", "Clientelismo" recognizes the wider network of obligations beyond the organization in which the manager is located. Someone in a superior position not only has obligations and responsibilities within the company, but also responsibilities to and mutual obligation with family members and with other individuals who may be tied into a quasi-familial, personal network."[6]

As Bott (1971) explains, individuals and family play a major role in developing social ideology by adapting and organising social values and norms in a way that makes sense of their first-hand experience.[7] El-Namaki (1979) stated that:

> "Today's top ranking technocrats are still influenced by tribal heritage in their decision making."[8]

In Saudi culture, family ties place a heavy responsibility upon family members who hold senior management positions. Higher level officials are expected to secure the future of their relatives by appointing and promoting them, using their organizational authority. Nonetheless, a clear internal organizational dislike of nepotism is noticeable from the opinions of those who do not benefit from it in their organization; yet most would agree that they have used "Wasta" at some time in their career.

In his recent study, Al-Sheikh (1994) argues that while the respect for kinship at the social level is applauded, it is, at the organizational level, at least in theory, considered to be outlawed.[9] The relationship between kinship and nepotism in Saudi organizations on the one hand, and the impact of nepotism on the decision making process in higher education institutions on the other, will be

highlighted in this chapter. A questionnaire, interviews, cases of decision making and general observation were the research tools for studying the operation of nepotism. Throughout this section, "Wasta" and "nepotism" will be used interchangeably.

5.2.1. *Questionnaire Analysis*

The researcher created a set of questions in order to identify nepotism in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions by focusing on:

- existence of "Wasta"

- attitude toward "Wasta"

- influence of "Wasta"

5.2.1.1. Existence of "Wasta"

80% of the study sample believed that nepotism occurred in their university. The degree of nepotism varies between sometimes=**31%**, often=**33%**, and always=**16%**. Only **15%** of the study sample stated that nepotism seldom or never occurred in their university. These figures indicate that nepotism is an important element in the culture of Saudi higher education institutions. It seems to be a common practice experienced by the majority in the work place.

5.2.1.2. Attitudes Towards "Wasta"

Attitudes toward nepotism were investigated in two ways:

- approval of nepotism
- practice of nepotism

The researcher found that **69%** of the study sample disapproved of nepotism, but only **31%** had never practiced it. On the other hand, only **10%** of the study sample approved of nepotism; however **35%** admitted that they had practiced nepotism at some stage in their career in Saudi higher education institutions.

The researcher believes that these results suggest a high level of social pressure upon personnel to practice nepotism and to avoid cultural shame if they do not comply. Theoretically most people believe nepotism to be unacceptable. Nevertheless, they feel that they have to adapt to their cultural heritage by taking care of their people through the practice of "Wasta".

5.2.1.3. Influence of "Wasta"

Finally, the researcher aimed to discover the influence of nepotism upon the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. He asked participants, as decision makers, about the influence of "Wasta" upon their decisions. He also asked participants, as observers, about the influence of "Wasta" on the decision making process in their universities. Only **11%** stated that some of their decisions had been influenced by acceptance of "Wasta", while **64%** of the sample believed that nepotism influences decision making by others in Saudi universities. People appear to notice the influence of nepotism upon the decision making process when they are observers but less so when they are the decision makers themselves.

In summary, the majority of participants disapproved of nepotism and denied using it yet it is thought to exist on a large scale and to heavily influence the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

5.2.2. *Interviews Analysis*

Throughout interviews, the researcher tried to find answers to the following questions:-

- How large a problem is nepotism?
- Do you wish to see the end of nepotism?
- How does it affect the decision making process?

In general, most interviewees saw nepotism as a major problem. In fact, some blamed nepotism for adversely affecting promotion aspirations and motivation to work hard. A typical comment was:

> "No matter how hard I work, it seems that a person with better connections gets the reward."

Others agreed with Kassem's (1989) argument that managerial positions were primarily obtained through "Wasta", not earned through hard work and qualifications, particularly in the public sector.[10] Others expressed resentment about the unfairness of nepotism. A head of department at one college stated that:

> "People with "Wasta" can find their way around most rules, which makes it difficult to apply the same rule to everybody."

On the other hand, a minority saw nepotism as a minor
problem. They considered nepotism to be part of the Saudi
culture, practised in minor issues such as expediting the
process of student enrollment or minimizing routine
procedures, thus making it harmless to organizational
objectives.

The second question tackled the issue of eliminating
nepotism. Three different views seemed to be prevalent:-

1) one group was enthusiastic about the elimination of
nepotism and believed it could be achieved within
universities if officials, especially those in higher level
management, wanted to do so. These interviewees agreed with
Cameron (1982) that the elimination of nepotism would
increase job security and job satisfaction.[11]

2) a second group was not enthusiastic about the elimination
of nepotism, that is those who saw nepotism as a minor
problem. In fact, they argued that there was a positive
side to nepotism which enabled the avoidance of unnecessary
routine and the speeding up of the decision making process.

3) a third group, the majority, wished to see the elimination of nepotism but believed that it could not be achieved in a traditional society such as that in Saudi Arabia, where traditional values were too strong to be challenged.

Finally the interviewees were asked about their views on nepotism vis-a-vis its effect upon the decision making process. Only a few denied that there was such an effect. Others suggested that through "Wasta", personnel remain loyal to the decision-maker as an individual not to organizational aims and objectives. The data suggests that nepotism could be an overriding factor in most decisions, thus calling into question the quality of the decision making process.

5.2.3. *Decisions Analysis*

Whilst following instances of decision-making during the field work, the researcher observed clear evidence of the influence of nepotism. Four cases of decision-making have been chosen to highlight this.

First, in relation to this study, the Rector of one university decided not to allow distribution of the researcher's questionnaire. The researcher tried to meet him (without success) and when a written explanation to confirm why he had not included that particular university in his study was asked for, it was denied.

As a Saudi, the researcher's solution was the use of "Wasta". With the help of influential people inside and outside that university, over 100 questionnaires were distributed. In fact, the best rate of return came from this particular university.

This incident may support the view of people who see nepotism as a positive behaviour overcoming bureaucratic deadlock and "red tape". Indeed, one could argue that the university's decision could have been different if the researcher had had "Wasta" in the Rector's office.

The second decision related to a student's application for membership of the university's sports centre. Understandably, he was asked to go through a routine procedure including a health check-up. However, the researcher asked an outsider to apply for the same membership by presenting a business card indicating his relationship to a higher level manager. He was accepted straight away, without the health check.

The third decision concerned hiring a new employee. Three people with similar qualifications were sent to the university by the Public Service Council. The one who got the job was the one who was related to one of the university's higher level managers.

The fourth decision involved a member of the academic staff at a law department who wanted to study for a Ph.D. in Britain, after obtaining his M.A. in the USA. Previously, all post-graduates in that department had been required to study in France as the management believed was best for them. Although some tried to convince the university of the importance of exploring other schools in other countries, this particular member was the only one who studied in the USA and later in the UK. He had "Wasta" through personal connections with both the Rector and the Dean.

Although one might argue that some of these decisions are minor and that in some cases "Wasta" had a positive effect, on the basis of the data gathered by other research methods "Wasta" seemed to undermine the credibility of the decision making process, as previously established by interviewees and by Kassem (op.cit)[12].

5.2.4. *Observation Analysis*

It was not difficult to observe the practice of nepotism in Saudi public organizations, and higher education institutions were no exception. One can agree with Kassem (*op.cit*) that managers have been influenced by a cultural heritage which expects them to take care of their relatives according to the Arabic saying:

> "A tree whose shade does not cover its seedling deserves to be uprooted."[13]

Throughout the field work, the researcher heard similar views from different people indicating a general acceptance of the practice of "Wasta" as a part of Saudi culture.

It was not unusual to see people handing over a small piece of paper or a business-card, indicating "Wasta", before they handed in their paper-work. The researcher also noticed some people asking for a "Wasta" from relatives or friends employed within the university to ensure preferential treatment. In offices, the researcher overheard telephone conversations demonstrating the practice of "Wasta", such as a phone call to speed-up the progress of paper-work because it was in the interest of the caller's father.

In the end, the researcher agreed with Pezeshkpur (1978), that one must accept that in the Arabic society, in general, individual status is determined by family position and social contacts, not necessarily by individual accomplishments.[14] This research demonstrates that over the years the practice has persisted and nepotism still significantly influences the decision making process.

5.2.5. *Implication*

In conclusion, one can say that "Wasta" may be classified, with Turner (1971), as:

> "... a class of social definition which was established and persists without agreements or commands. They may have been established by accident, for idiosyncratic reasons, or for reasons now forgotten; and they persist because of force of habit, because they are part of the available language, because no one wishes to challenge them, or because no one realizes that they are challengeable."[15]

In the researcher's view, people tend to accept decisions that come through "Wasta" as "correct", because the correctness of any decision depends upon both the general

social value system and those of the organization, one of
which is "Wasta". This leads into what Simon (1976)
calls:

> ".... the correctness of the organizational
> environment itself."[16]

The researcher agrees with Kassem's *op.cit* statement:

> "One pillar of the Weberian bureaucratic model,
> is that personnel decisions should be made on the
> basis of merit. Regrettably, this principle is not
> always followed in the Arab world. Even though
> Islamic teachings warn against violating this rule.
> In practice, the most qualified person does not
> always get the job, and the most productive
> employees do not always end up with the top
> reward."[17]

In Saudi universities, nepotism has been proved to influence
decisions in areas such as recruitment and promotion. If
the most qualified person does not get the job and the most
productive employee does not receive the top reward, does
this affect the level of innovation? This question will be
addressed in the next section.

5.3. INNOVATION

Innovation is defined by Becker & Whisler (1967) as:

> "the degree to which a social system is a first
> or early user of an idea amongst a set of similar
> social systems."[18]

It is defined by Meyer & Scott (1992) more broadly but simply as "knowledge use."[19]

In making a decision, innovation plays a major role in creating alternatives which are important in the decision making process (Qurab,1987).[20]

Child (1984) indicated that a failure to innovate and to be receptive to new ideas is a sign of structural failure.[21] In this respect, he cited a quotation about a large British enterprise:

> "Along this tree from foot to crown,
> Ideas flow up and vetoes down."[22]

This is a description of organizational culture grown dysfunctional over time, preventing the organization from effectively pursuing its goals in an environment hostile to innovation (Barley,et.al,1988).[23]

This section highlights the issue of innovation and its relationship to the decision making process through data gathered in questionnaires, interviews, and attending meetings.

5.3.1. *Questionnaire Analysis*

In 1982, Al-Nimir and Palmer used a questionnaire to test innovative values within the Saudi bureaucracy in several public sector organizations.[24]   The researcher incorporated this questionnaire into his own, anticipating a comparison of results with another set of Saudi organizations.

Al-Nimir and Palmer believed that **10%** of their study sample avoided criticizing their peers by either choosing not to answer or systematically using positive responses for each item;   thus, **10%** of the sample were eliminated from their analysis.[25]

For comparison, the researcher treated all the returned questionnaires, including those unanswered(UN), as the whole sample in both studies.   The following four tables illustrate the results of both studies.   The lapse of time between the two studies and the different internal environment (for example, the sample is confined to higher

education in this study) should be borne in mind when considering these results.

The first question asked about the proportion of Saudi bureaucrats receptive to new ideas.

<u>Table 5/1</u>:

Bureaucrats receptive to new ideas	All	Most	Few	None	UN	Total
Al Nimir & Palmer study	4%	23%	60%	5%	8%	100%
This study	3%	46%	46%	2%	3%	100%

Receptiveness to new ideas is an important skill opening the door to more innovative decision making processes (Kanan, 1985).[26] Taking into account the 13 year lapse between the two studies, table 5/1 shows that Saudi bureaucrats in higher education institutions are now more receptive to new ideas than bureaucrats in the Al Nimir and Palmer study. However, both studies show that Saudi bureaucrats are not considered to be highly receptive to new ideas.

To achieve innovative decision making, the researcher agrees with the views of both Qurab and Child, indicated above that, the great majority of bureaucrats must be receptive to new ideas. Nevertheless, almost half of the researcher's sample believed that only a few of bureaucrats

in Saudi higher education institutions are receptive to new ideas.

Although this result is a strong indicator toward a low level of innovation, three further indicators have been used to ensure that most factors were covered regarding the issue of innovation.

The second indicator is how many of Saudi bureaucrats are "primarily" concerned with job security;

Table 5/2:

Bureaucrats concerned with job security	All	Most	Few	None	UN	Total
Al Nimir & Palmer study	30%	27%	29%	7%	7%	100%
This study	22%	67%	8%	0%	3%	100%

This result shows that in the last **13** years Saudi bureaucrats have become more concerned with job security. In this study, **89%** of the sample believe that "all" or "most" bureaucrats in Saudi higher education institutions are primarily concerned with job security. Because innovation means change, a manager whose first priority is to retain his position, is most unlikely to be an innovative manager.

The third indicator is how many Saudi bureaucrats attempt to avoid conflict;

Table 5/3:

Bureaucrats attempting to avoid conflict	All	Most	Few	None	UN	Total
Al Nimir & Palmer study	36%	36%	19%	2%	7%	100%
This Study	9%	50%	29%	2%	10%	100%

Al Nimir and Palmer suggested that in a conservative society, such as Saudi Arabia, almost any form of innovation runs the risk of conflict.[27] According to this statement, 72% of their study sample suggested that "all" or "most" Saudi bureaucrats tend to avoid innovation.

Thirteen years later, and in the university environment of this study where personnel are generally educated to a higher level than those in the public sector, only a minor positive change has occurred. 59% of the researcher's sample believed that "all" or "most" bureaucrats at Saudi higher education institutions attempt to avoid conflict. Innovation means change which could lead to conflict in a conservative society, as suggested by the data presented later in this chapter. Therefore, bureaucrats who attempt to avoid conflict will tend not to adopt new ideas or polices. They will, most likely, conform to the status quo, which results in a low level of innovation.

Instead of trying to fit into the culture of the wider society, Dlawer (1990) sees one of the university's goals to be to set a proper conformity-innovation ratio between university and society.[28] In Saudi Arabia, the majority of public sector jobs are filled with university graduates. Therefore, if one goal of universities is to perpetuate the lack of innovation showed in Al Nimir & Palmer study op.cit,[29] then the lack of innovation in Saudi universities could be seen to reflect this. However, if that goal is to improve innovation, this study suggests that such a goal has not yet been achieved.

The final indicator is: when it comes to decision making, how many Saudi bureaucrats are unwilling to take risks?

Table 5/4:

Bureaucrats unwilling to take risks	All	Most	Few	None	UN	Total
Al Nimir & Palmer study	41%	26%	20%	5%	8%	92%
This study	18%	62%	9%	2%	9%	91%

The above table indicates that Saudi bureaucrats nowadays are more afraid of taking risks in making decisions.

One can draw a conclusion based on the above tables: Saudi bureaucrats are primarily concerned with job security and thus avoid any conflict that would result from innovation. They are not receptive to new ideas because

they wish to avoid any social inconvenience. Thus, the organizational culture of Saudi universities encourages the development of "less innovative" decision makers.

5.3.2. *Interviews Analysis*

Throughout the interviews, three issues were seen as important for innovation in the decision making process:-

- What is the cause of low innovation?
- How can the level of innovation be improved?
- What is the impact of innovation upon decision making?

In response to the first question, most interviewees believed their superiors would not appreciate new ideas or change in office procedures. They agreed with Assabaq (1991) that fear of a possible negative outcome slowed down innovational development.[30] Moreover, the promotion system was not seen to identify or encourage innovative personnel.

In answer to the second question, most interviewees believed that they needed some motivation to bring out their hidden innovative abilities. They argued that this motivation could be in the form of increased flexibility, thus opening the door to new ideas or of encouragement given to creative personnel. The latter suggestion finds support

from the argument of Pezeshkpur, *op.cit,* that the typical
Arab is passionate and can be propelled into action through
appeal to his emotions.[31]

In answer to the final question, most interviewees
agreed that a low level of innovation negatively affects the
decision making process, through lack of identified
alternatives, lack of flexibility, and highly routinized
decisions.

5.3.3. *Meetings Analysis*

In attending 15 meetings as an observer, the researcher
made two observations in regard to innovation.

First, he noticed the large number of young and highly-
educated participants which is typical of a university
culture. Many were western university graduates. They had
experienced a highly innovative organizational culture where
they saw new things happening every day, partly because of
the high level of innovation in the decision making process
at western universities (Hardy,1990).[32]   Because of the
rising number of these newcomers many university
administrators in today's world face pressure calling for
increased flexibility and innovation (Cooper &
Dunlap,1991).[33]   The researcher recalls seeing and hearing

of such pressure, yet he did not see evidence of increased flexibility and innovation.

The second point is the strong relationship between participation and innovation. In one departmental meeting, where the chairman followed a policy of delegating authority and allowing participation, members of that meeting worked to present their ideas by coming prepared or brainstorming during the meeting. However, most meetings were controlled by a chairman who adopted a non-participative style which inhibited the innovative impulse of those who attended who came without notes, listened, agreed and quietly left the meeting room.

In summary, the researcher agrees with Abdulwahab (1982) that creative thinking and innovation are influenced by personal factors such as education, nurture, and intelligence.[34] However, meetings analysis together with the results of other research methods suggest that in Saudi higher education institutions, the low level of innovation does not match the high level of education and intelligence. Indeed, the data suggests that organizational structure and organizational culture both play a more important role in determining the level of innovation than the factors identified by Abdulwahab.

5.3.4. _Implication_

In a conservative society such as that of Saudi Arabia, people are uncomfortable with change. As mentioned earlier, any change could cause conflict and therefore cultural pressure discourages innovation in most Saudi organizations. Moreover, in highly centralized organizations such as Saudi higher education institutions (chapter 6), one can expect a low level of innovation. However, highly-educated people are less accepting of the fact that they have to watch, listen, and agree without using their knowledge and creative thinking in the decision making process. Vught _op.cit,_ stated that:

> "...higher education systems are expected to contribute to economic growth by providing scientific and technological breakthroughs as well as highly skilled professionals...higher education systems are expected to perform the indispensable task of the most important societal innovator... higher education institutions are supposed to be able to initiate innovations themselves."[35]

Unfortunately, this section has revealed the lack of innovation amongst personnel at Saudi higher education institutions and its negative influence upon the decision making process.

In the following sections, two related concepts, social change and professionalism, will be examined.

5.4. SOCIAL CHANGE

Many authors have documented the external pressures on universities and the changes that are emerging within higher education institutions which are, in the main, reactive (Middlehurst,1988).[36] In a traditional society such as that of Saudi Arabia, organizational culture is strongly affected by social values making adaptation to any structural change difficult (Gagliardi & Turner,op.cit).[37] Pezeshkpur op.cit reported:

> "One foreign consultant, demonstrating a better method of filing, found that the Middle Eastern public administrator did not want to change his department's system; things ran smoothly as they were. Why should the system be changed at the risk of something going wrong?"[38]

In general, knowledge of the cultural background of those who control higher education is one means of understanding their attitude to social changes (Twombly & Moore,1991).[39] Despite the resistance to change in traditional society, Roeber (1973) presented a general argument that:

> "..the environment is now changing more rapidly and in unpredictable ways. Its influence is being felt inside the boundaries of the organization, and social change is becoming a factor in business decisions."[40]

The literature review, pilot study and field work suggested that social change is a factor in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions and this will be examined below. A questionnaire, interviews, and attendance at meetings were the research methods used.

5.4.1. *Questionnaire Analysis*

Al-Nimir & Palmer *op.cit* have studied the attitudes of Saudi bureaucrats towards social change.[41] The researcher inserted their two questions into his questionnaire in order to compare results. Participants in the earlier study were not given the choice of a neutral answer and the researchers treated the answered questionnaire as the whole sample. Thus, for the purpose of comparison, this researcher departed from their method by including unanswered (UN) in the whole sample, alongside strongly agree(S.A), agree(A), neutral(N), disagree(D) and strongly disagree(S.D). The following two tables represent the results of the two studies:

Table 5/5 illustrates how the participants are pre-disposed to avoid modernisation programmes that might alter the social status quo.

Table 5/5:

It is best to change programmes that cause social conflict	S.A	A	N	D	S.D	UN	total
Al-Nimir & Palmer study	24%	55%	N/A	13%	2%	6%	100%
This study	24%	37%	22%	9%	3%	5%	100%

Al-Nimir & Palmer's study showed that **79%** of their study sample felt it was best to change programmes that might cause social conflict. Thirteen years later, this study shows some positive improvement where in Saudi higher education institutions **61%** of the study sample concurred. In the researcher's view **61%** is still an impressive figure, showing high resistance to social change.

Table 5/6 illustrates how far participants believe in the maintenance of traditional values.

