



**Training and Development Challenges in Public Universities:  
The Case of Saudi Arabian Higher Education**

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## **Abstract**

This research examines the challenges encountered by training and development (T&D) in public higher education universities in Saudi Arabia in terms of needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation. The research emphasises an understanding of how these problems affect the success rate of T&D programmes through an analytical study focused on understanding the problems in T&D in these institutions by applying a case study method that researches the perspectives of faculty members and senior managers. In response to an identified gap in the literature particularly regarding investigating the delivery of T&D programmes in public universities within developing and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, this research seeks to explore T&D in Saudi Arabian Higher Education, with the aim of broadening knowledge in this field and offering a deeper understanding of the T&D situation in these institutions, so that HR departments, decision-makers, and policymakers might be better equipped to effectively implement T&D. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather qualitative data from 85 senior managers and faculty staff at four Saudi Arabian public universities, and this data was interpreted using framework analysis. The results highlight a number of significant challenges to the effective delivery of T&D within these institutions that are likely to hinder the growth of T&D in Saudi public universities and possibly compromise the government's Saudi Vision 2030 plan. The results indicate limited communication between HR departments and colleges to deliver T&D programmes; biases in the selection processes of academic staff for T&D; lack of interest among faculty members to attend T&D; and lack of coordination in university policy practices. Overall, the findings of this research show that the Saudi Arabian higher education sector has failed to capture the value of T&D, thus compromising competitive advantage through their human capital. In light of the findings, a streamlined framework is developed to suggest ways to overcome the challenges identified, which would improve Human Resources practices and help universities gain the value of their T&D programmes, enhancing the performance of the institution as well as of its staff and students.

## Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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### STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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### STATEMENT 2

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## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities–Shanghai
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HRM	Human resource management
HR	Human resource(s)
HRD	Human resource development
KAUST	King Abdullah University for Science and Technology
KSU	King Saud University
KAU	King Abdulaziz University
KFUPM	King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings
TNA	Training needs assessment
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
SHE	Saudi higher education institution
HE	Higher education institution
KKU	King Khalid University
T&D	Training and Development
L&D	Learning and development
(EVT)	Education and vocational training
HC	Human capital

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis, and everything I have achieved or will achieve to my parents and brother, Sultan.

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First of all, I am grateful to Allah (God) who continues to grace me with his uncountable blessings and who has given me the strength to complete this work.

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## **Publications resulting from this thesis**

The following publications have been based on this work:

- **Journal papers**

1. Othayman, M. B., Meshari, A., Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2020). The Challenges Confronting the Delivery of Training and Development Programs in Saudi Arabia: A Critical Review of Research. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 10(09), 1611. **(Accepted)**
2. Othayman, M. B., Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2021). The Challenges Confronting the Training Needs Assessment in Saudi Arabian Higher Education. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management* **(Accepted)**
3. Othayman, M. B., Meshari, A., Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2021). Challenges in the Evaluation Process of Training & Development Programs in Public Universities in Saudi Arabia High Education. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **(Accepted)**
4. Othayman, M. B. Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2021). Challenges experienced By Public Higher Education Institutions of Learning in the Implementation of Training and Development: As a Case Study of Saudi Arabian Higher Education. *Journal of Business Administration Research*. **(Accepted)**
5. Othayman, M. B. Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2021). The Impact of Challenges Confronting the Delivery of Training and Development Programmes in Public Universities: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia High Education. *Journal of Business Administration Research*. **(Under review)**

- **Conference papers**

1. Othayman, Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2020). An Investigation of Challenges Confronting the Delivery of Training and Development Programmes in Public Universities: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia Higher Education. British Academy of Management Conference 2020. **(Accepted)**
2. Othayman, Mulyata, J., & Debrah, Y. (2021). Challenges Confronting the Delivery of Training and Development Programmes in Public Universities: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia's Higher Education. School of Management Postgraduate Research Conference Wednesday 16 June 2021. **(Accepted)**

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 General introduction

This chapter presents an overview of this thesis, which focuses on exploring the challenges confronting the delivery of training and development (T&D) programmes in Saudi Arabian public universities. The first part of this introductory chapter presents an overview of T&D and the motivation behind this study, and the second details the research problem, aims and questions. The final section summarises the research methodology and thesis structure.