Table 5/6:

Social change should not be instituted at the expense of traditional values	S.A	A	N	D	S.D	UN	total
Al-Nimir & Palmer study	36%	50%	N/A	8%	2%	4%	100%
This study	25%	32%	21%	14%	4%	4%	100%

This table shows a clearer difference between the two studies. In Al-Nimir & Palmer's study, **86%** of the participants stress the view that modernization programmes should not pose a threat to traditional values. However, in the researcher's study, **57%** concurred. These results indicate that bureaucrats in Saudi higher education institutions are less resistant to social change than public

sector bureaucrats thirteen years ago. The researcher believe that this shift could have resulted from the higher level of education amongst university bureaucrats and the influence of western culture upon the western university graduates. However, one can say that Saudi bureaucrats are still resistant to social change. The relationship between such resistance and the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions will be explored below.

5.4.2. *Interviews Analysis*

On the evidence of interviews, a strong relationship existed between social change and innovation. During one interview, the manager of a computer centre expressed the opinion that there is a link between the high resistance to social change and the lack of innovation. This link reflects a finding made by Veiga (1983): a manager who is more flexible in career mobility and social change, is more likely to have a wider vision in the decision making process characterized by opening up opportunities, creating alternatives and avoiding dead-ends.[42]

A Secretary-General who holds a Ph.D. Degree in education from a western university, agreed with Nutt's (1989) argument that learning about decision making is dependent upon appreciating how well decision makers can

perform under various conditions.[43] He explains how moving to the new campus fitted with modern technology affected the performance of the university staff in two different ways. Those who were highly resistant to any social change and did not welcome new challenges found it very difficult to cope with the move. However, those who felt the opposite welcomed the move and the quality of their performance improved.

Other interviewees argued that in a traditional culture such as that of Saudi Arabia, stability is an important part of the social setting. Thus, it is expected that people will resist any social change, especially if such change affects traditional values. They agreed with Dhaher (1979), that people feel comfortable with things when they know how they function. However, when their surroundings are changed, they become apprehensive, anxious and confused.[44]

Members of the academic staff believed that Saudi higher education institutions struggle between the needs of two different groups of personnel. One group consists of old-fashion traditionalists who want things to remain as they are. They fear any kind of social change that might be caused by modernisation. Traditional values are so important in the eyes of these Saudis that they will reject any move that might endanger them. The other group is moderate and open-minded, most of whom have studied abroad.

They welcome new challenges, and they are willing to try different methods without compromising their values.

A Physiotherapist at a university health club stated that according to his experience, most Saudis are resistant to social change. However, when their colleagues try something new and feel comfortable with it they are easily persuaded. This health club, he said, was almost empty throughout the first year, "now, I have two assistants and a fully-booked schedule".

5.4.3. *Meetings Analysis*

Whilst sitting through 15 meetings, the researcher found most participants had mixed feelings about social change. In general, they seemed to react according to the anticipated impact of such change on traditional values. For example, one meeting discussed the internal design of the university dormitory including fitting a TV set in each unit. Apparently TV was prohibited in the old dormitory because university top management agreed with some religious leaders that TV has a negative influence upon students. However, the decision was made to allow TV in that university because it had become generally accepted in Saudi society. Thus, a change in society's values resulted in a change within the university.

The researcher agrees with Twombly & Moore (1991) that higher education reflects the society it serves, even in its own workings.[45] As the external environment changes, shifts should occur in higher education's internal environment including people's attitude toward social change.

In an academic departmental meeting the researcher witnessed a unique situation in which the head of that department addressed the question whether Saudi higher education institutions tend to resist rapid change. In his opinion the process of change preceding any action was lengthy. The main reason in his view was the inflexibility of Saudi culture. In that meeting, members agreed to take account of social acceptance of any new ideas as a major element in their presentation. In other words, before suggesting any policy or asking higher management to approve any decision, they should first ensure that it would not cause any social resistance.

In summary, meetings analysis indicated that in Saudi higher education institutions most people are highly resistant to anything that might affect their traditional values. This predisposition made them over-protective and inflexible and has implication for the decision making process.

5.4.4. *Implication*

Attituds to social change are connected with the level
of innovation and affects the decision making process.
About an institution with a high level of resistance towards
social change one can say that innovation amongst personnel
will be lacking. This has a negative impact on the decision
making process in that institution. In the researcher's
view the results of his analysis support Bryman's *op.cit*
statement that:

> "It is acknowledged that corporate cultures can
> be highly intransigent and that the stronger the
> culture the more difficult the change, however
> necessary it may be. So we must be aware that a
> strong functional culture can become a strong
> dysfunctional one which will continue to be promoted
> by culture-oriented leaders who are still acting as
> strongly as ever, but along the wrong path."[46]

It is the strength of Saudi traditional culture that creates
a strong corporate culture highly resistance to change and
leads to a low level of innovation. On the other hand, a
flexible institution that is willing to accept the challenge
of new ideas is more likely to produce a high level of
innovation amongst its personnel, leading to better quality
decisions.

As Alawy (1987) stated, the occurrence of social change depends upon several factors such as environmental flexibility and level of education.[47] Saudi higher education institutions have a high level of educated personnel but seem to lack the required flexibility. Nonetheless Wollitzer (1991) has stated that:

> "In higher education, as in the life of nations and in virtually all other aspects of human experience, one thing is certain: everything does truly continue to change. The world's thrust toward international cooperation and competition will not leave universities alone."[48]

The results of this section suggest that Saudi universities need to be prepared for the coming social change instead of resisting it because such change is inevitable in a changing world.

With this resistance to change, the other factors highlighted in this chapter, nepotism and lack of innovation, will remain unchanged. The researcher argues that these factors influence the level of professionalism amongst Saudi universities' personnel and this factor will next be focused upon.

5.5. PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism has been defined as:

"Professional quality, character, method, or conduct; the stamp of a particular profession."[49]

In the modern world of management, professionalism becomes a necessity in order to cope with organizational development. It is fair to argue that decision making requires special skills and knowledge. However, Assaf (1976) argues that most Arabic managers do not follow specific methods of decision making but instead, rely upon their experience and follow their feelings in choosing between alternatives.[50]

In contrast, high performance and productivity achieved by personnel in the developed world comes from professionalism and being motivated by concepts like excellence, quality and service (Harris & Harris,1988).[51] In fact, there are different training needs for different types of professions (Middlehurst, *op.cit*).[52] The researcher will consider the training received by bureaucrats in Saudi universities in order to determine the professionalism of the decision makers in such organizations. A questionnaire, interviews, documents, and general observation were the research methods used to gather the information.

5.5.1. *Questionnaire Analysis*

Questions regarding the issue of professionalism were concentrated into four areas:

- educational level

- years on the job

- professional training

- university-based management studies

Regarding the level of education, the study sample revealed a high level of education amongst personnel at Saudi higher education institutions. **45%** of the sample had degrees higher than a B.A. Moreover, **34%** of the sample held a B.A. degree, and only **21%** had no first degree.

In regard to length of employment at the university, the study sample shows the following:

1) **5%** spent less than a year in the job,

2) **14%** spent more than a year up to 3 years,

3) **11%** spent more than 3 years up to 5 years,

4) **26%** spent more than 5 years up to 10 years,

5) **44%** spent more than 10 years in their universities.

The above result could be linked to the findings on both innovation and social change, where the study indicated that personnel at Saudi higher education institutions preferred to settle in their jobs and avoid any change that might cause conflict or job insecurity. Brown (1986) argues that with the necessary training and preparation, managers would be capable of flexible mobility inside or outside the organization, instead of freezing themselves in the same job.[53] The question then is how well-trained and prepared were the study sample?

The answer can be seen in the results of the last two questions. The researcher asked the participants, firstly, if they had enrolled in any job-related training programmes? More than half had never attended any. The researcher then asked the participants if they had attended any managerial sessions or management classes: **71%** of the sample had not. To explain these results, the researcher looked back to the early 1980's when Abdulwahab (1982) found that more than 80% of Saudi managers learned how to make a decision through practice and experience.[54] Moreover, Anastos et.al (1980) linked this fact to the practice of nepotism by suggesting that due to "Wasta" in hiring new staff, Saudi organizations were confronted by a shortage of educated well-trained managerial personnel.[55]

5.5.2. *Interviews Analysis*

A proportion of interview questions covering the concept of professionalism were suggested by Middlehurst op. *cit* as follows:[56]

- Ask general managers of financial affairs if their employees are trained in the use of spreadsheets for handling budgets?

- Ask personnel managers if they or their employees are trained in staff selection and interviewing?

- Ask managers how they learn the skill of work planning and decision making?

- Ask academic staff how they learn presentational issues and do they restructure lectures utilizing student feedback?

The results of these questions indicated a lack of professional training amongst personnel at Saudi higher education institutions which supported the results of the questionnaire. More than half the staff in the departments of financial affairs had never received any training. In the personnel departments, only **18%** of the staff had trained in staff selection and interviewing. Saudi bureaucrats argued that they depend upon learning through practice rather than training programmes. Interviewees explained how they spent the first week on the job learning by watching, copying, and practicing with the help of other members of

the department. On the other hand, academic staff explained how they spent part of their last undergraduate year in practicing as school teachers. However, once reaching post-graduate level, they concentrated on their research with no further training in lecturing.

Managers in different departments became more aware that training in basic management concepts was important when the majority failed to answer questions regarding a basic knowledge of management in general and decision making in particular. In fact, Abdulwahab *op.cit* found a strong relationship between training and using a scientific decision making process.[57] In this study, the researcher asked interviewees whose job involved decision making: what method do you use to make a decision? **34%** said that they do not make any decisions, rather they do routine work before passing it to higher level management where the decision was usually made. **45%** stated that they learned how to make a decision through practice, experience, and referral to their superiors for consultation and advice. Only **21%** felt comfortable talking about different methods of decision making; the majority of these had a management education background.

5.5.3. _Observation Analysis_

As computers have become part of the professional
managerial process, an important observation made on all the
seven campuses was the lack of computer usage. Although
there was a computer in almost every office, the majority
remained partially or totally unused due to lack of
training. Other scholars such as Yaqy (1989) have noticed
the lack of computer usage among Saudi managers.[58] It seems
to be a universal problem as Regan (1995) observed:

> "Everyone has heard a story about the office
> which had computers installed on all the desks and
> today most remained unused."[59]

The researcher agrees with Simpson's (1994) argument about
the importance of implementing technologies appropriate to
the institution.[60] Indeed, liberal personnel within Saudi
higher education institutions saw lack of computer usage as
a sign of the larger problem, that is, lack of
professionalism. Thus, they work hard to instigate training
programmes in the university computer centres. Nonetheless,
the lack of other training programmes, especially
managerial, was noticed throughout the field work.

Computer sessions were the only on-the-job training on all the university campuses, leaving most training programmes to be held at the Institute of Public Administration, which has limited seats and programmes. One can argue that one training institution will find it difficult to satisfy the needs of all universities.

5.5.4. *Implications*

The researcher agrees with Harbison & Myers (1959) that management must inevitably become more professionally oriented.[61] Oshagbemi (1988) argues that academic leaders should benefit from management training in order to be more effective in their jobs.[62] Harbison & Myers *op.cit* state in detail:

> "The types of patrimonial or political management which may be appropriate in the early stages of industrial development are incapable of controlling modern large-scale enterprise. The managerial elite, therefore, becomes an elite of brains and education, and professional training instead of family or political connections must become the principal avenues of access to its ranks."[63]

However, this study proved that this has not been the case in the management of Saudi higher education institutions. In fact, lack of professionalism appeared to be a problem on all campuses. Decision makers lacked knowledge of methods of decision making and participants called for more training, especially on those campuses where technology is in advance of staff capabilities.

5.6. *CONCLUSION*

In conclusion, the data leads the researcher to believe that there is a connection between all the four cultural factors highlighted in this chapter. As nepotism determines decisions made about hiring and promoting staff, professionalism becomes less important than "Wasta". This creates a lack of professionalism and leads to a low level of innovation and resistance to social change, in part through the lack of the necessary skills.

At the same time, resistance to change limits the experience of personnel which leads to lack of innovation and vise versa. Moreover, personnel who benefit from nepotism resist change that might deny them such privilege.

Figure 5/1 : The relationship between the four cultural sub-factors.
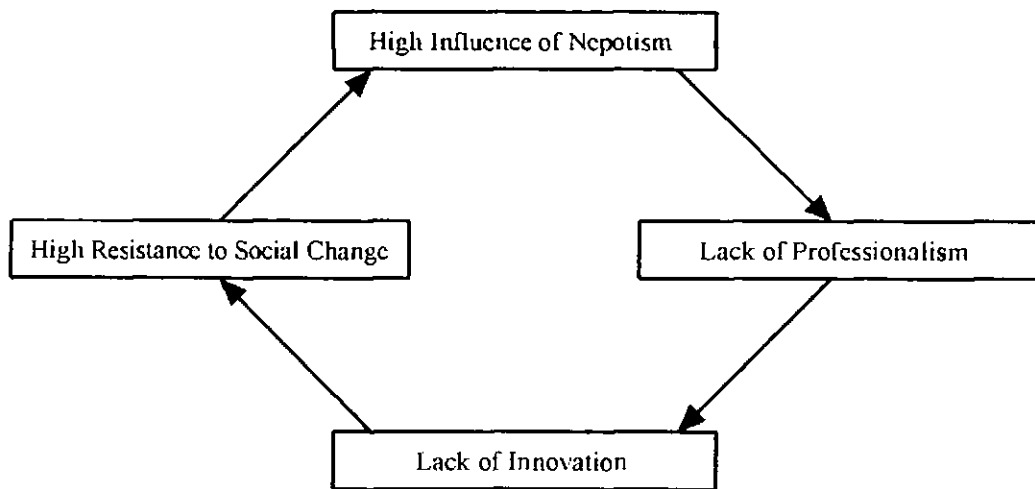
As the reader can see, these four cultural factors work together in a circular fashion whereby one factor leads to the other. The current Chapter has presented the problem, while Chapter 8 will present the researcher's suggestions for a solution.

The reader is invited, in the following two chapters, to consider the structural factors affecting the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

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CHAPTER SIX

MAIN STRUCTURAL FACTOR;

"CENTRALIZATION"

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the degree of centralization in the decision making process in Saudi universities. Centralization is a key issue because it determines the way in which decisions are made and the processes involved. Simon *et.al* (1954) present the following contrast:

> "An administrative organization is centralized to the extent that decisions are made at relatively high levels in the organization; decentralized to the extent that discretion and authority to make important decisions are delegated by top management to lower levels of executive authority."[1]

Twenty three years later Simon (1977) clarifies further:

> " The terms 'Centralization' and 'Decentralization' are heavily laden with value. In general, decentralization is regarded as a good thing, and centralization a bad thing. Decentralization is commonly equated with autonomy, self-determination, or even self-actualization. Centralization is equated with bureaucracy (in the pejorative sense of that term) or with authoritarianism, and is often named as a prime force causing dehumanization of organizations and alienation of their members."[2]

In a traditional country like Saudi Arabia centralization is part of the culture both politically and socially. In the Saudi bureaucratic system, decision-making power lies in the

hands of a very few people who comprise the Ministers' Council. Even a small matter such as promoting an official at the higher level of management in any public organization must be approved by the Ministry Council and receive the assent by the King himself. As Johany (1980) explains:

> "In Saudi Arabia the King is the head of state, prime minister, commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the chief executive of the government. In the final analysis he is the ultimate authority."[3]

This degree of centralization reflects the values of Saudi society. As previously noted, the Saudi father controls most family matters and makes most of the decisions, especially those affecting the future of his children, their education and marriage. Thus, in Saudi society people are accustomed to centralized leadership since it is their experience of the family they grow up in.

The pilot study and field work indicated two major elements of centralization which will be the foci of this chapter: the level of participation which determines the degree of employees' involvement in decision making and the hierarchy of authority which gives a person the authority to take a decision.

6.2. LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

This section will examine the approach of Saudi managers to participation. Knowledge of people's attitude to participation is necessary to fully understand the issue of centralization and especially how this impacts on the decision making process.

In general, organizational theorists such as Weber (1947),[4] Taylor (1947),[5] and March and Simon (1965),[6] all placed emphasis upon the framework of individual participation in organizational decision making. The concept of participative management was introduced by McGregor (1960),[7] through his well-known "Theory X and Theory Y". Morse & Lorsch (1970), summarized McGregor's ideas:

> "Theory X assumes that people dislike work and must be coerced, controlled, and directed toward organizational goals.... Theory Y - the integration of goals - emphasizes the average person's intrinsic interest in his work, his desire to be self-directing and to seek responsibility, and his capacity to be creative in solving business problems. It is McGregor's conclusion, of course, that the latter approach to organization is the more desirable one for managers to follow."[8]

The researcher supports the latter view that participation in decision making increases the participants' satisfaction, self-actualization, and loyalty which in turn enhances decision making.

As Cohen & March (1986) explain in relation to American academic institutions:

"For many people, the process and structure of university governance are more important than the outcome, at least within wide ranges of possible outcomes. Participation is not a means but an end. Academic institutions easily become process rather than output-oriented. Goals provide scant evidence on whether the output of the decision process within academe is desirable, but participation in the process is a conspicuous certification of status. Individuals establish themselves as important by virtue of their rights of participation in the governance of the institution."[9]

The importance of participation can be seen in its relation to personal autonomy, satisfaction, and loyalty of participants. A better quality of decision making and increased productivity is achieved by attention to these factors through giving more responsibility (Brooke,1984).[10] This section will investigate the level of participation through data gathered using the research methodology described in Chapter 3.

6.2.1. *Questionnaires Analysis*

In his handbook of organizational measurement, Price (1972)[11] chose Aiken and Hage's (1968)[12] scaled questionnaire to measure the level of participation in an organization. The researcher adopted that scale (Appendix 1.). The four questions were as follow;

a. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions to hire new staff?

b. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions on the promotion of any of the department staff?

c. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions on the adoption of new policies?

d. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions on the adoption of new programs?

Using Aiken & Hage's method of computing, the following table's results show the level of participation for the whole sample;

Table 6/1

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	45%	28%	4%	12%	6%	95%
Question b.	51%	20%	9%	7%	11%	98%
Question c.	26%	35%	9%	19%	7%	96%
Question d.	18%	29%	15%	19%	16%	97%
AVERAGE	**35%**	**28%**	**9%**	**14%**	**10%**	**96%**

$$\{ [1(35) + 2(28) + 3(9) + 4(14) + 5(10)] / 96 \} = \underline{\textbf{2.33}}$$

Aiken & Hage classified 3 as the mid-point dividing low and high levels of participation where 1 represents the lowest and 5 the highest level of participation. The participation

rate here of **2.33** indicates a low participation organization where two thirds of the sample 'never' or 'seldom' participate in the decision making process. The following figures present a summary of the results in the tables in respect of all the groups which are fully displayed in Appendix 4.

Figures 6/1 & 6/2   **Participation rate for universities**   **Participation rate for management levels**
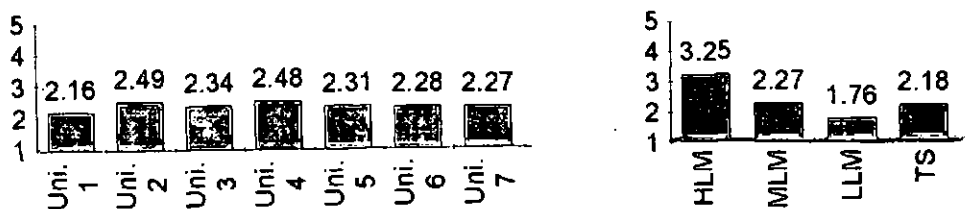
From the above figures and table, one can reasonably argue that in Saudi universities, the level of participation in the decision making process is clearly low. Only higher level management has a slightly higher score of **3.25**. **63%** of the entire sample answered the questions about their participation in the decision making process with either 'never' or 'seldom'. The results of other research methods should clarify the level of participation in the decision making process and explain the reasons behind the above results.

6.2.2. *Interviews Analysis*

From an analysis of interviews, the researcher discovered two conflicting points of view regarding the issue of level of participation:

- those against increasing the level of participation
- those for increasing the level of participation

The first group, against increasing the level of participation in the decision making process, was represented by executives who believed that opening the door to more participation will only create more problems. A Deputy-Rector, a member of higher level management said:

> "the fewer the people who participate in the process of decision-making, the faster and more effectively is the decision made..."

He explained that when more people take part the process gets more complicated and out of control. So, in his view:

> "Participation in the decision making process creates problems rather than solving them..."

In these interviews, the researcher pointed out that a number of well-known theorists believe in the positive effect of greater participation. They argue that allowing subordinates to participate in the decision-making process and to use their skills gives both boss and subordinate confidence and an enhanced perception of the role each can play, leading to higher output and effectiveness (Heller & Wilpert,1981).[13] Moreover, the effectiveness of participation can be increased through an understanding of its effect upon the working environment (Lockwood,1985).[14] The usual response to these suggestions was "there is a big difference between theory and reality."

Another typical response was that what is right for the west is not always right for the middle-east because of social and cultural differences. The researcher agreed with this general point, however, the positive impact of participation, such as increased loyalty and satisfaction, could equally apply to east as to west.

Conservative higher level managers became defensive in discussions with the researcher, rejecting anything western. The idea of adopting any western theory was, to them, the imposition of western culture. Typically, a Deputy Rector answered the researcher's reference to a relationship between participation and effectiveness, by saying:

"In the western culture, anarchy exists because everybody is participating in the decision making process. We do not need that culture. People must not participate unless they are ready to do so. In other words, they will participate in the decision making process when they reach the level of management which allows them to have such a privilege. And, it will not help their effectiveness if they carry responsibilities which they may not be able to handle."

It may be guessed that, when those in lower level management who are denied the opportunity to participate in decision-making reach a higher level and become decision makers, they continue to deny people below them the right to participate. In links with higher productivity in the outcome of decisions, Farris & Lim (1969) argues that participative leadership leads to high productivity and high productivity leads to a participative leadership.[15]

The second group was in favour of increasing the level of participation in the decision making process. In this group, the researcher found the great majority of academic staff and many personnel at middle and low level management but only a minority of higher level management.

A Secretary-General surprised the researcher by blaming non-participants for not asking for the right to participate. The fact that 55% of the study sample wished for greater participation in order to improve their job environment (see Chapter 4.), might surprise that Secretary-

General. When people do not ask to participate in the decision making process, it may not follow from their silence that they do not want to.

A Secretary-General of another university favoured a change in the level of personnel's participation in the decision making process at all Saudi universities. Nonetheless, he believed it would be difficult because of the current authoritarian management style. He also hoped that this study would provide a new framework for a better and more effective kind of participation. He agreed that a positive relationship exists between increasing levels of individual participation and effectiveness.

Revealing a positive attitude, the head of the Computer Centre, a middle level manager, stated that he had taken some action towards giving personnel in his department the chance to participate in the decision making process. He said:

> "I found out that people get more enthusiastic if they feel that they are important at their work place and the best way to make them feel important, is by giving them the opportunity to participate in the decision making process whenever that decision affects their field."

Moreover, he wished that higher level management would give more opportunities to staff at the middle level. He agreed with Withey & Cooper (1989) that, in general, participation in decision making boosts staff morale and increases their loyalty.[16]

It has also been suggested by Patchen (1970) that there is a positive relationship between participation and job satisfaction[17]. Thus, at that Computer Centre, the researcher interviewed three middle level staff who strongly supported the idea of increasing the level of individual participation in the decision making process in all departments. One of them stated that when he was working in the Personnel Affairs Department, he followed routine orders without any creative thinking or involvement on his part towards improving the way his work is done. After a few months he became bored and lost interest in the job. In his words:

> "I worked like a robot doing the same job every day. I followed routine steps for every situation. I realized that a computer would be better for this kind of work. So, I decided to move to another department to fulfill my need to be part of the job, not a slave of it."

He went on to say:

"participating in the decision making process at this Computer Centre makes me very loyal to my job, thinking all the time of new ways to improve the productivity my department and the quality of our decisions."

This experience is supported by Roberts *et.al* (1968) who identify the positive influence of participative leadership upon the satisfaction and performance of subordinates.[18]

Another member of the staff at the Computer Centre said that he had applied to work there when he heard about its leadership style; knowing that he would take part in the decision making was a strong motivation.

A third man interviewed there said that being active in departmental meetings gave him the experience and confidence to be active at meetings outside his department. More interestingly, he said:

"Compared to my colleagues who work in other departments, I found myself more satisfied with my work because of my belief that I play an important role through my participation in the decision making process. In fact, I hope to see the door open for them to participate in the decision making process in their departments."

When it came to the academic staff, the literature on educational reform has called for increased teacher participation in decision making (Bacharach,et.al,1990),[19] which is believed to increase innovation together with motivation and commitment (Werther,1988).[20] A different point of view is canvassed by Mitchell (1988) in his study of departmental leaders. He found that in some departments where participation by professionals such as teachers was practised, the faculty produced "a lot of promise but not much performance."[21]

In Saudi universities, academic staff expressed their wish to participate in the decision making process. Even Heads of Departments said that they played no part in determining the work process in their departments. Al-Najim (1985) studied one Saudi university in which he obtained a similar result.[22]

It was very common to hear the academic staff complain about being denied the right to participate in making decisions which directly affect their job, including, in some universities, deciding the weighting of the total mark as between class work and examinations where universities decided that 80% of the grade would be for the final exam and only 20% of the grade would be left to faculty staff to allocate for the semester work. All of the 13 staff members

and **19** students who were asked by the researcher for their view, expressed their disagreement with the university's' decision. Unfortunately, the ones most affected by the decision were not given the opportunity to participate in making it.

A Professor in an Economics Department stated that he had become used to receiving university memorandums reporting decisions affecting the way he ran his classes, upon which he had not been consulted. He gave an example of the university directing his students to review economic books that the university believed were important.

Another Professor in another university said that he had no involvement in academic decisions, which were usually made at higher level management. He expressed his wish for a minor involvement through participating in an annual survey or questionnaire to be distributed amongst all teaching staff to take their views on all matters dealing directly with academic affairs. The researcher totally agreed with this suggestion.

In fact, the Holy Qur'an, endorsed participation fourteen hundred years ago in *Sura Al-Shura,* which means "Consultation". In that Sura, the description of the believers was:

"Those who respond to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, who spend out of what we bestow on them for Sustenance."[23]

Moreover, Islam as a religion encourages participation and consultation and this is intimated in the Holy Qur'an several times. For example, Prophet Mohammed is enjoined to consult his followers in this passage:-

"It is part of the mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee. So pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in him)."[24]

Many personnel at the middle and lower levels of management told the researcher of their wish to be consulted and to take part in decision making. An employee at the Personnel Affairs Department with a B.A. in Management, claimed that since starting his job he has attempted to use some of his decision making skills but was denied the right to participate. He asked the researcher to appeal for the door to be opened to educated staff to practise what they have learned and to participate for the benefit of the university.

In these interviews, one can see that beliefs about participation in the decision making process vary from one employee to another. However, most opinions fell into one of the two groups: staff who are against opening the door to participation, mainly the majority of higher level management, and staff who would like to see an increase in the level of participation especially in decisions that have a bearing on their job, mainly the majority of middle and lower level management, teaching staff and a minority of higher level management. Scott-Morgan (1994) argues that prescribing the level participation is a major function of management.[25] These interviews indicate the management practice of Saudi higher education institutions resulted in a low level of participation in the decision making process.

6.2.3. *Meetings Analysis*

As Schwartzman (1989) explains, meetings produce and reproduce power relationships and systems of control.[26] Mindful of this, the researcher noticed at 10 out of the 15 meetings he observed that, the chairman of the meeting was in total charge, while the rest of the personnel, were, like the researcher, observing and taking notes.

For example, in a meeting in a Vice-Rector's office, the main objective was to decide upon the quality of

furniture to be used in the university dormitory. The meeting started with one of the university engineers giving a short presentation about the different offers from several specialist companies. Then, the Vice-Rector, using his experience in dealing with such matters throughout his long career, gave his opinion about the project and the companies that were competing to win that contract. Everybody seemed to agree with him, so the meeting ended by approving his choice. From an observer's point of view, it was difficult to determine whether the agreement arose because the Vice-Rector made the right decision based on a participative discussion in a previous meeting or because of the lack of participation. One thing the researcher was certain of: the level of participation in this meeting was very low.

In contrast, at a College department meeting the situation was totally different. The Head of Department was meeting with five academic members of staff to decide the best way to organise a special conference at their college. At this meeting, the researcher encountered a process of exchange of ideas. The members of that meeting spoke in turn, one by one, each listened, took notes and gave feedback. Everybody had an important role in the meeting. At the end of the meeting they expressed to the researcher their satisfaction, which appeared to suggest strongly a relationship between a greater level of participation in the decision making process and greater job satisfaction.

The first of these two meetings represents a non-participative style and was observed in *nine* other such meetings. The second meeting represents a participative style which was echoed at *four* other meetings. In other words, two thirds of the meetings in the researcher's sample revealed lack of participation in the decision making.

6.2.4. *Decisions Analysis*

The **28** decision cases followed indicated a low level of participation in the decision making process. Of all these decisions the researcher has chosen two examples, which exemplify the overall picture of the decision making process in Saudi universities.

A decision had been made to extend the working hours of the university Sports Arena by two hours at the end of the normal working day. The researcher went to the Sports Centre to discover how this decision was made. During those additional hours the Physiotherapist was reading a newspaper. After being given a short account of the reason for the visit, the Doctor told the researcher that he had never been asked his opinion in the matter. He claimed that there were no students coming to the Sports Centre at this time of the day. He said:

"If the administration of the university asked me as a member of the staff at this Sports Centre, I would have advised them to add the two hours, if necessary, at the beginning of the working day. So, we would start earlier and the students would come to use the center during these additional hours."

The researcher was interested to discover whether students supported his view that they also should participate in any decision about extending or changing the working hours at the university's Sports Centre. 15 students were asked for their opinion. Some of them supported the researcher's view by pointing out the fact that it is students who use the Sports Centre the most and so should play a part in making the decision. However, nobody asked the students their opinion. It is worth mentioning that most students whom the researcher met with agreed with the Physiotherapist that the Sports Centre should open earlier, not close later.

So, the question was, if it wasn't the people who work in the Sports Centre or the people who use it who made the decision, who did? The researcher learned that the decision had been made at higher level management without any consultation with either the personnel who work at the Sports Centre or the students who use it.

Another decision which the researcher followed was that concerning the appointment of a new employee to work at the Communication Department of one university. Three new graduates were chosen and sent to the university from the Civil Service Council. The university was not involved in this selection, but had the right to choose one out of the three. The researcher followed the matter at the university, when the three candidates had their job interviews. The interviewers were the university Vice Rector for Administrative Affairs, the General Manager of Personnel Affairs and the General Manager for Public Communication. Common sense would suggest that the hiring of a new employee is a decision that should involve the department that he is to work in. In addition to the choice being limited to those three people nominated by the Civil Service Council, within the university the right to participate in choosing the new employee lay in the hands of the higher level management, not in those of the department that had the vacancy.

6.2.5. *Observation Analysis*

The fieldwork conducted inside Saudi universities revealed to the researcher that they are highly complex organizations. Mintzberg (1979) argues that a complex organization should utilise a decentralized structure.[27] However, managers in the Arab world are regarded as authoritarian and tend to discourage participatory decision making (Meade & Whittaker,1967).[28]

A major decision was that regarding the choice of a new Rector for one Saudi university. The researcher agrees with Kalman & Hossler (1987) that such a decision is one of the most important events in the life of any university; history, mission, power, control, and institutional characteristics interact to influence the selection and thus to affect the future of the university.[29] From a western perspective, they describe the procedure for electing the president at Catholic institutions thus:

> "Catholic institutions usually advertise in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for candidates with homogeneous qualifications and backgrounds. A representative Search Committee screens these credentials and chooses a small number of finalists who come to campus for interviews with a wide variety of individuals and groups. The Board of Trustees then makes the final appointment."[30]

In contrast, when the Rector of one Saudi university was chosen by the King to be a Minister, his successor was appointed by the King also. It came to the researcher's knowledge that even higher level managers at that university heard the news on TV like the rest of the country without participating in this very important decision. This comparison illustrates the impact of social and political life on the universities. This case clearly indicates a highly centralized system in which the university is assimilated into the overall governmental process.

6.2.6. *Implication*

Between entirely non-participative management and totally participative management there are levels of participation that may suit different kinds of organization (Abdulwahab,1982).[31] In general, Harris & Harris (1988) believe that people seek greater democracy in their work place, which may mean participating in management problem solving, planning and decisions.[32] Also, Alutto & Beleasco (1972) argue that there is an assumption concerning the universal desirability of increased participation in the decision making process.[33] Ali (1989) argues that Western values may have influenced some Arab managers to adopt a consultative style.[34] However, in studying the styles of Mid-eastern managers, Badawy (1980) found most were highly

dissatisfied with the extent of the "opportunity to participate in setting goals", where self-actualization was considered an important need by most age groups.[35]

In this study, the vast majority of participants expressed their need for a more participative role in the decision making. This is reflected in both this Chapter and Chapter 4 as an element in participants' requirements for improving their work environment.

Moreover, in their study of managerial practices in the Arabian gulf region, Al-Jafary & Hollingsworth (1983) found that:

> "All managers would like to be operating in a more participatory mode than they are currently operating.., they also seem reluctant to involve their subordinates in the decision making process.., (however) the results (of the study) may demonstrate the lack of faith that managers have in their subordinates' abilities to be resourceful on the job."[36]

In this study, some higher level managers with an open-minded view told the researcher of their wish to foster a more participative management style. However, they believe it is very difficult to challenge the current authoritarian management style. Thus, like the majority of higher level managers at Saudi universities, they continue to practice a non-participative style of decision making.

In general, all the research method results lead to the conclusion that the decision making process in Saudi universities is negatively influenced by the lack of participation. This view was supported by the vast majority of participants who expressed their disillusion with the outcome of decisions and demand more participation which they believe will have a positive impact on decision making.

As shown in Chapter **4, 55%** of the sample suggested that more participation in the decision making process would improve their internal social environment. The finding in this section support the above suggestion and confirm the importance of increasing the level of participation in order to improve the work environment and promote more efficient decisions.

On the other hand, **71%** of the sample suggest that a wider distribution of authority is required in order to improve their work environment. The distribution of authority within the organizational hierarchy is examined in the following section.

6.3.   HIERARCHY OF AUTHORTY

In this section, the researcher will address the issue of the distribution of authority.   Does higher level management in Saudi higher education institutions pass authority for decision making down the ladder of the hierarchy?

Before answering this question, one should bear in mind the leader's addiction to power.   Kets de Vries (1991) suggested that a major reason for the unwillingness to relinquish power is the transferential effects of leadership which they do not want to relinquish.[37]   In the Saudi bureaucratic system the Ministry Council, which is the highest body of authority headed by the King, has the authority to elect a university's higher level managers and is unwilling to pass that authority to the university or even to the Higher Education Council.[38]   Johany op.cit describes this feature of the Saudi bureaucratic system:

> "What many foreigners do not understand is that a Saudi Minister is more of an assistant to the King than a cabinet member who formulates policy...   For example, petroleum policy, is really not made at the Ministry of Petroleum but rather in the King's office."[39]

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, an organization is considered to be centralized if decisions

are made at a relatively high level in the organization
(Simon *et.al,op.cit*).[40] In general, it is argued that as
organizations get bigger and more complex, they require a
distribution of authority amongst different levels of
management (Madani,1978;[41] Dill,1984).[42] Further, Vught
(1989) argues that in a complex decision environment the
number of decision makers increases.[43] Mintzberg (1989)
states:

> "The more complex an organization's environment,
> the more decentralized its structure. The prime
> reason to decentralize a structure is that all the
> information needed to make decisions cannot be
> comprehended in one hand. Thus, when the operations
> of an organization are based on a complex body of
> knowledge, there is usually a need to decentralize
> decision-making power."[44]

Ahmad (1982) argued that the greater the level of
civilization and of education, the greater the
decentralization.[45] However, in describing the structural
bureaucracy of a Saudi university, Dhaher (1979) observes
that authorised decision makers are in higher level
management while the rest are implementors of decisions.[46]
Again, Badawy *op.cit*, describes the managerial style in the
Middle-East as highly authoritarian, with organizational
power and authority very much focused at the top.[47] This
section focuses on hierarchy of authority in Saudi
universities and its relation to the decision making
process.

6.3.1. *Questionnaires Analysis*

Price *op.cit* quote Aiken & Hage's questions for assessing the degree of hierarchy of authority.[48] They contain five statements to which a participant must respond by selecting either definitely false, false, true, or definitely true. The researcher used these statements and added the option of a 'neutral' response to suit the design of his questionnaire(Appendix 1.) as follows:

a) There can be little action taken here until a supervisor approves a decision.
b) A person who wants to make his own decisions would be quickly discouraged here.
c) Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final decision.
d) I have to ask my boss before I do almost anything.
e) Any decision I make has to have my boss's approval.

Table 6/2 presents the results for the whole sample.

Table 6/2

	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	35%	33%	12%	9%	8%	97%
Statement b.	24%	21%	28%	15%	5%	93%
Statement c.	31%	32%	13%	9%	12%	97%
Statement d.	31%	28%	17%	13%	8%	97%
Statement e.	36%	39%	16%	4%	1%	96%
AVERAGE	**31%**	**31%**	**17%**	**10%**	**7%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(31) + 2(31) + 3(17) + 4(10) + 5(7)] / 96\} = \underline{\mathbf{2.28}}$$

Bearing in mind that the above five statements focus on the authority to make the *smallest* decisions, two third of the

sample believed that they do not have such authority. Only 17% of the sample disagreed. This is a clear indication of a highly centralized organizations. The figures below present the degree of authority at the seven Saudi universities, levels of management and teaching staff (see tables in Appendix 4.)

Figures 6/3 & 6/4   **Authority rate for universities**   **Authority rate for**
                                                                management levels
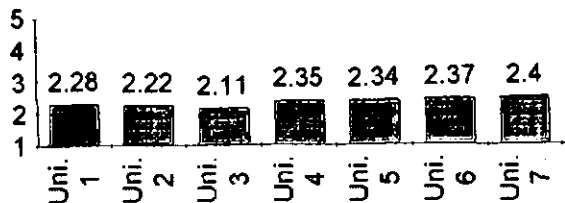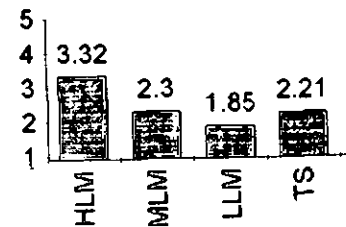
These figures show that the participants at all Saudi universities have a low level of authority in the decision making process and demonstrates the homogeneity between these institutions. Only higher level management enjoys a level of authority above a scale of **3** which divides high and low levels of authority. The researcher will highlight the factors behind the result and its impact on the decision making process by means of relevant data gathered by other research methods, commencing with interviews.

6.3.2. *Interviews Analysis*

In the interviews, the researcher came across three important reasons behind the monopolisation of authority by higher level management; they are:

-unwillingness to pass down authority

-unwillingness to exercise authority

-external influences pushing towards centralization

First, higher level managers' unwillingness to pass down authority shows clearly through their claim that it is part of their job description to possess that amount of authority. In an interview with the Vice-Rector of Financial Affairs, he stated that:

> "In my job, I take full responsibility for the outcome of all financial decisions. Thus, it is too risky to pass down that authority."

Birnbaum (1986) supported the above views stating that decentralization may not be useful in all cases.[49] Ramanadham (1984) explains:

> "Decentralizing may produce damaging inconsistency, waste and lack of control, calling forth pressures for uniformity and central control."[50]

Two other Vice-Rectors and an Assistant Vice-Rector agreed with him and added that it is a heavy duty to carry such responsibility, however, they were willing to do so as an important part of the job. Werther *op.cit* responds to those managers who reserve authority to themselves because they believe their job is to make decisions, by stating that:

> "Of course, no manager's job is to "make" decisions. Instead, the manager's job is to get decisions made. Greater involvement in the first, second, and third steps of the decision-making process results in less resistance and less need for follow-up controls."[51]

The second reason became clear as higher level managers commented that subordinates are hesitant in handling the responsibility that comes with having the authority to make decisions. In Kassem's view (1989), Saudis simply expect their leaders to lead them autocratically and to make decisions for them.[52] This study finds Kassem's view to be debatable, although the majority of higher level management agreed with his point of view. A General Manager of a Financial Department stated that:

> "As subordinates find responsibilities hard to handle, it is to the benefit of the university to limit the authority to make decisions in the hands of the higher level managers only".

He believed that the experience of higher level management should guide the university and that they consistently make the correct decisions. However, many participants at middle level management disagreed, wishing to have that authority, which, to their minds, would increase their job satisfaction and improve the outcome of decisions. These participants and the researcher agreed with Harris & Harris *op.cit* that today, people want more freedom of choice, more self-determination and more authority.[53]

The final, and most important reason for centralization of authority in decision making is the external influence of the social and political system. A Secretary-General told the researcher that the university system is a small part of the working of the state. He added:

> "Centralization is part of our system, we got used to it, so, it becomes difficult to change even if I, as a top official would like to see such change."

In support for this statement, Ali & Swiercz (1985) describe the background to such a situation:

> "Over the years, the authoritarian style has become established in the Middle East culture due to various factors which have shaped the norms and beliefs of the society."[54]

Lauter (1969) indicated that authoritarianism in management systems is generated by the educational system and family structure on the one hand, and by cultural and social values on the other.[55]

Moreover, Saudi higher education institutions depend financially on government funding. Therefore, as in many universities, the sponsor controls the decision making process by centralizing the authority in the hands of those who report to the sponsor (Ashar & Shapiro,1988).[56]

In summary, the influence of the social and the bureaucratic system produces a highly centralized decision making process, where most higher level managers were unwilling to pass down authority and subordinates were not used to the responsibilities that come with it. Those who believed it should be otherwise found it difficult to realize or implement their beliefs for the same social and bureaucratic reasons.