### 1.2 An overview of Training & Development

The history of T&D research dates back to the early 1900s and has a long tradition in applied psychology. Over the years, not only has interest in this subject increased, but the science and practice of T&D have developed significantly along with the changing nature of work, so training goals have expanded from improving the efficiency of simple manual tasks to providing employees with the skills they need to perform complex, dynamic tasks. Once supervisors have received appropriate training (Kraiger, 2014), advances in technology make on-demand learning possible which can be carried out almost anywhere at any time. Noe et al. (2014) specifically note that the role of T&D has expanded not only as a means of empowering individuals but also as a valuable way for organisations to improve team efficiency and gain competitive advantage. This shift has been accompanied by continuous development and a growing body of knowledge across various disciplines, including military psychology, industrial/organisational psychology, cognitive psychology and human factors, which has facilitated the design and provision of T&D that takes advantage of such deeper understandings. Drost et al. (2002) studied the universality of T&D practices across nine countries (Canada, Australia, Japan, Mainland China, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan, the United States, and Mexico) by reviewing the literature. They concluded that no universal practices exist across the studied countries, but that there are significant similarities due to cultural values and industry trends. Galvão et al. (2020) advanced the argument that entrepreneurship education and training programmes could have an effect in low-density areas, including local investment and creation of new businesses, employment and specialised services. They further commented on the need to involve various regional stakeholders in entrepreneurship programmes to start new companies that have a positive impact on local and regional development requires effective T&D.

Substantial limitations with the existing empirical research on T&D across nations may impede organisations' capabilities to design and implement effective human resource management (HRM) practices (Drost et al., 2002). Ongoing employee development is critical to the short- and long-term success of every business and organisation (Becker, 1962; Pittam, 1987). T&D in the workplace is vital and this is particularly so in the Saudi Arabian context due to a vicious circle which begins in university. In Saudi Arabia, many college students do not receive the information and support they need to persevere and graduate, and this can also be observed in the workplace, largely due to the lack of effective T&D among academic staff. A large body of research shows that the long-term benefits of coordinated T&D programmes for academic staff outweigh the direct costs because all students, regardless of their curriculum, should have access to a knowledgeable, up-to-date teacher or tutor to help them master the policies, procedures, theories and resources needed to succeed in their studies. Academic staff T&D also increases creativity in job performance and ignoring it affects not only the students but the institutions themselves as they bear the cost of reduced efficiency. It is on this basis that this thesis delivers results on the impact of T&D on the academic creativity of Saudi universities to stimulate critical, extended analysis of the subject.

### **1.3 Training & Development programmes in Saudi Arabia**

T&D has long presented a challenge in Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia. According to KPMG (2019), Saudi Arabian organisations face particular human resources (HR) challenges due to turbulent external and environmental factors, including demographics, legislation, technology, and the economy. Moreover, the Saudi Vision 2030 reforms announced in 2016 (Saudi Arabia, 2016) have also increased pressure on organisations to adopt sweeping changes. To cope with such external pressures, Saudi Arabian organisations are transforming rapidly, therefore T&D is a key concern for policymakers due to its importance in organisational success (Al-Hanawi et al., 2019).

Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country with, as of 2018, a population of 33.4 million. The majority of this population are under 50 years old, and the illiteracy rate has fallen more than tenfold from 60% in 1972 to 5.6% in 2018. The labour market position in 2018 showed that 12,688,042 individuals were employed, 70% of whom work in the private sector (KPMG, 2019). These demographics show increasing potential for the Saudi workforce to learn and grow. While the strong private sector provides significant employment and development opportunities, expatriates hold the majority of employment (80.4%) in private firms (Saudi Arabian Monetary

Authority (SAMA), 2019). Most of these firms, even at the global level, invest heavily in T&D programmes to improve organisational performance (Baum, 2007).

The Saudi Arabian government is implementing the necessary initiatives to develop its human resources and increase the knowledge and skills of Saudis. For this purpose, the 2020 budget allocates \$51.73 billion to education and HR development (from a total budget of \$272 billion) (Amlôt, 2019). The reason behind such significant investment is to prepare the Saudi workforce to contribute to the growth of the economy and lower the unemployment rate. The role of universities in developing human capital by producing high-level graduates is therefore crucial (Amlôt, 2019). Al-Ghamdi and Tight (2013) state that when the quality of academic staff at an institution is high, its teaching and research noticeably improve. This leads to the production of high-quality graduates who are indispensable in the development of the economy on both the domestic and international level.