6.3.3. *Meetings Analysis*

Throughout attendance at **15** meetings as an observer, the researcher noticed that total authority in the majority of meetings was retained in the hands of the Chairman of the meeting. Most meetings were carried on in a traditional

bureaucratic manner, where everybody reported to the Head of the meeting who had total control over the smallest details.

Only in 5 out of the 15 meetings was authority distributed amongst the members. In those meetings there was democratic interaction and participation in reaching agreed outcomes. However, these meetings proved to be exceptional. One of them was of higher level management while the other four were in academic departments where the heads and members had an open-minded view toward the sharing of authority.

Another indication of lack of authority was that 12 meetings resulted in "recommendations" rather than "decisions". It was very common for these meetings to be concluded by the writing up of a report on the findings to be sent up the ladder of hierarchy for a final decision at the Rector's or Vice-Rector's offices.

6.3.4. *Decisions Analysis*

By following decision cases, the researcher found that authority is mainly in the hands of people at higher level management. Most decisions had to go all the way up through the hierarchy in order to achieve final approval. Lack of

distribution of authority was very noticeable and proved to slow down the decision making process.

In academic decisions, for example, a very long bureaucratic procedure was necessary in order to get action on even a very small matter. A member of the academic staff wanted to attend an academic conference in another Saudi city. He had to write to the Head of his department and wait for the Department Council to meet to decide whether to send it up to the Dean's office or not. After the approval of the Department Council, the Head of the department wrote a report and sent the member's request up to the Dean's office, where it had to be studied and discussed at the College Council. The authority of the College Council permits it to make recommendations but not to make decisions.

The researcher followed this case for 7 weeks before the decision was made. A decision of this nature has to be approved by the University Council headed by the Minister of Higher Education himself.

The researcher experienced something similar when he applied for an extension to his scholarship. He had to write to the Saudi Cultural Attaché in London, explaining his request, supported by a letter from his Supervisor.

The second step was for the Saudi Cultural Attaché to support that by a report about the researcher's progress and the urgency of his request. This paper work had to go to the university's Scholarship and Training Department. Another report had to be written, then the paper work had to go the academic department of the researcher.

From that point, the same procedure as that in the first example had to be followed for the final decision to be made by the University Council and signed by the Minister of Higher Education.

Rashed (1990) argued that one of the most important principles of a "good management" is the efficient distribution of authority.[57] In both examples the authority for the final decision was in the hands of the second highest authority in the university's bureaucratic system, the University Council. The highest authority is the Higher Education Council headed by the King, which the researcher will highlight in the documents analysis to follow.

6.3.5. *Documents Analysis*

The researcher will focus below on three important types of document: the new higher education structure, books of authority and selected memorandums.

6.3.5.1. The New Higher Education Structure[58]

In 1993 the Saudi government introduced a new structure which confirmed that Saudi higher education institutions are highly centralized (see Appendix 5. for a diagram of the levels of hierarchy). For example, the King himself is the President of the Higher Education Council. The Minister of Higher Education is the Vice-President. Ministers of Education, Finance and National Economics, Labour and Social Affairs, and Planning are members of the Council together with the President of Civil Service Council, President of Girls' Education and Rectors of the seven universities. This council has the authority to design and change the education policy of all Saudi universities.

The University Council, for each university, is headed by the Minister of Higher Education who has the authority to approve matters that used to be within the authority of the university Rector, for example the planning of training, scholarship and staff's education leave.

6.3.5.2. Books of Authority[59]

These books identify the distribution of authority amongst the university officials and contain many examples of a highly centralized system. The researcher chose three. Firstly, a few people at higher level management have almost all the authority for carrying most of managerial responsibilities. Secondly, even those people can in most matters only recommend an action, while authority for the decision lies with the University Council. Finally, in colleges, Deans and Department Heads have almost no authority other than reporting to higher level management to await a decision or a recommendation.

6.3.5.3. Selected Memorandums[60]

These memorandums also indicate the high level of centralization. For example, attached to many of the returned questionnaires, the researcher found a memorandum indicating that the Rector of the university himself had to approve cooperation with the researcher. Thus, authority to fill in a questionnaire was technically in the hands of the Rector. The following example makes the point:

From: Dean of ... College,
To: General Manager of Administrative Affairs

Dear Sir;

    In an answer to your memorandum No(.) Date(..),
which was attached to the University Rector
memorandum No(.) Date(..), attached to the Secretary
General memorandum No(.) Date(..), in regard to the
letter of Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud Islamic
University's Secretary-General which indicated that
Hafez Al-Medlej is doing research on the decision
making process in Saudi higher education
institutions and he wishes us to fill in the
attached questionnaire.   Thus, you find attached to
this memorandum the answered questionnaires.

                         Sincerely yours;
                         Dean of.....College

The above document illustrates the highly centralized

system of Saudi higher education institutions.   The

authority to make such a minor decision is in the hands of

the Rector, whilst the rest of management personnel are

implementors of these decisions having only the authority to

suggest and recommend action.

6.3.6. *Observations Analysis*

    All the observational points made with regard to the

issue of participation could be used again with some

adjustment to highlight the issue of hierarchy of authority.

The authority for making the decision appeared to be always

in the hands of the higher level of management.

Theorists argue that centralization is a temporary structural feature. For example, Aleboody (1985) believes that centralization is needed in the first stages of establishing any managerial system while decentralization follows.[61] Also, Mintzberg states that:

"Extreme hostility in its environment drives any organization to "centralize" its structure temporarily."[62]

However, the new Saudi higher education system has in fact become more centralized over the years which leads the researcher to believe that this is not a temporary situation. For example, the researcher extended his scholarship twice. The first time, the decision had to be approved by the university Rector and this took **5 weeks** from requesting the extension to the approval of it. The second time, with the new structure, the authority to make the same decision lay in the hands of the Minister of Higher Education as the head of University Council. The decision took **3 months** to make in part because the University Council meets only once a month.

6.3.7. *Implication*

The different research methods produced data that supported one important fact, that is, the lack of authority in the hands of university personnel other than those at higher level management. Handy (1994) states that:

> "As people become more educated and more expensive, it does not make sense to treat them as automata, nor do those better-educated people enjoy having so little space for discretion in their jobs."[63]

The researcher found that Saudi universities were prime examples of the authoritarian management style.

Simon (1977) has raised the most important question and provided the answer when stating:

> "The question is not whether we shall decentralize, but how far we shall decentralize. What we seek is a golden mean: We want to find the proper level in the organization hierarchy - neither too high nor too low - for each important class of decisions."[64]

In her study of Brazilian higher education policy making, Hardy (1990) notes that adopting the decentralized US university model in a Brazilian university resulted in a decentralized decision making process and empowerment of

faculty and administrators which increased the quality of decisions and staff commitment.[65] In Saudi universities an example of the implementation of such a model does not exist despite of the participants' demand for wider distribution of authority. Instead, data suggests that the Saudi higher education system has become more centralized than previously.

6.4. *CONCLUSION*

In conclusion, the researcher argues that the authoritarian nature of traditional leaders in Saudi Arabia creates an authoritarian management style, despite Islamic values which encourage consultation (*shura*). This management style results in a highly centralized organizational structure.

The literature review of this chapter suggests a general assumption concerning the universal desirability of increased participation in the decision making process where Western values may have influenced managers from other culture to adopt a consultative style. However, this style has not been adopted in the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Instead, data suggests that the system became more centralized over the years without testing decentralized methods.

In the researcher's view, higher education institutions are the perfect example of organizations with highly educated personnel and should take the initiative by applying more democratic methods of decentralized decision making.

In the final analysis, Saudi higher education institutions have a highly centralized decision making structure resulting from an authoritarian Arabic culture which, in large measure, influences organizational behaviour.

As the reader may recall organizational environment (Chapter 4.) was identified as the main cultural factor having influence over four cultural sub-factors (Chapter 5). Similarly, this chapter has presented centralization as the main structural factor, whilst the following chapter will highlight its relationship with four structural sub-factors: formalization, routinization, communication and coordination will be examined in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

STRUCTURAL SUB-FACTORS

FORMALIZATION;
COMMUNICATION;
ROUTINIZATION;
COORDINATION.

7.1. *INTRODUCTION*

Using the results of the literature review, the pilot study and the fieldwork, this chapter will focus upon four structural sub-factors which greatly affect the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. These are: formalization, communication, routinization and coordination.

In chapter six, the researcher explored the main structural factor, "centralization", by focusing on participation and hierarchy of authority. This chapter will complete the structural picture by highlighting the four structural sub-factors mentioned above.

Because organizational structure encompasses more than shown in an organizational chart (Leavitt,1972),[1] two universities with identical organizational charts may adopt different structures of decision making. For example, a university with a charismatic leader might be characterized by an entrepreneurial strategy (Hardy,1990).[2] An entrepreneurial style should only be regarded as good or bad when considered in a particular organizational and environmental context (Covin & Slevin,1988).[3] Thus, an understanding of the management style of any given organization has to take into account both organizational culture and organizational structure.

Because of the homogeneous nature of the institutions under study, both in organizational environment (chapter 4) and the level of centralization (chapter 6), and because of the intention to cover four factors in this chapter, the researcher will be looking at the whole sample instead of analyzing the sample of each university.

7.2. FORMALIZATION

Formalization, by definition, is the degree to which the norms of a social system are explicit (Blau & Scott,1962).[4] The degree of procedural coordination, the specification of lines of authority, the spheres of activity and authority of each organization member, indicate the degree of formalization, a set of abstract, more or less permanent relations that govern the behaviour of each participant (Simon,1976).[5]

In the management of higher education, Boyer (1987) believes that due to the formalization of university decision making, faculty members feel loyal to their professions but less committed to their universities.[6] In a research note about management studies in the Arab world Attiyyah (1992) has found common ground between many studies:

> "It is noteworthy that these studies were
> conducted on Arab public bureaucracies characterized
> by high formalism and stress on compliance with
> rules and regulations."[7]

The researcher investigated the level of formalization in the decision making process of Saudi Universities. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were the research methods used.

7.2.1. *Questionnaires Analysis*

Price (1972)[8] recommended Hage and Aiken's (1969)[9] fifteen statement questionnaire as a scale of formalization measurement. Bearing in mind the cultural differences between western and Saudi organizations, the researcher agrees with Oshagbemi (1988) that questionnaires designed for western organizations should be dealt with carefully when applied to organizations in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia.[10] The researcher incorporated Hage & Aiken's questionnaire into his own, with linguistic adjustments necessary to reflect the nature of the current study (Appendix 1.).

Job codification, rule observation, rule manuals, job descriptions and specificity of job descriptions are the five measures yielded by the fifteen statements (Price, *op.cit*).[11] The researcher will analyse each of these measures in order to assess the degree of formalization and its relation to decision making.

With 1 being the score for the lowest level of formalization and 5 being the highest, 3 is normally the mid-point dividing the highly formalized organizations from the less so. In the tables below, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree.

Table 7/1; Job Codification	SA	A	N	D	SD	total
a. First I feel that I am my own boss in most matters	2%	21%	18%	30%	25%	96%
b. A person can make his own decision without checking with anybody else	6%	14%	18%	37%	21%	96%
c. How things are done around here is left pretty much up to the person doing the work	7%	11%	12%	38%	28%	96%
d. People here are allowed to do as they please	6%	10%	17%	39%	25%	97%
e. Most people here make their own rules on the job	6%	16%	13%	39%	22%	96%
Average	**5%**	**14%**	**16%**	**37%**	**24%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(5) + 2(14) + 3(16) + 4(37) + 5(24)] / 96 \} = \underline{\textbf{3.64}}$$

Hage & Aiken (1967) devised the above method of calculation and argued that educational institutions have a lower than average score on formalization.[12] However, the above shows an average score of **3.64** indicating high formalization where **61%** of the sample believe that their job is codified whilst only **19%** disagree.

The second measure is of rule observation:

Table 7/2. Rule Observation.	SA	A	N	D	SD	total
f. The employees are constantly being checked on for rule violations.*	18%	44%	11%	20%	3%	96%
g. People here feel as though they are constantly being watched to see that they obey all the rules.*	16%	38%	23%	16%	3%	96%
AVERAGE	**17%**	**41%**	**17%**	**18%**	**3%**	**96%**

* these statements are opposite the scale, thus the calculation will be as the following..

$$\{ [\, 5(17) + 4(41) + 3(17) + 2(18) + 1(3) \,] / 96 \} = \underline{\textbf{3.53}}$$

Table 7/2 gives another high score on formalization. **58%** of the sample agree that they are constantly being checked on for rule violations, only **21%** disagree. These figures suggest that explicit rules are presented in a rule manual for personnel which they must follow and obey. But the following table (7/3) tells the reader a different story.

Table 7/3. Rule Manual	SA	A	N	D	SD	total
h. There is no rules manual	24%	43%	13%	11%	6%	97%

$$\{ [1(24) + 2(43) + 3(13) + 4(11) + 5(6)] / 97 \} = \underline{\textbf{2.29}}$$

In table (7/3), **67%** of the sample agreed that there is no rules manual, only **17%** disagree. The question is then, if there is no rules manual, how is it that **58%** of the sample agree that employees are constantly being checked on for rule violations (Table 7/2)? It might be suggested that a completely defined job description may contain all the rules relating to a job. Table (7/4) should be able to decide the question.

Table 7/4. Job Description	SA	A	N	D	SD	total
i. There is a complete written job description for my job.*	6%	14%	14%	35%	27%	96%

* this statement is opposite the scale.

$$\{ [\ 5(6) + 4(14) + 3(14) + 2(35) + 1(27)\ ]\ /\ 96\ \} = \underline{2.34}$$

Again, almost two thirds of the sample in table (7/4) agreed that there is no completely defined written job description for their jobs. So, with neither rule manual nor written job description, indicating low formalization, how is it that the results in tables (7/1 & 7/2) indicate high formalization? Table 7/5 may clarify the picture.

Table 7/5. Specificity of Job Descriptions	SA	A	N	D	SD	total
j. Whatever situation arises, we have procedures to follow in dealing with it*	19%	41%	14%	17%	4%	95%
k. Everyone has a specific job to do.*	18%	54%	14%	9%	1%	96%
l. Going through the proper channel is constantly stressed.*	29%	57%	9%	1%	0%	96%
m. The university keeps a written record of everyone's job performance.*	18%	42%	22%	10%	4%	96%
n. We are to follow strict operating procedures at all times.*	21%	40%	19%	11%	1%	92%
o. Whenever we have a problem, we are supposed to go to the same person for an answer.*	14%	41%	16%	20%	4%	95%
Average	**20%**	**46%**	**16%**	**11%**	**2%**	**95%**

* these statements are opposite the scale.

$$\{ [\ 5(20) + 4(46) + 3(16) + 2(11) + 1(2)] / 95\ \} = \underline{3.75}$$

Again, the result of this table, indicates a highly formalized organizations. With **66%** of the sample agreeing on a high degree of specificity in their job description, only **13%** disagree. The reader may wonder how this can be reconciled with the outcome of the question about written job description? This question was addressed in the interviews analysis.

Brooke (1984) argued that it was not appropriate to take one mean for the fifteen questions together because formalization produced different scores when work role or job specifications were under consideration.[13] Thus, by taking the mean of each of the five measures, the researcher was able to observe a high formalization score on job

codification, rule observation and specificity of job description, while he recorded relatively low formalization scores in relation to rule manuals and job descriptions.

Figure 7-1 :   The formalization scores of the five measures.
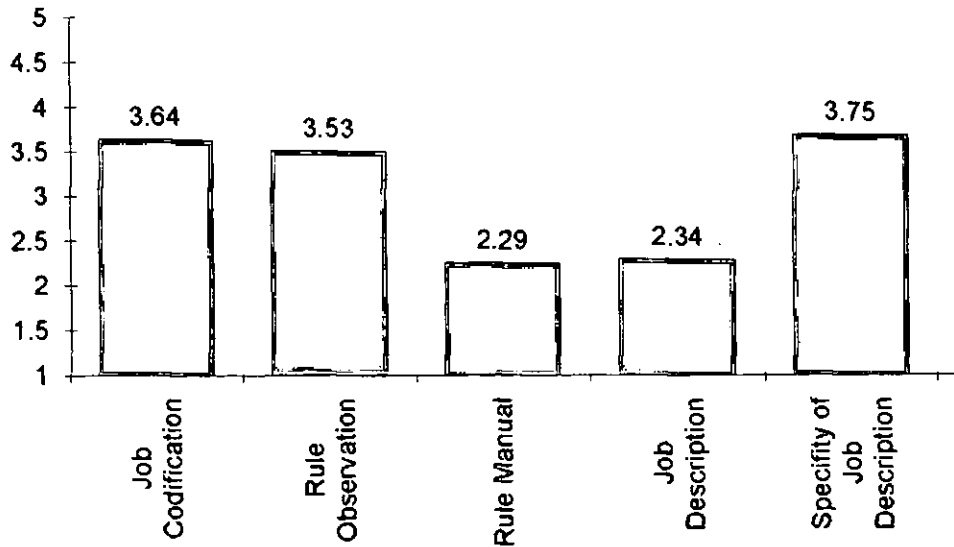
Saudi higher education institutions are highly centralized organizations (Chapter 6). Theoretically, a highly centralized organization should be highly formalized (Brooke, *op.cit*).[14] This questionnaire analysis showed that despite the infrequent use of rule manuals and written job descriptions, Saudi higher education institutions are highly formalized organizations. This contrary finding will be addressed in the interview analysis next.

7.2.2. *Interviews Analysis*

Interviews resulted in the identification of two distinct perspectives on the level of formalization: those of higher level management and those of the other managers.

Higher level managers believed that their subordinates' jobs were highly formalized. However, the researcher formed the impression that no one works by their own rules. Nevertheless, the hierarchical structure of authority made it clear that Saudi universities are extremely formalized and that apparently, employees fulfil their work roles following the university rules. A Secretary-General explained that:

> "The bureaucratic system allows the university to know whether or not personnel obey and follow the university rules. If something goes wrong, such as a delay or a slip we are able to spot the person responsible for that mistake."

Responding to the researcher's question about the absence of rule manuals in what had been proved to be by other measures a highly formalized organization, the Secretary-General explained that there were rule manuals in each university which were provided by Ministry of Higher Education. It appeared through the questionnaire results however that

these rule manuals were not ready to hand, and the Secretary-General admitted this. He explained that:

> "The rule manual has only an outline of the major rules and needs to be in the hands of top officials only, so there is no need to make copies for all personnel."

The researcher agreed with the Secretary-General on this point. However, the absence of rule manuals and written job descriptions suggests that the decision making process would not be highly formalized. A General-Manager of Finance Affairs told the researcher that:

> "In this department, nobody can make his own decision without checking with an authorised staff member. In fact, authorities in this university are defined clearly. Thus, no one is called upon to take more responsibility than his position allows."

The view of high level management suggests extremely high job codification, where every job is clearly codified. However the questionnaire results suggested that **19%** of the sample disagreed and **16%** feel neutral about this issue (Table 7/1). The researcher's looked for the reasons behind the contradiction.

The results of two interviews with two middle level managers at the Maintenance Department yielded contrasting views on job codification.

An Accountant in that department gave the following account of his job:

> "There is no way that I can make my own decisions, because that would mean taking a risk which neither the university nor I can afford. In fact, any decision has to have a few signatures in order to be approved. It is like being watched all the time for rule violation."

This statement supports the view of high level management. However, a Car Mechanic Supervisor in that department told the researcher that he determines the way that he does his job, but more importantly, that he has to make sure that his performance satisfies his boss and meets the university's requirements. So, there is room for the person doing the job to have some control over his work with the limitations necessary to ensure that he doesn't miss departmental goals. So, in the same university, in the same department, the degree of formalization differed from one job to another, and is not uniformly high as was suggested by higher level management.

Further evidence came from personnel at a university Computer Centre who said that they chose to work there in order to innovate and try out different methods of carrying out their work. As one argued:

"I studied hard to specialize in the computer field and I was not prepared to work in a totally formalized manner. It was important to know that the manager of this Computer Centre encourages innovation which helps to minimize the level of formalization in our work."

Thus the results of these interviews agree with Child (1984) that the level of formalization varies from department to department depending on the managerial leadership and its approach to the problem of controlling the activities of subordinates.[15] In the absence of a rule manual and written job descriptions, the character of the individual determines the level of formalization in his work. Moreover, the nature of the employee's job greatly influences the level of flexibility in job codification.

By means of the interviews analysis, the researcher found the explanation for the high level of formalization despite the lack of a rule manuals or written job descriptions and for a state of affairs in which the decision-maker finds himself in a highly formalized organization without the tools to make formalized decisions. Most participants indicated that they carry out their job in a formalized manner following the oral instructions of their superiors. They stated that most of their work is routine - tasks and procedures which have been learnt are then repeated in response to prevailing requirement.

7.2.3. *Documents Analysis*

The researcher found it difficult to locate rule
manuals in Saudi higher education institutions. In an
internal document from the General Manager of Administrative
Development at one university, the researcher found this
statement illustrating the difficulty:

> "It became one of the responsibilities of the
> Administrative Development Department, by the
> decision of High Committee of Administrative Reform
> (HCAR) No.... / Date...., that our department should
> carry the responsibility of updating the
> university's rule manual, but we can not update
> something that doesn't exist."[16]

Although all Saudi universities are highly formalized, the
above is clear evidence that at this university there is no
rule manual.

At another university, the researcher obtained a copy
of the rule manual which was so brief that it covers only a
few matters such as vacations, promotion, and training
rules. In this document, the researcher could not find any
clear job descriptions. Thus, the rule manual and written
job description play a minimal role in formalizing the
decision making process.

Nevertheless, in every university the researcher located the "Book of Authority" which stipulates the authority and responsibility relating to the jobs of officials in high level management.[17] These documents detail the structure of authority indicating which departments work under the authority of which official without making reference to the work process.

7.2.4. *Implication*

Hage (1966) states that a highly centralized structure leads to a highly formalized one.[18] Nonetheless, the result of this study indicates that Saudi higher education institutions are highly formalized organizations when it comes to job codification, rule observation, and specificity of job description, but, at the same time, rule manuals and written job descriptions have a very minor role to play in formalizing the work and decision making process. The researcher discovered three factors that determine the level of formalization.

Firstly, the leadership of the university in general and, sometimes, the approach of the heads of the departments. Hardy *op.cit* argued that some Brazilian university leaders give their subordinates some room to work as they please provided that they do this without adversely

affecting university objectives.[19]   In contrast, most Saudi university leaders strictly formalise every single move of their subordinates making sure that everything is done according to the university rules but without providing a clear written job description or rule manual. Instead they rely on the verbal instruction and leading by example of the more experienced personnel.

Secondly, the nature of the job and the seriousness of the risks attached to it (Clifford,1983).[20]   For example, financial affairs are, understandably, very formalized. A rigid system minimizes the risk of corruption and mishandling of funds. Other jobs, however, where innovation is important, require more flexibility.

Finally, the third factor is the personality of the employee.   For example, an innovative and enthusiastic employee such as those interviewees at the Computer Centre were determined to take control and use their own imagination and intelligence in their job. Others preferred to work in a routine manner.

A certain level of formalization is necessary in organizations in order to avoid anarchy. However, over-formalization may kill the creative instincts of personnel doing the job and have a negative impact on the decision making process(see innovation, Chapter 5).

7.3. COMMUNICATION

Communication may be defined as the extent to which information is transmitted among the members of a social system (Tannenbaum,1968).[21]   Simon *op.cit* stated that without communication there can be no organization for in this case there is no possibility of the group influencing the behaviour of the individual.[22] Mintzberg (1983) argued that:

> "Privileged non-technical knowledge generates political power. This power arises in two ways:
> 1) from controlling an important flow of information into the organization, by playing a role known as "gatekeeper", and
> 2) from standing at the crossroads of important flows of information within the organization, by playing a role sometimes called "nerve center", or by being in a position of "centrality."[23].

For example, in any given department, the manager's productive output could be measured in terms of information, a great part of which is transmitted verbally (Willis,1989).[24] In Saudi culture where people like to talk and share information, one would expect them to carry this habit into their work-place and to find a high level of communication in Saudi universities. In order to measure the form of this communication and its impact on decision

making, a questionnaire, interviews and observation analysis were used.

7.3.1. *Questionnaires Analysis*

Georgopoulos and Mann (1962),[25] have developed a seven item questionnaire to test and measure six aspects of communication: adequacy, amount, frequency, quality, informality, and direction. In his study of organizational measurements, Price *op.cit* considered this questionnaire as an ideal measurement.[26] The researcher adopted these seven items to determine the level of communication both formal and informal (Appendix 1.).

Formal communication was explored using four questions. First, participants were asked about the kind of information which they received from their immediate superior. A fairly positive result was gathered. **13%** of the sample agreed that they received totally adequate information and **32%** received very adequate information. A further **40%** received fairly adequate information. These figures are very important because a well-informed decision maker means well-advised decisions. In fact, as Badawy (1980) argued, the general consensus is that subordinates should be given direct and specific information relevant to the immediate job[27].

The second question was about the amount of verbal communication between an employee and his immediate superior. Given the above result, one would expect a high level of communication with the superior. Instead, 22% of the sample stated that they spend less than 15 minutes per week talking to their immediate superior, and another 22% spend 15-30 minutes. A further 26% spend 30-60 minutes per week talking to their immediate superior.

One explanation for the apparent contradiction between the two results is that information came in written rather than verbal form. Nonetheless, communication with immediate superiors greatly affects the decision making process; verbal communication has a role to play in informing the decision maker. However, according to these results, there is a lack of verbal communication in Saudi universities.

The third question asked about the frequency with which the participants communicated with their immediate superior about certain topics. 15% of the sample talked about "work" once a day and only 2% of the sample discussed on a daily basis either administrative, financial, or academic decisions with their immediate superior. Given the importance of verbal communication, this is a poor results.

The fourth and final question was designed to test the qualitative aspects of communication between participants and their immediate superiors. The question addressed downward communication and revealed that half of the sample often received appreciation, directions, information, suggestions, and questions from their immediate superiors, while the other half said that they did not. In the researcher's view, this kind of communication should be the basic minimum received by all employees but half of the personnel at Saudi higher education institutions are denied it.

It is reasonable to argue from the above results that even allowing for the amount of adequate information received from the immediate superior, there is a general lack of formal verbal communication.

Informal communication was tested by asking three questions about the amount of time per week that a participant spent talking to his closest colleague, the topics discussed and the position of that colleague.

As expected, most participants talked about "work" with a colleague working at the same level. However, 55% of the sample talked for less than an hour per week with their closest colleague, which is very little in comparison with the figures for western administrators (Willis, *op.cit*).[28]

7.3.2. *Interviews Analysis*

The focus of the interviews was on two important issues: direction and technology of communication.

First, the direction of communication. Many participants expressed their feelings about the lack of upward communication. One member of the teaching staff stated that he received information and directions all the time but had rarely been asked to feel free to pass information or suggestions upwards. In his statement, he agreed with Wilensky (1967) that hierarchy blocks upward communication.[29]

Another member of the academic staff gave an example of the operation of the hierarchy when one of the academic staff was promoted to act as Dean for a limited period:

> "The new dean tended to continue blocking upward communication, and forgot the point of view he held when he was on the teaching staff."

In addition to the role of hierarchy, a possible explanation of the blocking of upward communication is cultural. Almaney (1981) explains:

> "The Arab is an extremely proud person and can be sensitive to any criticism that may depreciate his honor, courage, or generosity."[30]

Thus, superiors in Saudi universities may hesitate to open the channel of upward communication, fearing any kind of criticism. Assabaq (1991) argued that the traditional Arabic bureaucratic type enhances downward communication, while what he calls the 'leader' type is more participative and encourages two way communication.[31]

At high level management, a Rector denied the above assessment, stating that:

> "At this university, we apply the 'open-door' policy, where any employee can enter the office of any member of the high level management to express his feeling or register his complain or suggestion."

This statement was supported by other interviewees who told the researcher that some top officials are perfect examples of the leader type. However, they believed that Saudi universities were still in need of more of that type for the sake of more open communication and efficient decision making.

The second important issue is the technology of communication. In an interview, the Manager of the Computer Centre remembered how he had been enthusiastic about introducing the computer system to the university. He stated:

>"Our aim was to install a unit in every office.
>Thus, all the necessary information would be at
>officials' finger-tips. But it was a difficult
>process. Most personnel seemed to be afraid of the
>new technology. Now they have a unit, it is not
>clear that they are using it."

At the same university, the Secretary-General told the researcher that the government paid a lot of money to instal the computer system, and is paying even more to train personnel to use it. He showed awareness of the importance of communication technology when he said that in five years the computer system will be the back-bone of communication in the university.

Fenn & Yankelovich (1972) summarized the importance of both issues of upward communication and communication technology by stating that:

>"A planned system of upward communication can
>help management strike a new balance between
>supervisor and supervised"[32]

The data preduced by this research has led the researcher to believe that the style of leadership and the use of technology determine the level and direction of communication and thus are instrumental in informing and organising the work of the decision makers.

7.3.3. *Observation Analysis*

During the fieldwork, the researcher made observation on two issues relating to communication; technology and office design.

First, most offices were fitted with a computer unit but most remained inefficiently used. However, some used the technology and considered that their work was consequently better organized and more efficiently carried out.

Anastos *et.al* (1980) noticed that in finalising an important decision, Saudi bureaucrats tend to consult important members of the bureaucratic system and whilst this creates an atmosphere of open communication, at the same time it slows down the decision making process.[33] Thirteen years later, in this study, the researcher observed the same thing. Officials relied on the telephone to consult and gather information rapidly. Moreover, the researcher noticed that in the offices of higher level management computers were used even less. Thus the benefit of using information technology as a mean of collecting and processing information speedily did not appear to be fully utilised.

Another observation made were the firmly closed offices where university officials lock themselves away from their colleagues and employees, making communication difficult. In contrast, the computer centre at one university had an open-plan design with glass partitions. Staff said that it improved the environment for communication. Where there is visual contact there is more ready access for one to another. However, the researcher is aware that some professionals need to work in private offices, for example, academic staff.

7.3.4. *Implication*

The above data supports Felts (1992) view that communication failure is intimately associated with hierarchical structure and existing power relations within organizations.[34] Handy & Aitken (1986) argued that in a highly centralized organization, the communication is formalized, the memoranda go from role to role and are copied to roles, not individuals.[35] Because of the highly centralized structure, this study found that the only active channel of communication is downward. However, the researcher agrees with Tierney (1987) that:

> "A mixture of written and oral messages, formal
> and informal networks, and hierarchical and lateral
> channels is needed before participants fully
> comprehend the organization and their role in it."[36]

The data set out above strongly suggests that centralization has blocked the other channels of communication. This is perceived to negatively affect the efficiency of decision making. Tjosvold (1984) has proposed that in the case of interpersonal communication failures, managers typically are unaware of the information necessary to anticipate problems.[37] In Saudi universities, centralized system directed the flow of communication to be exclusively downward. However, upward and horizontal communication are equally important in gathering the information needed to make efficient decisions.

Communication needs to be improved by better use of the computer systems. In fact, the researcher agrees with Harris & Harris (1988) that information management should be one of the most important skills required in executives to enable them to deal with communication planning and coordination.[38] Accuracy, timeliness, completeness, and role-sense are required of the information needed for efficient decision making.[39]

The university cannot benefit from unused computer units. In fact, by the time personnel start to operate these computers, the rapid development of computer technology will have made the current computer system too old to be efficient. Urgent training in computer operation will improve communication and prevent a wasted investment in the existing technology.

The researcher reminds the reader of the strength of participants' demand for informal meetings to improve their job environment (Chapter 4): The data suggests that this demand is the product of lack of upward communication.

One can reasonably argue that the shorter the distance between the decision maker and the information source the faster and more efficiently the decision can be made (Assaf, 1976)[40]. Systems that are highly centralized and formalized with poor communication cause decision making to be slow and routinized. Routinization will be illustrated in the following section.

7.4.   ROUTINIZATION

Routinization is defined by Price *op.cit* as:

> "The degree to which role performance in a social system is repetitive."[41]

Al-Nimir & Palmer (1982) characterized routinization in Saudi bureaucracy as "inflexible".[42]   They also saw lower level management sending every-day decisions to higher level management as a way of avoiding responsibility.[43]   Hyjan (1992) found that Saudi managers used routine as a way of exercising power over their employees through which they come back repeatedly to their boss for his approval.[44]   In dealing with important decisions, Saudi bureaucrats avoid responsibility by sending them to committee (Al-Nimir & Palmer, *op.cit*).[45]   Saudi higher education institutions depend entirely on government finance and this entails adopting the routinized bureaucratic system of every other Saudi public organization (Albader & Assaif, 1988).[46]

Chapters 4 & 6 touched on routinization as one of the bureaucratic features in Saudi higher education institutions.   In this chapter, a questionnaire, interviews, and decision analysis will be used to highlight it as one of the structural factors that affect the decision making process.

7.4.1. *Questionnaires Analysis*

Al Nimir and Palmer *op.cit*, have used a three-item questionnaire to measure how routinized Saudi bureaucratic procedures are in the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Finance, petroleum, Social Welfare, Information, Health and Municipal Affairs.[47] The researcher incorporated those questions into his questionnaire adding a 'neutral' option to suit the questionnaire design (Appendix 1.). The following table gives a comparison of the degree of routinization of the decision making process in both studies.

Table 7/6	h.routinised	routinised	neutral	not routinised	not at all
Al Nimir study	21.5%	54.2%	N/A	21.1%	3.1%
This study	23.4%	42.6%	15.2%	12.1%	2.7%

As can be seen, similar results came from both studies. Although there is time lapse and differing structures in the organizations under study, it seems that the consistent nature of the organizational environment and centralization in Saudi "bedocracy" (Al-Awajy,1971)[48] have held sway in making these Saudi organizations highly routinized. 66% of the sample believed that routinization exists in the decision making process in Saudi universities. The researcher agrees with the observation of Albadr & Assaif *op.cit* that whilst asking universities to be innovative we tie their hands with routine and bureaucracy.[49]

7.4.2. *Interviews Analysis*

In interviews, the researcher used another scale to measure the level of routinization (appendix 6). Hage and Aiken (1969) used five statements to be presented to an interviewee and his answers give a measure of how routinized his job is[50]. The researcher organized the interview data in terms of level of management; higher, middle and lower management levels, and teaching staff.

University officials at higher level management understandably believe that their job is highly non-routinized. In fact, with 1 being the lowest mean and **4** the highest, where the higher the mean the higher the routinization, the score of top officials was **1.66**, which on the scale of Hage and Aiken, means highly non-routinized. Price *op.cit*, anticipated that the higher the level of management, the more likely the job occupant is to report that his job is very much non-routine.[51]

Nonetheless, in discussion with members of high level management on the degree of routinization throughout the university, the researcher noted a number of note-wothy points.

First, higher level management believed that routinization is a part of the organizational culture in any Saudi public organization. Second, they almost all agreed that routine is the dark side of bureaucracy, consuming most of the manager's time and slowing down the decision making process. Third, some admitted being tired of serving on numerous committees to discuss matters that could be dispatched by one official if he had the authority to make the decision. Finally, some higher level managers indicated that some matters have to be dealt with routinely, such as financial affairs, but they agree with the researcher that even in these matters processes need to be speeded up.

Middle level management gave a score of 2.98, which indicates that routine is taking up a major part of their time. Three important points came up in the interviews with staff in middle level of management. First, routine led to boredom. Some said that in changing their job they were running away from routine. Second, most of them felt that they were over-qualified for the kind of work that they were handling. "Anyone with a high-school degree, or less, can do most of our work", was a typical comment. Finally, it seemed that they came to the university with high hopes of doing an innovative job, where they could put into practice what they had learned in their student years but they were disappointed by the reality of a routinised job.

Lower level management scored **3.29**, indicating a highly routinized job. In fact, except for security and maintenance staff, the rest have a totally routinized job. Hassan (1972) supported this result arguing that routinized decision processes were most likely to occur at lower and middle management levels.[52]

Academic staff members stated on the one hand that they repeat their work every semester so it becomes routine. But on the other hand, there are always new things happening in the world of teaching, which makes it an innovative job. In fact, they gave a score of **2.06**, which indicates a low routine job. Nonetheless, academic staff members depict administrative behaviour at Saudi higher education institutions as highly routinized. At a conference for universities' Rectors, Assaif (1985) reported an important finding:

> "While the university system should serve the academic staff members, we find the teacher runs from department to department to follow up and complete routinized matters."[53]

Most academic staff agreed that because of the routine, a simple decision has to climb up the hierarchical ladder to be approved by top officials after passing through department council, college council and sometimes other committees.

7.4.3. *Decisions Analysis*

In almost all the **28** decisions that the researcher followed he saw evidence of a high level of routinization. However, two decisions will be used here as examples.

First, a decision concerning the promotion of a member of staff who met the requirements. He had to write to the head of department then wait for the signatures of approval of four councils (Chapter 6). It took ages to make that decision despite his meeting all the requirements. He knew that it was a matter of time, a "long time", before he won the promotion. That time could be saved by cutting back the routine processes and instituting a wider distribution of authority.

The second decision was concerned with closing a student's file. The student had decided to move to the other university in the same town after two weeks' enrolment in the first university. In order to close his file and take it to the other university for registration, he had to get 27 signatures from most of the university bodies, for example, colleges, libraries, dormitory, sports centre, security, traffic, and health clinic. He claimed that he did not have a room in the university dormitory, he did not use the library nor the sports centre, and that he did not know where most of the places were that he was supposed to get a signature from.

Throughout the student's misery, the researcher saw him wasting valuable time in satisfying routine, running between buildings and departments to get 27 signatures, while a better system of communication aided by modern technology could clear his record in a few seconds.

7.4.4. *Observation Analysis*

It is easy to see the high level of routine involved in the job of bureaucrats at Saudi higher education institutions by watching them at work. At the offices of many bureaucrats, the researcher noticed the large load of paper-work waiting to be routinely signed. In separate visits to the same officials, the researcher noted that they would receive time and again the same paper-work and sign it sometimes without reading it but thereby satisfying the routine.

When booking interview appointments the researcher faced great difficulty because university officials were engaged very often in committees. As March & Romelaer (1976) explained, routine decisions can take a longer time to make if transferred to a committee.[54] Schwartzman (1989)[55] pointed out that while bureaucrats think that committees are for making decisions, decisions are often the last thing to emerge. Instead, decisions would be carried forward to the agenda of the following committee under "Unfinished Business" (March & Romelaer, *op.cit*).[56]

The researcher agrees with Handy (1984) that an unchanging environment leads organizations to adopt a life of quiet and routine.[57] In walking through Saudi universities, this is noticeable on all the campuses.

7.4.5. *Implication*

From the foregoing, it can be reasonably stated that Saudi higher education institutions are highly routinized organizations. Staff members at all levels of management see routinization as a negative aspect of the bureaucratic system in the Saudi public sector. Moreover, the research data supports the assertion of Abdulwahab (1982) that routinized decisions take up most of the manager's time.[58] Thus, routinization slows down the decision making process by consuming time which could be used more wisely in making other important decisions.

It is very important to mention that some university matters may be routinized to a greater or lesser degree by their nature (March & Simon,1965).[59] Singh (1990) sees some routines that are successful by being appropriate to the nature of the decision and are carried out without being felt as a negative aspect of the bureaucracy.[60] The researcher has made a similar point about formalization and centralization, where some decisions require the application of these principles. Thus, financial affairs and security procedures need to be dealt with in a routine fashion to avoid risk. However, routinization has a negative impact over the decision making process if applied to all decisions.

7.5. COORDINATION

Coordination is the degree to which each of the various interdependent parts of a social system operates according to the requirements of the other parts and of the total system(Price, op.cit).[61] Alansary (1987) states that coordination leads to clarification of relations, goals, and results which create a better organizational environment for more efficient decisions.[62] In studying the literature of organizational behavior in Saudi Arabia, the researcher found the problem of "overlapping" taking the centre-stage in most analyses of "coordination".

For example, in his study of the decision making process, Abdulwahab op.cit stated that most managers in Saudi organizations complain about the lack of coordination because of the high degree of overlapping of departments' responsibilities.[63] Also, in studying the hierarchy chart of King Abdulaziz University, Madani (1978) mentioned that overlapping causes ambiguity of authority and responsibility, making it difficult to coordinate the activities of different university departments.[64] Thus, in examining the issue of coordination, the latter will be opposed to overlapping throughout the questionnaire, interviews, documents, and observation analysis.

7.5.1. *Questionnaires Analysis*

Georgopoulos and Mann (1962)[65] measured coordination in study of organizational effectiveness by using two questionnaires. Making some adjustments to make them applicable to this study, the researcher inserted those questionnaires into his own (Appendix 1). The researcher added two direct questions about overlapping.

According to the scale used, the lower the mean the higher the degree of coordination, 1 being the lowest mean and 5 being the highest. In the study of Georgopoulos and Mann, their means were averaged at 2.37 and 2.14, while in this study at 2.84 and 3.06. These figures show that the seven Saudi universities are less well coordinated than the ten organizations in Georgopoulos and Mann's study.

From the direct question eliciting the participants' view of coordination in Saudi higher education institutions, the researcher gained the results shown in table 7/7:

Table 7/7

Level of Coordination	High	Medium	Low
Average Percentage	29%	40%	28%

Only 29% of the sample believe that there is a high level of coordination between different departments in Saudi higher education institutions.

In answers to the other direct questions about overlapping of authority and responsibility of different departments, the results were as shown in table 7/8:

Table 7/8

Level of Overlapping	Low	Medium	High
Average Percentage	20%	54%	23%

This time, a stronger and clearer result was gained; 20% of the sample believed that there was only little overlapping in the work of different departments. In other words, fewer personnel believe in a high level of coordination when overlapping is highlighted as a feature of lack of coordination.

The data strongly suggests a link between the quality of communication and the quality of coordination. As reported in the section of this chapter dealing with communication, there is a problem in getting the information needed to make an efficient decision, in part because there is uncertainty about who is responsible for what.

7.5.2. *Interviews Analysis*

In the interviews, cooperation, communication, and overlapping emerged as the principal issues for coordination.

Cooperation was the first key factor in determining the level of coordination. As some interviewees told the researcher, they enjoy a high level of cooperation with departments at different levels in the university. Most of that cooperation comes through interpersonal relations rather than through structural ones. In other words it was a particularistic cooperation rather than universalistic. This finding supports Badawy's *op.cit* statement that:

> "Mideastern managers put much stronger emphasis
> on personal contact and less on procedures."[66]

In fact, the researcher had been told that coordination between two departments could be affected if one of the 'well-connected', cooperative personnel took a vacation. Personal relations determine the level of cooperation and thus the level of coordination which plays a great part in the decision making process.

Among academic staff the picture seemed brighter, as a high level of cooperation was reported to be established between members. However, academic staff who carry some administrative responsibilities agreed with Kempner (1990)[67] that greater cooperation between administration and faculty would serve the best interest of their universities. They argued that this kind of cooperation need to be increased to achieve the coordination needed for more efficient decisions.

Another important form of cooperation is that between different Saudi universities. Most interviewees agreed with Tenbak (1987) on its importance and on the lack of it.[68]

Communication is the second factor determining the level of coordination. The interview data indicated that there is a difference between coordination through horizontal and vertical communication in Saudi universities. Some interviewees believe that an open channel of downward communication helped to coordinate their work vertically but they complained about the horizontal coordination of work between different departments, because of what they term 'lack of communication'.

A General Manager agreed with Morssy (1976) that one sign of successful management is a high quality of coordination between departments.[69] However, he insisted

that his responsibility was to coordinate the work of
different departments working under his authority and to
follow the directions of his superior, the Secretary-
General. On the other hand, he said that it would be
possible to coordinate the work of different departments
through committee meetings of heads of departments. Yet, he
agreed with the researcher that these meetings have a work
schedule, which meant that some matters would have to wait a
long time before being addressed. Thus, the reasonable
solution is the improvement of horizontal communication
between departments.

Overlapping was the third factor most interviewees
referred to as a problem in the coordination of the decision
making process. Many personnel pointed to instances of
overlapping in the work of different departments. Moreover,
some officials agreed with Assaif *op.cit* that there is a
hidden overlapping problem because of poor coordination.[70]

In summary, interviewees agreed that because it is an
important factor in the decision making process, it needed
to be improved. On the one hand, the level of cooperation
and communication must be increased and on the other hand,
overlapping must be minimized.

7.5.3. *Meetings Analysis*

During meetings the researcher attended, he noted two important points. First, meetings played a major role in coordinating the work of different departments in Saudi higher education institutions. Exchange of ideas and information among departmental representatives at meetings was a very effective way to ensure that the work of departments fits together in the sharing of assignments. The researcher witnessed some cases of overlapping being solved in meetings at different levels of management.

The second point concerns 'personal relations' which are a major factor in the coordination of the work of different departments. Departmental representatives who enjoyed a strong relationship with each other were coordinating the work of their respective departments smoothly, while it took much more effort to agree on the way the job should be done if they were meeting for the first time or if they had not established strong relationships. What was witnessed in those meetings provided a clear example of how the decision making process in Saudi universities relies in part on personal relations.

7.5.4. *Documents Analysis*

In the study of many universities' documents, the researcher came across the issue of coordination in three types of documents: the authority book, operational reports, and internal memorandum.

The book of authority at each university coordinates the work, authority, and responsibility of university higher level management. However, the picture is not clear when it comes to the work of lower and middle levels of management. The researcher's understanding after studying these documents, is that Saudi higher education institutions depend heavily on them in coordinating the work of different university departments. Yet, it is extremely difficult to cover all aspects of work in different departments when designing highly coordinated work assignments. Thus, where the role of communication is minimized as shown early in this Chapter, and, where the decision making process is highly centralized as discussed in Chapter 6, the researcher believes that it is unrealistic to rely on the book of authority to act as the only source of coordination.

The following Chapter generates some suggestions for the improvement of the level of coordination in Saudi universities in order to create a better environment for more efficient decision making.

Operational reports showed clear cases of overlapping between the work of different departments. In one university the Department of Studies and Information was assigned to be the department responsible for gathering and monitoring the implementation of all the rules and regulations which are issued by the university councils. The same job is assigned to the Department of Management Development.[71] There was another example at another university, where maintenance is under the supervision of three authorities though this was not the case in the six other universities.[72]

An internal memorandum, at one university, contained a formal complaint about the problems of managing traffic at the university because it is within the authority of the Department of Public Relations, whereas it should be in a separate department as in other universities.[73]

7.5.5. *Implication*

There are two strands to the issue of coordination: its importance in the decision making process and the factors that influence it.

The importance of coordination springs from the fact that in most cases a decision has to go through several stages in different departments. Thus, the coordination between these departments is very important for making an efficient decision. In a centralized organization, most decisions have to climb the hierarchical ladder to get the necessary signatures of approval. Saudi higher education institutions are highly centralized organizations (chapter 6), thus, coordination between departments becomes extremely important to speed up and improve the quality of the decision making process.

The factors that influence the level of coordination are cooperation, communication, overlapping, and personal relations. Cooperation is a key factor in improving the level of coordination but there is a problem if that cooperation is accomplished through the personal relations of individuals in separate departments. As noticed, because

of the possibility of change of personnel there is instability in the cooperative relations between departments that rely on personal relations. Such instability affects the decision making process through its effect on the adequacy of coordination.

Communication determines the level of coordination through the flow of information and departmental connections. Madani *op.cit* stated that if communication fails to transmit the necessary information, objectives become unclear.[74] With reference to the discussion of 'communication' in this chapter, downward flow was seen as the main direction for information. Moreover, as the researcher discussed earlier, there was a lack of horizontal communication between departments. It is fair to say that improving the level of coordination requires improving the quality of communication.

Overlapping is one of the major problems in management coordination in Saudi universities. Where there is overlapping, it is difficult to manage and organize the relationship between departments (Balderston,1974).[75] Decision makers say how they suffer from overlapping in departmental authority and its negative affect on the decision making process.

Finally, personal relations seems to have the upper hand in determining the level of coordination in Saudi universities. Through their significance for improving the quality of cooperation and communication on one hand, and minimizing the damage of overlapping on the other, personal relations play a major part in the decision making process and are an important feature of the organizational culture of Saudi higher education institutions.

7.6. _CONCLUSION_

This chapter highlighted four sub-factors which proved to be features of the organizational structure of Saudi universities: formalization, communication, routinization and coordination. All these have a major influence on the decision making process. A strong relationship exists between these sub-factors and the main structural factor 'centralization' on the one hand, and between themselves on the other.

As highly centralized structure leads to a highly formalized one, this study found that Saudi universities are highly formalized in terms of job codification, rule observation, and specificity of job description. Nonetheless, there was a minor role for written job descriptions and rule manuals.

In connection with communication, this study found that because of the highly centralized structure, the only active channel of communication is downward. The data suggests that centralization has blocked the other channels of communication and that this affects the quality and adequacy of information necessary to anticipate problems and make an efficient decisions.

Routinization proved to be a typical feature of the Saudi "Bedocracy". Centralization and formalization play a major role in routinizing the decision making process. This finding expresses the relationship between cultural and structural factors to be highlighted in the final chapter of this thesis.

Coordination as an aspect of organizational structure was also influenced by centralization and formalization. Formalization without clear written distribution of authority makes it difficult to coordinate the work of different departments in a university, causing overlapping.

Furthermore, lack of communication between departments leads to lack of coordination through overlapping in the responsibilities and authority of different departments.

Figure 7-2 : The relationship between the structural sub-factors.

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                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                    │  High Degree of Formalization │
                    └──────────────────────────────┘
                    ↗                              ↘
┌──────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│  Lack of Coordination │              │  High Degree of Routinization │
└──────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────────────┘
                    ↖                              ↙
                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                    │     Lack of Communication     │
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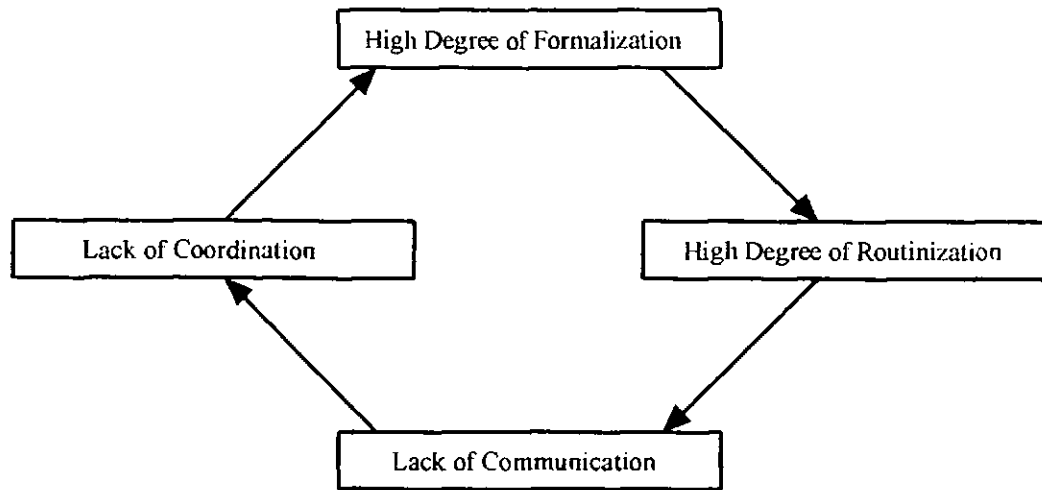
A strong relationship was found between these structural factors and the cultural factors discussed in Chapters 4 & 5. The following and final chapter of this thesis will highlight this relation and suggests an approach to manage these factors as a mean of improving the overall efficiency of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION AND THE NEW APPROACH.

8.1. *INTRODUCTION*

This chapter will summarize the findings of the research and link all the parts of this study in order to propose an approach to more efficient decision making. The researcher argued that the highest degree of efficiency in decision making is reached when all the important cultural and structural factors have a positive influence upon its process.

The literature review highlighted the relationship between organizational culture and organizational structure. The aim of this study has been to increase awareness of the extent of the influence of cultural and structural factors upon the decision making process in Saudi universities. The analysis of cultural factors in Chapters 4 & 5 will be linked to that of the structural factors highlighted in Chapters 6 & 7. Suggestions and recommendations will be made toward the development of an approach to more efficient decision making and the anticipated benefits and results of adopting such an approach will also be identified.

Finally, the researcher will indicate what this thesis has added to knowledge in the field in the hope that it will provide both a starting point for further research and for taking practical steps in the real world of Saudi universities.

8.2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL FACTORS

The pilot study and the fieldwork showed that five cultural factors influenced the operation of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions. Principal among these is the organizational environment which is strongly related to the other four: nepotism, innovation, social change and professionalism.

The literature suggested a range of organizational environmental factors that affect the decision making process, some of which are external and some of which are internal. The external factors identified by this study were Saudi cultural values, forming the external social environment and Saudi cities, forming the external physical environment. The internal factors were chiefly the relationships between personnel and organizational values, forming the internal social environment and university buildings and facilities, forming the internal physical environment.

With regard to the external physical environment, Saudi cities proved to have a positive impact upon the decision making process by providing the decision makers with a pleasant living environment and modern facilities such as communication technology. Regarding the external social

environment, Saudi culture proved to have a significant influence over the decision making process by shaping the organizational behaviour of Saudi bureaucrats. The researcher believes that this influence could well be positive: an understanding of the Saudi culture is required before adopting any new managerial system. There is, of course more than one good way to manage. This thesis will help Saudi bureaucrats to be more aware of their own cultural predilections (identified below) and more aware of the cultural choices that are open to them and to their organisation. The need to consider cultural factors in designing a new approach to management decision making is strongly indicated.

In respect of the internal physical environment, participants indicated the positive impact of the facilities of new campuses. In respect of the internal social environment they agreed on two important points: first, that it was a major influence on their performance and second, that it was in much need of improvement. This consensus gives the researcher the confidence to say that if the recommendations set out below are adopted, Saudi universities will benefit from better performance from their employees and produce more efficient decisions throughout their systems.

In this study, cultural factors were identified as being influenced by both the external and the internal organizational environment and moreover, to be inter-related.

The practice of nepotism is a result of the strong family ties in Saudi culture. People are hired on the basis of who they know rather than what they know and this leads to a lack of professionalism amongst personnel. In combination with limited training this lack of professionalism limits employees' ability to innovate and generate alternatives which are an important part of an effective decision making process. Lack of both professionalism and innovation lead to increased resistance to social change which feeds back into the practice of nepotism. The following diagram illustrates this theory.

Figure 8-1 : The relationship between all the cultural factors.
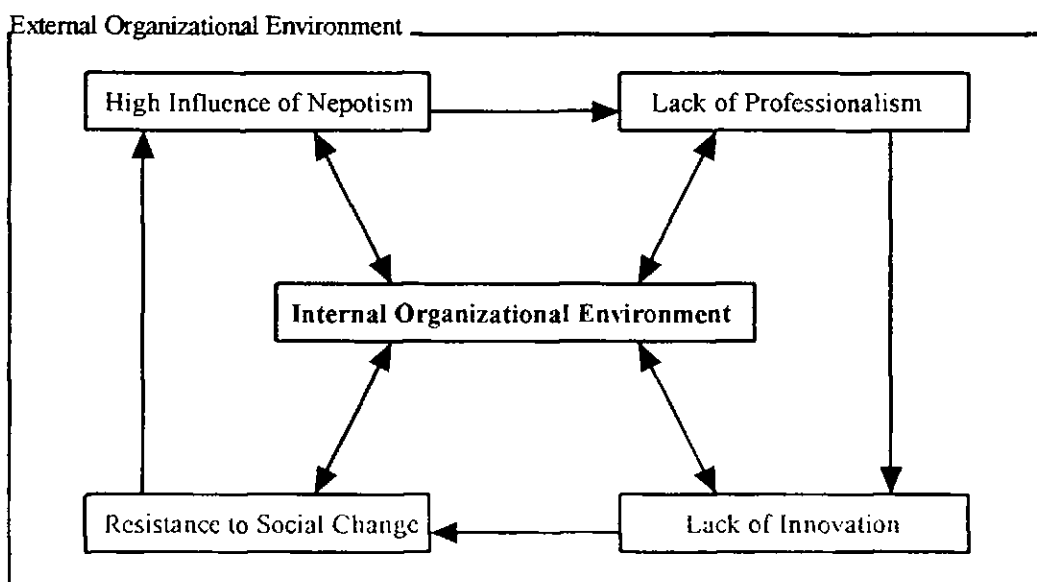
8.3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXAMINATION OF STRUCTURAL FACTORS

The pilot study and the fieldwork suggested that five structural factors greatly influence the decision making process, these being centralization, formalization, communication, routinization and coordination. Centralization is chief among these. Participants complained about the lack of participation in decision-making and the monopolization of authority at the higher level of management.

The literature suggested that the greater the complexity of an organization the more decentralized its structure should ideally be. Saudi universities showed the opposite tendency, becoming more centralized as they become bigger and more complex. The decision making process is negatively influenced by a highly centralized system in many ways. For example, lack of participation negatively affects the loyalty of personnel and leads to lack of commitment to their work. A highly centralized system entails a slow decision making process because even small decisions have to go up the hierarchical ladder in order to be approved at the highest level. It also encumbers the working life of higher level management with numerous minor decisions.

Centralized decision making within universities is encouraged by the external social environment, especially the Saudi political and social systems. Centralization of the internal social environment was a key issue in the view of participants who called for increased participation and a wider distribution of authority in order to improve their work environment and their effectiveness.

A high degree of centralization was reflected in the operation of other structural factors, for example, formalization. The researcher found a highly formalized system despite the lack of manuals of rules or written job descriptions; unusually, the system operated on verbal rather than written directions. Each superior trained his subordinates to work in a way that supported a centralized system and satisfied higher level management.

Formalization requires routinized decision making and thus routine features as another product of centralization. Most employees operate within a routine, passing paperwork up to higher level management where the decisions are made.

Centralization, formalization and routinization serve
to deaden innovatory impulses in the personnel of Saudi
universities. These three factors are inimical also to
effective communication and produce poor coordination, both
having a damaging effect on the decision making process.
Because of the lack of an upward flow of communication,
higher level management does not receive a clear message of
dissatisfaction from personnel. Thus, the cycle perpetuates
itself.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship
between the five structural factors.

Figure 8-2 : The relationship between all the structural factors

Internal Organizational Environment
High Degree of Formalization → High Degree of Routinization
High Degree of Centralization
Lack of Coordination ← Lack of Communication
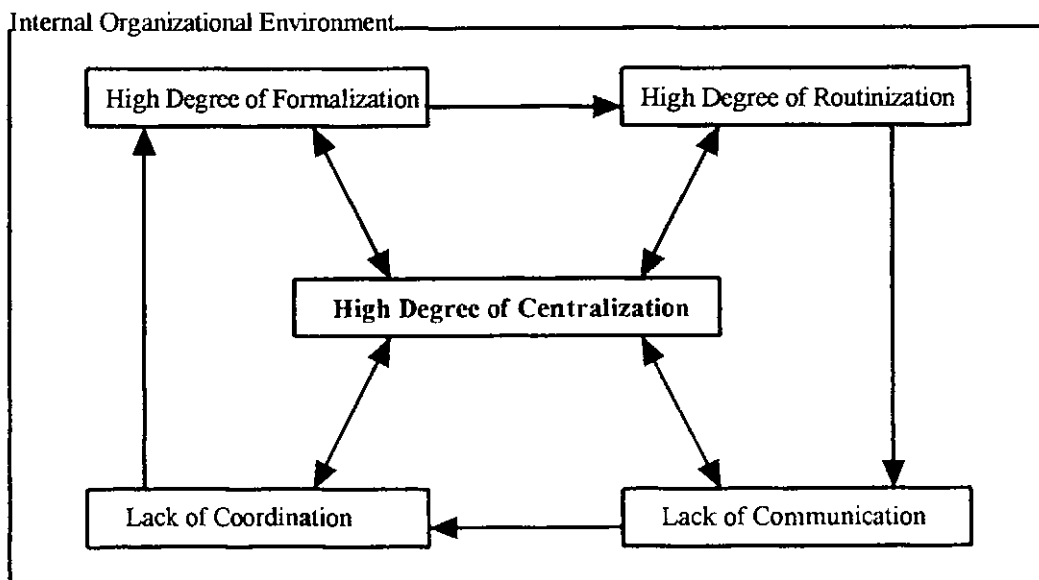
8.4. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis has highlighted the influence of ten factors affecting the decision making process. On the basis of the knowledge gained from literature, fieldwork and data analysis the researcher makes the following recommendations in respect of each of these factors, which if applied, will improve the efficiency of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

8.4.1. *Organizational Environment*

Both external and internal environment play a dominant role in shaping the behaviour of both the organization and the individual. The internal organizational environment has a major influence on the performance of personnel and they suggest that it needs much improvement; this will be addressed in the forthcoming suggestions.

As regards the external environment, Saudi culture is too strong to be challenged, thus, cultural factors must be taken into consideration when making recommendations to improve organizational practice. Awareness of the influence of the external environment and knowledge of the necessary

improvement to the internal environment should regulate the
impact of other factors, for example, the influence of
"nepotism".

8.4.2. *Nepotism*

Nepotism is an important feature of Saudi culture,
flourishing in Saudi universities and influencing the
decision making process. It would be very difficult to
eliminate "Wasta". However, its influence could be
minimized by following the religious call for justice and
equality and by creating clear policies of appointment and
promotion which should put "the right person in the right
job". For example, Saudi universities should establish
specific requirements in relation to each position and no
one should be appointed or promoted until he meets these.
These requirements should identify job-related training
programmes and educational background in order to promote
"professionalism".

8.4.3. *Professionalism*

Professionalism, as indicated by the lack of formal
training, proved to be weak throughout all Saudi
universities. To overcome this, it is suggested that

universities should teach all their students managerial skills; these will be vital in their future roles. Creative problem-solving skills and effective oral and written communication skills should also be taught. Additionally, training programmes, both on and off the job are needed in order to improve the capabilities of Saudi personnel. Leaders must set an example by attending training sessions to help them adopt and apply modern ideas about leadership, for instance, encouraging "innovation".

8.4.4. *Innovation*

Innovation is very important for creating flexibility and choices. All universities should establish a managerial system that encourages innovation by opening the door to a multiplicity of opinions which creates more options; this is more likely to lead to effectiveness than a monolithic decision making process. Superiors should encourage their subordinates to come up with new ideas for doing the job and solving its problems. The ability to innovate will increase the flexibility of both the organization and the individual and help them adapt to "social change".

8.4.5. *Social Change*

Social change appears to be resisted by Saudi universities' personnel and this limits their experience and knowledge. An exchange programme for personnel between departments within the university as a first stage and between universities, as a second stage, is suggested. The homogeneity of the seven Saudi universities would present minimal challenge, however, dislodging the individuals from their social and organizational milieus would prepare employees for more challenging experiences.

Bearing in mind the cooperative relations between the Gulf States, the following stage would be to enroll those who completed the university and national stages of social change experience, into a personnel exchange programme between the Gulf universities. This experience will ensure that personnel experience work under different leadership, with different colleagues and tackling different problems. The researcher hopes that the success of such a programme will encourage university leaders themselves to visit western universities and invite western scholars to visit Saudi universities. These visits will overcome their resistance to social change and increase their ability to question the current system in Saudi universities, starting with the dominant problem of "centralization".

8.4.6. *Centralization*

Centralization is the most insidious feature of the Saudi bureaucratic system. In the early years of Saudi higher education, centralization was justified because of the lack of highly educated professional leaders. Nowadays, decentralization has become a necessity to improve the efficiency of the decision making process. The researcher suggests two paths to decentralization.

Firstly, increase the level of participation by direct encouragement of subordinates by superiors, or indirectly through, for example, a students union, a teaching staff union, informal meetings, surveys and a suggestions box.

Secondly, a wider distribution of authority which leaves higher level management to concentrate on strategic planning. The making of day-to-day decisions should be left in the hands of middle and lower levels of management through which their experience will broaden and innovation be encouraged, releasing them from high level of "formalization".

8.4.7. *Formalization*

Formalization is required to a certain extent to guard against anarchy but should leave the door open for creativity and innovation. Ideally, a balance should be achieved.

Firstly, the level of formalization should be lower than at present. Through a wider distribution of authority, as discussed earlier, Saudi universities can be less formalized.

Secondly, the decision making process should be made simple and transparent so it is easier for a greater number of personnel to participate and comprehend.

Thirdly, the decision maker's performance will improve through participation, this time by choosing the way a decision is made. However his university must clarify, in a written contract, his responsibilities, role and objectives.

Finally, the new formalization should provide the solution to the obstacles that retard the decision making process such as "routinization".

8.4.8. *Routinization*

Routinization is another feature of the Saudi bureaucratic system. It results from high centralization and slows down the decision making process by consuming time which could otherwise be used wisely in making more important decisions. Thus, decentralization should lower the level of routinization throughout a wider distribution of authority which will minimize the levels of hierarchy that a decision has to pass through. Different administrative departments should work together towards simplifying and minimizing the number of procedures involved in decision making and this requires good "communication".

8.4.9. *Communication*

Communication is the life blood of an organization. Relevant data and information are essential to decision taking. There is a relationship between the quality of information and the quality of a decision. Universities should improve systems of communication through wider use of technology and opening up lines of communication other than those flowing exclusively downward.

Figure 8-3 :   The current aod suggested methods of communication.
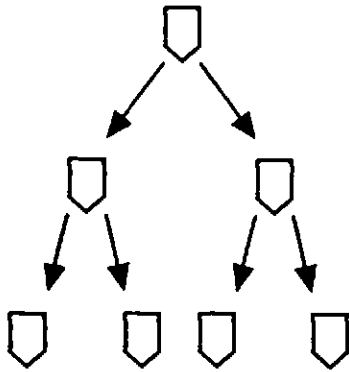
The current method of communication.   **The suggested method of communication.**
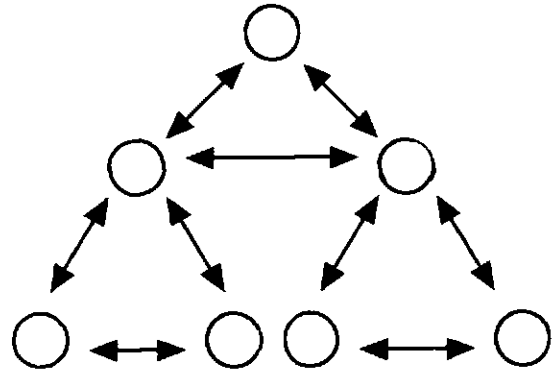
This simple diagram illustrates the suggested pattern of communication for creating greater "coordination".

8.4.10. *Coordination*

Coordination is necessary on two levels. Firstly, coordination between departments using lines of communication and meetings will enable each department to be aware of the needs and activities of the other. Secondly, coordination between universities through exchange of experience, information and ideas will help to improve the efficiency of decision making.

It is the researcher's view that the implementation of the above suggestions will have a positive influence upon both organizational culture and structure and result in an efficient decision making process as presented in the following approach.

8.5. THE NEW APPROACH

The basic argument of this thesis is that, the highest degree of efficiency in decision making is reached when all the important cultural and structural factors have a positive influence upon its process. This research has identified those significant factors through the literature review and analysis of the findings of the field work which presented the views of participants in Saudi higher education institutions. On the basis of the above argument and in conjunction with this study's recommendations, the researcher will present below his model of an efficient decision making process, followed by a new approach to decision-making which reflects this model.

Figure 8-4 : the researcher's model for an efficient decision-making process(EDMP).

An EDMP must take into consideration the important influence of organizational environment by raising the awareness of the external environment and improving the internal environment.

An EDMP must be fair and treat people equally based on organizational rules. For example, the hiring and promoting of staff must be based on what they know not who they know.

An EDMP must be flexible and encourage innovative decision makers by opening the door to multi-method processes.

An EDMP must be capable of adapting to social or organizational changes.

An EDMP must be handled by professional personnel who are multi-skilled in problem solving and communication technology.

An EDMP must be decentralized to enable higher level management to focus primarily on the large scale decisions such as planning for the future of the organization leaving other decisions in the hands of properly authorized staff.

An EDMP must be intelligently formalized so as to prevent anarchy without freezing the creativity of personnel through high formalization.

An EDMP must benefit from multi-channel communication and the use of information technology.

An EDMP must minimize routine procedures in order to save resources of time and energy which could be devoted to processing other decisions.

An EDMP must be carried out through a high degree of coordination between departments.

The above model can be illustrated in the diagram below which delineates the new approach:

Figure 8-5 : **The new approach.**

Great awareness and understanding to the external environment

| Improved internal organization environment | ⟷ | Decentralized decision making process |

| Less influence of Wasta | | Less formalization |

| Improved professionalism | | Less routinization |

| Encouraged innovation | | Improved communication |

| Less resistance to social change | | Improved coordination |

Efficient organizational culture ⟷ Efficient organizational structure

Efficient decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions

8.6. HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS

Throughout this thesis, the homogeneity of the seven Saudi universities suggests that the results reflect the state of the decision making process in all these institutions. The ten factors studied reveal that the decision making process lacks efficiency. It is hoped therefore that the leadership in all universities will look carefully at all the above suggestions and work hard to apply them in order to improve the level of efficiency.

It is recognized that it is very difficult to make such a radical change as to apply all the recommendations at once. However, improvement could be initiated by a few steps in the right direction. The researcher will provide university leaders with the findings of this research in the hope that they will lead by example in adopting those suggestions that directly relate to their job, for example, handing down some of their authority to their subordinates and encouraging participation.

Further, the researcher hopes that each university will distribute amongst its employees an annual questionnaire to gain their view of useful change as regards decision making. The researcher will help by suggesting the design of the first questionnaire and offering his services for future collaboration.

The researcher anticipates that reform will depend on the attitude of the leadership. It is well known that in the past, most leaders in Saudi universities graduated from Egyptian universities which operate under the same Arabian authoritarian style. However, today's leaders are western graduates and this raises hopes that a new approach will be well-received. It is thought that open-minded and well-educated leaders will take a long look at the suggestions to see if they could be implemented in their universities.

Bearing in mind the tenacity of traditional Saudi culture a slow process of change is to be expected. Those factors springing from the cultural background, such as "Wasta", will be more difficult to change compared with those associated with the structural background such as communication.

The researcher would expect an increase in the job satisfaction of personnel as a result of applying only some of the proposals. This should encourage leaders in the universities to adopt the new approach as a whole.

Finally, as the researcher has generated greater awareness of the importance of organizational culture and structure, he encourages other scholars to study their relation to different aspects of organizational behaviour as suggested below.

8.7.   FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher hopes that this study becomes a point of departure for further studies and researches to improve the managerial system in countries like Saudi Arabia in both public and private sectors.   The following are some suggestions.

Firstly,   this   research   recognizes   the   strong traditional culture of Saudi Arabia and its influence in shaping both individual and organizational behaviour.   It is for other scholars to study that culture in terms of its boundaries, and strengths and weaknesses, in order to guide policy makers towards culturally acceptable changes in the future.   Researchers are invited to explore the managerial values in the Holy Qur'an such as the potential for encouraging consultation and discouraging nepotism.   Also, study of social and organizational reactions towards adaptation of western managerial models to countries such as Saudi Arabia is extremely important.

Secondly,   the   system   of   management   in   Saudi universities is a small part of the whole Saudi state bureaucratic system.   Further studies are required to examine the influence of political and social pressure on other managerial systems in both the public and private

sectors. In addition, the potential for improvement in the overall bureaucratic system needs to be studied.

Thirdly, the deficit in efficient use of computers and in communication technology in general is an important subject to be tackled. This research highlighted the reasons behind this situation, for example, centralization and lack of professionalism. However, scholars in Information Technology should be encouraged to develop suitable communication networks that encourage higher level management to operate with the aid of a multi-channel communication system.

Fourthly, the researcher pointed to the problem of a lack of professionalism and its influence upon decision making and made suggestions for overcoming the problem. Other scholars are invited to adopt, develop and design training programmes to answer the need for a more professionalized personnel. However, they must be aware of the milieu of organizations under study to ensure the best results.

Finally, the researcher believes that Saudi universities will adopt the suggestions of this research to different extents. Scholars of Organizational Development, should follow the progress of the adoption of the proposed approach at different Saudi universities.

8.8. _CONCLUSION_

At the end of this study it is hoped that the reader has absorbed what this thesis adds to the general knowledge in the field of public administration. It is the first research geared to encouraging an awareness of the cultural and structural factors which determine the level of efficiency of the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.

The study began by reviewing the literature of the West, developing countries, and Saudi Arabia and identified the strong relationship between organizational culture and organizational structure in regard to the decision making.

Following the pilot study and the fieldwork, five cultural factors and five structural factors became the focus of the thesis. The researcher went beyond triangulation by using six research methods to highlight the influence of these factors upon decision making. The results indicated that all these factors have, in combination, contributed to the lack of efficiency.

In this final chapter, the researcher used his knowledge of western models and awareness of the milieu under study to develop a new approach which focused on the

ten factors and drew them together in a relationship giving for a highly efficient decision making process.

In the researcher's view, all the factors studied needed to be better understood for the good of the organizations. Therefore the approach proposed focuses on how to maximize the positive contribution of each factor towards the creation of an efficient organizational culture and organizational structure.

It is believed that the quality of decisions in higher education institutions influences the quality of their product. This product is the future of the country. Thus, the researcher hopes that leaders in Saudi higher education give this study serious consideration as they fashion the future of Saudi Arabia.

To conclude, the researcher believes in the strong relationship between a higher quality of higher education and more rapid development of the nation. He intends therefore that this study should help to oil the Saudi wheel in the development race by improving the quality of higher education through greater efficiency of *the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions.*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.   The Main Questionnaire

a) When people work together they talk about work, their personal interests, and other things which may not be related to the job. And , usually people talk more with certain persons than with others. Think of that person in this university **with whom you talk the most**. Then check the average amount of time per week you talk with this person while at university.

less than **half** hour per week	I I
between **half** and 1 hour per week	I I
between 1 and 2 hours per week	I I
between 2 and 4 hours per week	I I
between 4 and 6 hours per week	I I
more than 6 hours per week	I I

b) How often do you usually talk with **this person** about each of the following things ?

	once a month	2-3 times a month	once a week	2-4 times a week	once a day
1. about work					
2. about employee wages, hours or benefits.					
3. about ways in which working relations between departments could be improved.					
4. about ways in which satisfaction or morale among university personnel could be improved.					
5. about things, people, or happenings outside university.					

c) What position in the university does **this person** have ?

lower than mine	I I
same level as mine	I I
my immediate superior	I I
higher than mine, but not my immediate superior	[ ]

d) In general how do you feel about the kind of communication which you receive from your immediate superior ?

completely adequate	I I
very adequate	I I
fairly adequate	I I
rather inadequate	I I
inadequate	I I

e) On the whole, what is the average amount of time per week you talk with your immediate superior in the university ?

less than 15 minutes per week	| |
between 15 and 30 minutes per week	| |
between half and 1 hour per week	| |
between 1 and 2 hours per week	| |
between 2 and 4 hours per week	| |
more than 4 hours per week	| |

f) How often do you involve in a discussions with your immediate about the followings ?

	once a month	2-3 times a month	once a week	2-4 times a week	once a day
1. about administrative decision making.					
2. about financial decision making.					
3. about academic decision making.					
4. about work.					
5. about employee wages, hours, or benefits.					
6. about ways in which working relations between departments could be improved.					
7. about ways in which satisfaction or morale among personal could be improved.					
8. about things, people, or happenings outside university.					

g) How often does your superior do the following ?

	always or nearly always	very often	often	sometimes	seldom or never
1. express appreciation for your work					
2. gives you directions or orders					
3. explains things, gives information or suggestions					
4. asks for your suggestions or opinion					
5. asks you for information, explanation or clarification					
6. criticizes you, refuses to help or is unnecessary formal.					
7. gives excess, unnecessary information or comments.					

h) How often do you do the following ?

	always or nearly always	very often	often	sometimes	seldom or never
1. participate in the decision to hire new staff.					
2. participate in the decision on the promotion of any of the department staff.					
3. participate in the decisions on the adoption of new policies.					
4. participate in the decisions on the adoption of new programs.					
5. attend meetings within your department.					
6. attend meetings within the university, but outside your department.					

i) How often does influence of **"Wasta"** occur in this university ?

always or nearly always	[ ]
very often	[ ]
often	[ ]
sometimes	[ ]
seldom or never	[ ]

j) Given the option, which of the following would you prefer ?

a position with high pay in a rural area	[ ]
a position with adequate pay in a major city	[ ]

k) In your opinion, who of the university bureaucrats are receptive to new ideas ?

all of them	[ ]
most of them	[ ]
few of them	[ ]
none of them	[ ]

l) In your opinion, who of the university bureaucrats are primarily concerned with job security ?

all of them	[ ]
most of them	[ ]
few of them	[ ]
none of them	[ ]

m) In your opinion, is there any kind of overlapping between the work of different departments ?

    there is high overlapping | |
    there is little overlapping | |
    there is no overlapping   [ ]
    I do not know if there is any overlapping | |

n) How well do the different work activities in this university fit together ?

    perfectly | |
    very well | |
    fairly well | |
    not so well | |
    not well at all | |
    I do not know   [ ]

o) In your opinion, who of the university bureaucrats attempt to avoid conflict ?

    all of them | |
    most of them | |
    few of them   [ ]
    none of them   [ ]

p) In your opinion, who of the university bureaucrats are willing to take risks ?

    all of them | |
    most of them   [ ]
    few of them   [ ]
    none of them | |

q) In your opinion, what are the ideal methods for students to participate in decisions relating to their affairs ? (you can chose more than one method).

    through a students' representative in the department council   [ ]
    through a students' representative in the college council   [ ]
    through a students' representative in the university council   [ ]
    through surveys that cast their opinion | |
    through an annual meeting with university officials | |
    through suggestion boxes | |
    others (please state)..

r) Given the option, which of the following would you prefer ?

    a position with high authority and responsibility in a rural area | |
    a position with low authority and responsibility in a major city   [ ]

s) Please, mark your opinion in regard to the following statements.

	s.agree	agree	neutral	disagree	s.disagree
1. we have a friendly atmosphere in this department					
2. I have excellent relationship with my boss					
3. I feel very comfortable in my work					
4. I feel that my voice is heard in my department					
5. I feel that I am my own boss in most matters					
6. a person can make his own decision without checking with anybody else					
7. how things are done around here is left pretty much up to the person doing the work					
8. people here are allowed to do as they please					
9. most people here make their own rules on the job					
10. work environment has a great affect on my performance					
11. the employees are constantly being checked on for rule violations.					
12. people here feel as though they are constantly being watched to see that they obey all the rules					
13. there can be little action taken here until a supervisor approves a decision					
14. a person who wants to make his own decisions would be quickly discouraged here					
15. even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for the final decision					
16. I have to ask my boss before I do almost anything					
17. any decision I make has to have my boss' approval					
18. there is no rules manual					
19. one should be very careful in making routine decisions					
20. there is a complete written job description for my job					
21. it is best to consult with ones' superior before making a decision					
22. it is best to change programmes that cause social conflicts					
23. in this university it is NOT important how much you know, it is who do you know that really counts					
24. whenever a situation arises, we have procedures to follow in dealing with it					
25. everyone has a specific job to do					
26. in making decisions, no one should violate rules					
27. when it comes to decision making, we treat everybody equally regardless of who they are					
28. social change should be instituted even at the expense of traditional values					
29. going through the proper channels is stressed					
30. the university keeps a written record of everyone's job performance					
31. there is contradiction between different decisions make by different departments					

32. "Wasta" is a common behaviour in this university					
33. I feel that my voice is heard in this university					
34. we are to follow strict operational procedure at all times					
35. whenever we have a problem, we are supposed to go to the same person for an answer					
36. the effective participation of the academic staff in the university's committees, will improve the quality of academic decisions					
37. the effective participation of students in the making of decisions relating to their affairs, will improve the quality of those decisions					

t) Given the option, which of the following would you prefer ?

    a low paying job with a pleasant environment   [ ]
    a high paying job with an uncomfortable environment   [ ]

u) In general, how well planned are the work assignments of the people from different departments that have to work together ?

    extremely well planned   [ ]
    very well planned   [ ]
    fairly well planned   [ ]
    not so well planned   [ ]
    not well planned at all   [ ]
    I do not know   [ ]

v) In your opinion, what are the things that need to be done to improve your work environment ? (you can chose more than one).

    wider distribution of authority   [ ]
    improve communication between departments   [ ]
    more efficient use of the computer   [ ]
    more participation in the decision making process   [ ]
    create informal meetings to talk freely about new ideas   [ ]
    others(please state)...

w) On the basis of your experience and information, how would you rate the quality of overall decision making process in this university ?

    excellent   [ ]
    very good   [ ]
    average   [ ]
    below average   [ ]
    poor   [ ]
    I do not know   [ ]

x) In your opinion, what are the things that need to be done to improve the decision making process in this university ? (you can chose more than one).

wider distribution of authority	| |
improve communication between departments	| |
more efficient use of the computer	| |
more participation in the decision making process	| |
create informal meetings to talk freely about new ideas	| |
others(please state)..	

y) On the basis of your experience and information, how would you rate the quality of education that the students generally receive from this university ?

excellent	| |
very good	| |
average	| |
below average	[ ]
poor	| |
I do not know	[|

z) Please answer the following about your personal information:

1. your academic qualification is :

	lower than B.A.	| |
	B.A.	[|
	higher than B.A.	| |

2. you have been in this university for :

	less than 1 year	| |
	between 1 and 3 years	| |
	between 3 and 5 years	| |
	between 5 and 10 years	| |
	more than 10 years	| |

3. your age is :

	less than 30 years	[|
	between 30 and 40 years	[|
	between 40 and 50 years	| |
	between 50 and 60 years	| |
	more than 60 years	| |

4. your category is : a| administrative

	sixth or lower	| |
	seventh to eleventh	[|
	twelfth or higher	| |

b| academic staff   \| \|

5. your type of work is :

	administrative	| |
	technical	| |

6. have you attended any training sessions:

	yes	| |
	no	| |

7. have you attended any management courses:

	yes	| |
	no	| |

APPENDIX 2. Personnel's General View of the Decision Making Process

As shown in the questionnaire above, the researcher asked the participants for their own evaluation of the decision making process at their university by asking:

Based on your knowledge and experience, how would you rate the decision making process in this university?

The following chart presents the results obtained.

Figure A2-1 : **The participants' rating of the decision making process in Saudi universities.**
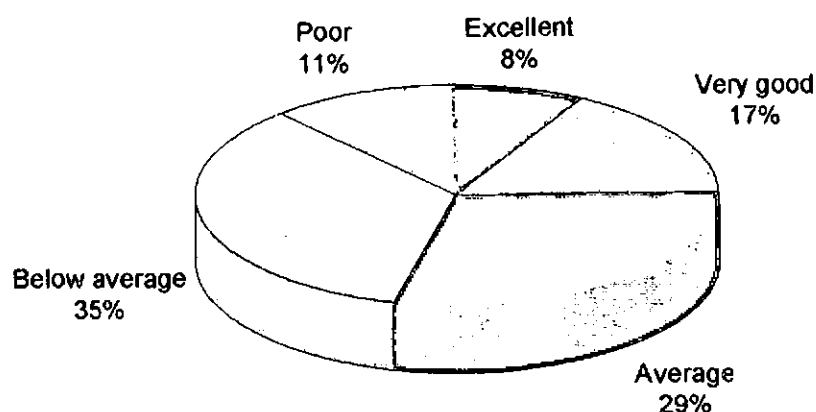
It might be thought that the decision making process in universities which are run by highly educated personnel, would achieve an excellent rating. However, the above chart illustrates that only **25%** of the study sample thought it very good or excellent, **29%** rated it average, while **46%** rated it between below average or poor. To explore the reasons behind such a result, cultural and structural factors are investigated by means of all the research methods.

APPENDIX 3.   The Student Questionnaire

In the researcher's view students are what a university is about. Thus Saudi students' evaluation of the decision making process that affects their academic lives is most valuable. Thus, due to reasons given in Chapter 3, a ten-item questionnaire was distributed amongst the graduate students of two universities.

* Please mark your opinion in regard to the following statements

	s.agree	agree	neutral	disagree	s.disagree
1. the university management always makes decisions that serve the students' best interest					
2. I am totally satisfied with all the academic decisions in this university					
3. somehow or another I participate in the making of the academic decisions					
4. students should participate in the committees that discuss student affairs					
5. students' opinion must be taken when building a new stadium or swimming pool					
6. this university is run by the few people at high level management, while the rest of personnel cannot do any remarkable work					
7. as a student, there is no role for me to help improving the performance of this university					
8. a student can influence the decision making process in this university					
9. a student can influence the university performance if his voice is heard					
10. some of the academic decisions at this university are not serving the best interest of the students					

This questionnaire highlighted three important issues; students' satisfaction, involvement, and influence in relation to the decision making process in their universities.

First, three questions were asked to establish the level of students' satisfaction with the decisions made by the university. When asked if they believed decisions were made so as to serve the best interests of the students, more than half of the sample disagreed. Only **30%** agreed. Moreover, when asked if they were satisfied with all academic decisions, two thirds of the sample disagreed. Only **15%** expressed satisfaction. Finally and similarly, two thirds of the sample believed that some of the university's academic decisions did not serve the best interests of the students.

Second, students' involvement in the decision making process was highlighted by four questions. When asked about the hierarchy of authority, **74%** of the sample believed that their university is run only by the very few people at the top. A significant proportion, **86%**, believed that students were not involved in the making of academic decisions. However, a massive **93%** of the sample argued that students should participate in the committees that make such decisions. Finally, when asked if their opinion should be taken on the specific question of a new swimming pool, **68%** agreed, **9%** disagreed and **23%** were neutral.

A third set of questions tested students' views on their influence over the university's performance in general in relation to their influence upon the decision making process. Three questions highlighted the issue. **67%** of the sample believed that students do not have any influence over the general performance of their university. **77%** believed that a student cannot influence university decisions. Combining the two questions, **82%** of the sample believed that students could influence the general performance of their university if their voice is heard.

These significant results raise important questions regarding the decision making process in Saudi higher education institutions which the researcher fully addressed in the main questionnaire.

APPENDIX 4.   **Tables Represented By Figures**

4.1. *Organizational Environment*

QI. Given the option, which of the following would you prefer:

   a. a position with <u>high</u> pay in a <u>rural area</u>.
   b. a position with <u>adequate</u> pay in a <u>major city</u>.

QII. Given the option, which of the following would you prefer:

   a. a position with <u>high</u> authority and responsibility in <u>rural area</u>.
   b. a position with <u>low</u> authority and responsibility in <u>major city</u>.

Table 4/1 Q1	I		
	a	**b**	**total**
University 1.	35%	63%	98%
University 2.	33%	64%	97%
University 3.	34%	60%	94%
University 4.	32%	63%	95%
University 5.	37%	63%	100%
University 6.	29%	69%	98%
University 7.	32%	68%	100%
AVERAGE	33%	64%	97%

Table 4/2 Q2	II		
	a	**b**	**total**
University 1.	39%	46%	85%
University 2.	36%	58%	94%
University 3.	46%	46%	92%
University 4.	39%	52%	91%
University 5.	32%	66%	98%
University 6.	33%	64%	97%
University 7.	30%	68%	98%
AVERAGE	36%	57%	93%

= comparing the two studies in regard to the above two questions I,II

Table 4/3 Q1	I			II		
	a total		b	a total		b
This study	33%	64%	97%	36%	57%	93%
Nimir & Palmer	29%	68%	97%	34%	61%	95%

QIII. Given the option, which of the following would you prefer:(see Table 4/5 in Appendix 3.)

Table 4/5. Q3	III		
	a	b	total
University 1.	87%	8%	95%
University 2.	87%	7%	94%
University 3.	86%	12%	98%
University 4.	92%	7%	99%
University 5.	88%	12%	100%
University 6.	91%	7%	98%
University 7.	81%	16%	97%
AVERAGE	87%	10%	97%

= the comparison between the two studies in regard to the above question III

Table 4/6 Q3	III		
	a total		b
This study	87%	10%	97%
Nimir & Palmer	86%	10%	96%

Q4. My work environment has a great effect on my performance.

Table 4/7	S.Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	S.Disagree	TOTAL
University 1.	35%	51%	9%	3%	0%	98%
University 2.	33%	53%	9%	2%	0%	97%
University 3.	52%	31%	6%	0%	2%	91%
University 4.	25%	59%	7%	6%	0%	97%
University 5.	41%	43%	13%	3%	0%	100%
University 6.	27%	56%	11%	2%	0%	96%
University 7.	27%	59%	11%	3%	0%	100%
AVERAGE	34%	50%	9%	3%	0%	97%

Q5. We have a friendly ambiance in this department;

Table 4/8	S. Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	S.Disagree	TOTAL
University 1.	24%	51%	13%	8%	3%	99%
University 2.	29%	53%	10%	4%	0%	96%
University 3.	33%	36%	12%	5%	1%	87%
University 4.	24%	56%	8%	7%	1%	96%
University 5.	43%	40%	7%	3%	7%	100%
University 6,	29%	53%	9%	7%	2%	100%
University 7.	14%	65%	14%	5%	0%	98%
AVERAGE	28%	51%	10%	6%	2%	97%

Q6. I have an excellent relationship with my boss.

Table 4/9	S.Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	S.Disagree	TOTAL
University 1.	49%	29%	15%	3%	1%	97%
University 2.	37%	47%	12%	1%	1%	98%
University 3.	49%	31%	6%	5%	0%	91%
University 4.	46%	42%	7%	1%	0%	96%
University 5.	51%	34%	6%	6%	3%	100%
University 6.	40%	42%	18%	0%	0%	100%
University 7.	35%	51%	8%	3%	0%	97%
AVERAGE	44%	39%	10%	3%	1%	97%

Q7. I feel very comfortable in my work.

Table 4/10	S.Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	S.Disagree	TOTAL
University 1.	23%	48%	13%	8%	7%	99%
University 2.	26%	51%	16%	6%	1%	100%
University 3.	34%	34%	20%	6%	0%	94%
University 4.	28%	52%	15%	3%	0%	98%
University 5.	40%	35%	19%	1%	4%	99%
University 6.	31%	45%	9%	13%	2%	100%
University 7.	27%	54%	8%	11%	0%	100%
AVERAGE	30%	46%	14%	7%	2%	99%

**   *Some universities occasionally show noticeably different figures under individual columns, such as University 5, under "strongly agree" above.   In practice, and in the light of issues concerned with the number of responses referred to in Chapter 3:* (EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY), *the researcher was interested in positive, negative and neutral responses.   Thus, if the reader add, for instant,* 'strongly agree' *to* 'agree' *there will be no note-worthy differences between the seven universities.   In addition, data derived from other research methods indicated a high level of homogeneity between the Saudi universities, which undermines the importance of the suggested differences indicated in these tables.*

4.2. *Centralization*

= level of participation..

a. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions to hire new staff?

b. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions on the promotion of any of the department staff?

c. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions on the adoption of new policies?

d. How frequently do you usually participate in the decisions on the adoption of new programs?

University 1	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	47%	19%	12%	11%	7%	96%
Question b.	52%	23%	9%	7%	3%	94%
Question c.	37%	17%	19%	2%	4%	89%
Question d.	28%	23%	23%	12%	11%	97%
AVERAGE	**41%**	**20%**	**16%**	**11%**	**6%**	**94%**

$$\{[1(41) + 2(20) + 3(16) + 4(11) + 5(6)] / 94\} = \underline{\mathbf{2.16}}$$

University 2	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	45%	23%	4%	12%	11%	95%
Question b.	51%	15%	9%	7%	16%	98%
Question c.	26%	30%	9%	19%	12%	96%
Question d.	18%	24%	15%	19%	21%	97%
AVERAGE	**35%**	**23%**	**9%**	**14%**	**15%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(35) + 2(23) + 3(9) + 4(14) + 5(15)] / 96\} = \underline{\mathbf{2.49}}$$

University 3	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	42%	17%	6%	12%	14%	91%
Question b.	40%	22%	8%	3%	17%	90%
Question c.	40%	25%	6%	3%	17%	91%
Question d.	30%	26%	9%	9%	17%	91%
AVERAGE	**38%**	**23%**	**7%**	**7%**	**16%**	**91%**

$$\{[1(38) + 2(23) + 3(7) + 4(7) + 5(16)] / 91 = \underline{\mathbf{2.34}}$$

University 4	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	27%	30%	6%	21%	13%	97%
Question b.	44%	20%	7%	11%	14%	96%
Question c.	32%	19%	23%	13%	10%	97%
Question d.	24%	18%	23%	14%	21%	100%
AVERAGE	**32%**	**22%**	**15%**	**15%**	**14%**	**98%**

$\{ [1(32) + 2(22) + 3(15) + 4(15) + 5(14)] / 98 = \underline{\mathbf{2.48}}$

University 5	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	50%	29%	4%	3%	11%	97%
Question b.	44%	28%	9%	8%	6%	95%
Question c.	31%	22%	12%	16%	12%	93%
Question d.	18%	24%	28%	14%	13%	97%
AVERAGE	**36%**	**26%**	**13%**	**10%**	**11%**	**96%**

$\{ [1(36) + 2(26) + 3(13) + 4(10) + 5(11)] / 96 = \underline{\mathbf{2.31}}$

University 6	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	36%	36%	9%	9%	9%	99%
Question b.	58%	9%	10%	10%	7%	94%
Question c.	36%	22%	16%	16%	7%	97%
Question d.	22%	29%	18%	9%	16%	94%
AVERAGE	**38%**	**24%**	**13%**	**11%**	**10%**	**96%**

$\{ [1(38) + 2(24) + 3(13) + 4(11) + 5(10)] / 96 = \underline{\mathbf{2.28}}$

University 7	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	43%	22%	14%	14%	7%	100%
Question b.	43%	26%	19%	5%	4%	97%
Question c.	24%	32%	24%	11%	5%	96%
Question d.	24%	29%	19%	16%	9%	97%
AVERAGE	**34%**	**27%**	**19%**	**12%**	**6%**	**98%**

$\{[1(34) + 2(27) + 3(19) + 4(12) + 5(6)] / 98 = \underline{\mathbf{2.27}}$

Lower.L.M	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	62%	13%	10%	4%	7%	96%
Question b.	68%	12%	6%	4%	6%	96%
Question c.	55%	30%	6%	0%	4%	95%
Question d.	38%	30%	13%	4%	8%	93%
AVERAGE	**56%**	**21%**	**9%**	**3%**	**6%**	**95%**

$\{ [1(56) + 2(21) + 3(9) + 4(3) + 5(6)] / 95 = \underline{\mathbf{1.76}}$

Middle.L.M	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	44%	22%	8%	11%	10%	96%
Question b.	51%	17%	10%	7%	11%	96%
Question c.	34%	25%	17%	9%	9%	94%
Question d.	26%	27%	19%	9%	15%	96%
AVERAGE	**39%**	**23%**	**14%**	**9%**	**11%**	**96%**

{ [1(39) + 2(23) + 3(14) + 4(9) + 5(11)] / 96 = **2.27**

Higher.L.M	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	20%	28%	0%	24%	20%	92%
Question b.	28%	16%	8%	8%	40%	100%
Question c.	8%	24%	16%	32%	16%	96%
Question d.	4%	12%	32%	24%	28%	100%
AVERAGE	**15%**	**20%**	**14%**	**22%**	**26%**	**97%**

{ [1(15) + 2(20) + 3(14) + 4(22) + 5(26)] / 97 = **3.25**

Teaching.S.	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always	TOTAL
Question a.	44%	27%	7%	16%	3%	97%
Question b.	43%	23%	12%	10%	7%	95%
Question c.	39%	21%	17%	11%	7%	95%
Question d.	37%	17%	21%	16%	7%	98%
AVERAGE	**41%**	**22%**	**14%**	**13%**	**6%**	**96%**

{ [1(41) + 2(22) + 3(14) + 4(13) + 5(6)] / 96 = **2.18**

= hierarchy of authority..

a) There can be little action taken here until a supervisor approves a decision.

b) A person who wants to make his own decisions would be quickly discouraged here.

c) Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final decision.

d) I have to ask my boss before I do almost anything.

e) Any decision I make has to have my boss's approval.

In a similar way to the questionnaire analysis in the section of level of participation, the following tables present the result of universities.

University 1.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	35%	33%	12%	9%	8%	97%
Statement b.	24%	21%	28%	15%	5%	93%
Statement c.	31%	32%	13%	9%	12%	97%
Statement d.	31%	28%	17%	13%	8%	97%
Statement e.	36%	39%	16%	4%	1%	96%
AVERAGE	**31%**	**31%**	**17%**	**10%**	**7%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(31) + 2(31) + 3(17) + 4(10) + 5(7)]/96\} = \underline{\textbf{2.28}}$$

University 2.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	36%	34%	11%	8%	6%	95%
Statement b.	30%	27%	21%	11%	6%	95%
Statement c.	29%	31%	20%	9%	8%	97%
Statement d.	28%	29%	18%	12%	9%	96%
Statement e.	35%	38%	14%	7%	3%	97%
AVERAGE	**32%**	**32%**	**17%**	**9%**	**6%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(32) + 2(32) + 3(17) + 4(9) + 5(6)]/96\} = \underline{\textbf{2.22}}$$

University 3.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	37%	36%	10%	7%	4%	94%
Statement b.	30%	33%	20%	11%	4%	98%
Statement c.	31%	35%	11%	10%	9%	96%
Statement d.	34%	32%	15%	9%	6%	96%
Statement e.	37%	41%	10%	3%	0%	91%
AVERAGE	34%	35%	13%	8%	5%	95%

$$\{[1(34) + 2(35) + 3(13) + 4(8) + 5(5)] / 95\} = \underline{\textbf{2.11}}$$

University 4.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	34%	30%	11%	10%	8%	93%
Statement b.	23%	32%	19%	14%	8%	96%
Statement c.	26%	29%	17%	12%	13%	97%
Statement d.	17%	40%	16%	13%	8%	94%
Statement e.	36%	44%	8%	5%	2%	95%
AVERAGE	27%	35%	14%	11%	8%	95%

$$\{[1(27) + 2(35) + 3(14) + 4(11) + 5(8)] / 95\} = \underline{\textbf{2.35}}$$

University 5.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	33%	32%	14%	9%	9%	97%
Statement b.	31%	27%	16%	12%	6%	92%
Statement c.	27%	33%	19%	7%	6%	92%
Statement d.	24%	27%	14%	17%	13%	95%
Statement e.	26%	40%	16%	7%	5%	94%
AVERAGE	28%	32%	16%	10%	8%	94%

$$\{[1(28) + 2(32) + 3(16) + 4(10) + 5(8)] / 94\} = \underline{\textbf{2.34}}$$

University 6.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	23%	36%	21%	13%	5%	98%
Statement b.	24%	30%	14%	19%	9%	96%
Statement c.	28%	38%	21%	7%	3%	97%
Statement d.	22%	29%	17%	15%	11%	95%
Statement e.	32%	36%	20%	4%	2%	94%
AVERAGE	25%	34%	19%	12%	6%	96%

$$\{[1(25) + 2(34) + 3(19) + 4(12) + 5(6)] / 96\} = \underline{\textbf{2.37}}$$

University 7.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	30%	38%	7%	11%	8%	94%
Statement b.	28%	26%	9%	18%	12%	93%
Statement c.	33%	35%	11%	8%	4%	91%
Statement d.	24%	24%	6%	20%	17%	91%
Statement e.	23%	44%	12%	10%	7%	96%
AVERAGE	**28%**	**33%**	**9%**	**13%**	**10%**	**93%**

$$\{[1(28) + 2(33) + 3(9) + 4(13) + 5(10)] / 93\} = \underline{\mathbf{2.40}}$$

HLM	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	12%	32%	8%	28%	16%	96%
Statement b.	8%	20%	4%	32%	32%	96%
Statement c.	12%	24%	8%	32%	20%	96%
Statement d.	0%	16%	4%	40%	36%	96%
Statement e.	20%	32%	16%	16%	12%	96%
AVERAGE	**10%**	**25%**	**8%**	**30%**	**23%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(10) + 2(25) + 3(8) + 4(30) + 5(23)] / 96\} = \underline{\mathbf{3.32}}$$

MLM	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	32%	33%	10%	10%	9%	94%
Statement b.	25%	27%	20%	11%	10%	93%
Statement c.	36%	36%	9%	7%	7%	95%
Statement d.	31%	30%	10%	13%	11%	95%
Statement e.	31%	35%	10%	9%	8%	93%
AVERAGE	**31%**	**32%**	**12%**	**10%**	**9%**	**94%**

$$\{[1(31) + 2(32) + 3(12) + 4(10) + 5(9)] / 94\} = \underline{\mathbf{2.30}}$$

LLM	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	47%	31%	9%	6%	4%	97%
Statement b.	42%	32%	10%	7%	5%	96%
Statement c.	44%	37%	9%	4%	2%	96%
Statement d.	39%	36%	10%	6%	4%	95%
Statement e.	45%	37%	11%	2%	1%	96%
AVERAGE	**43%**	**35%**	**10%**	**5%**	**3%**	**96%**

$$\{[1(43) + 2(35) + 3(10) + 4(5) + 5(3)] / 96\} = \underline{\mathbf{1.85}}$$

TS.	D. True	True	Neutral	False	D. False	TOTAL
Statement a.	31%	36%	15%	5%	5%	92%
Statement b.	29%	33%	11%	12%	9%	94%
Statement c.	43%	35%	10%	4%	3%	95%
Statement d.	30%	32%	7%	12%	16%	97%
Statement e.	26%	44%	7%	12%	8%	97%
AVERAGE	**32%**	**36%**	**10%**	**9%**	**8%**	**95%**

$$\{ [1(32) + 2(36) + 3(10) + 4(9) + 5(8)] / 95 \} = \underline{\textbf{2.21}}$$

APPENDIX 5. Levels of hierarchy in the current system

Higher Education Council

the King

▼

Minister of Higher Education

Minister of Education   Minister of Finance   Minister of Labor   Minister of Planning

President of Civil Service Council   7 Rectors   Presiden of Girls' Education

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University Council

Minister of Higher Education

▼

University Rector

Vice-Rectors   Sceceratery-General of Higher Education Council   Deans   3 Consultants

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University Education Council

Vice-Rector of Higher Studies and Research

▼

A Member of the Academic Staff from Each Colledge

Colledge Council

Colledge Dean

Heads of Departments   Vice-Dean   3 Members of Staff

Department Council

Head of Department

▼

At Least 2/3 of the Total Members of Staff

APPENDIX 6. Routinization Measurement Using Interviews

As Price (1972) describes it, five questions with two different formats were used in the interview schedule. The first question is simply:

1. Would you describe your job as being highly routine (HR), somewhat routine (SR) , somewhat non-routine (SNR), or highly non-routine (HNR)?

The remaining four questions are statements followed by showing the interviewee a card to choose his answer from: definitely true, more true than false, more false than true, or definitely false. The four statements are:

2. People here do the same job in the same way every day.
3. One thing people like around here is the variety of work.
4. Most jobs have something new happening every day.
5. There is something different to do every day.

Based on the answers of the five questions above, routinization score for higher, middle and lower levels of management and teaching staff are represented in the four tables below.

HLM	HR	SR	SNR	HNR	Total
Average	4%	20%	14%	62%	100%

$$4(4) \quad + \quad 3(20) \quad + \quad 2(14) \quad + \quad 1(62) \quad / \quad 100 = \mathbf{1.66}$$

MLM	HR	SR	SNR	HNR	Total
Average	33%	39%	21%	7%	100%

$$4(33) \quad + \quad 3(39) \quad + \quad 2(21) \quad + \quad 1(7) \quad / \quad 100 = \mathbf{2.98}$$

LLM	HR	SR	SNR	HNR	Total
Average	42%	46%	11%	1%	100%

$$4(42) \quad + \quad 3(46) \quad + \quad 2(11) \quad + \quad 1(1) \quad / \quad 100 = \mathbf{3.29}$$

TS	HR	SR	SNR	HNR	Total
Average	15%	22%	17%	46%	100%

$$4(15) \quad + \quad 3(22) \quad + \quad 2(17) \quad + \quad 1(46) \quad / \quad 100 = \mathbf{2.06}$$

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