It is for this reason that Saudi Arabian universities should be investing in developing their faculty: when these individuals are prepared, they have the capacity to produce high-quality graduates who can help achieve the Saudi Vision 2030 and attain greater international rankings. This research can, therefore, be important in supporting decision-makers in this area by highlighting the T&D challenges in these institutions and providing suggestions to overcome them. This will be carried out from three angles: training needs analysis (TNA), T&D implementation, and T&D evaluation from the perspective of senior managers and academic staff in Saudi public universities.

#### **1.4 Motivation for the research**

HR practices are increasingly developing in a wide variety of organisational contexts (Noe et al. 2003). In the modern world, examining HR practices from an empirical perspective is necessary for all organisations to achieve competitive advantage because HR has a considerable impact in almost every area, including employee productivity, performance, and retention (Huselid, 2011). Several studies have concluded that HR sits at the heart of organisations and is a driving force for their success (Harrison, 2000; Schmidt & Lines, 2002; Becker, 2009). In response to this large body of research, governments and organisations increasingly understand the importance of developing their human resources as they can positively impact the long-term growth of countries in which such organisations operate.

The available literature indicates rising evidence of the positive link between employee T&D and an organisation's performance (Bhat 2013; Elnaga and Imran 2013; Khan et al. 2017;

Talpur et al. 2017). Every organisation, whether public or private, must work with and through people. Strategic human resource management (HRM) posits that human resources are the primary key to success: the research largely agrees that, first, human capital can provide competitive advantage and, second, that HR practices can rapidly affect a company's human capital (Delery and Shaw, 2001). T&D is a fundamental way to enhance the performance, productivity and job satisfaction of employees. Most countries in the developed world understand the importance of T&D and support them as a way of achieving a national vision and improve gross national product (GNP). Moreover, according to the UK L&D Report (2018), in the current economic climate, 94% of the top performers surveyed stated that T&D are critical to success. An organisational emphasis on T&D therefore increases employees' skills and knowledge so competitive advantage can be gained.

Organisations face multiple challenges from many angles, such as accessing qualified employees (Cole, 1998; Gatignon & Kimberly, 2004), which affect their performance. Despite the critical role of T&D in enhancing performance, a large number of studies have concluded that both developed and developing countries face challenges which limit its effectiveness (Al Bahar, et al. 1996; Ardichvili & Gasparishvili, 2001; Lloyd, 2002; Budhwar & Sparrow, 2002; Budhwar et al; Alzalabani, 2002; Bing et al., 2003).

There is at present a lack of research and evidence on the problems and challenges confronting the delivery of T&D programmes in public universities in Saudi Arabia. As one of the fastest-growing countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia is experiencing increasing demand for a competent and established workforce. Investing in the country's workforce is a key element of the 2030 Vision, which aims to ensure that the Saudi economy, which is traditionally based on oil exports, diversifies into other sectors. This was born from the realisation that such a heavily oil-exporting economy is vulnerable to a decline in oil prices, as has been seen in recent years when the price of oil reached its lowest level in two decades. To mitigate this risk, the Saudi government is supporting research that aims to increase employees' skills and knowledge to facilitate the development of the country's economy (Arabia, 2016). This requires Saudi public universities to improve in quality.

Research supports the need for further studies in the Middle East (Moideenkutty et al., 2011; Saheem et al., 2017; Budhwar et al., 2018), including Saudi Arabia. Despite signs of progress in T&D in this region, most Arab countries are unlikely to reach the desired level of efficiency and effectiveness (Al-Elobeidy, 2016), so this part of the world represents a fruitful context for research studies. Although Saudi Arabia is considered a developing country, even developed



countries like the United Kingdom require effective T&D to improve organisations, often employing industry professionals, to the extent that it is a priority for most UK organisations. Successful implementation of T&D programmes presents problems for companies all over the world, so training goals may not be achieved. Fielden's (2005) study of 1,153 organisations across the United Kingdom indicated that the coaching and training actions of many organisations do not match the goals communicated to their employees. This means that even in developed countries, where the benefits of training have long been understood, there is the need for further analysis of the challenges facing T&D delivery.

It is these reasons that have motivated this research, aiming to understand the challenges in the delivery of T&D. Addressing these challenges can enhance the chances of the success of the country's vision and the output of its universities, as well as the satisfaction of academic staff, which would in turn improve the quality of teaching.

### **1.5 Research problem**

Based on the present study's review of the literature and discussion on T&D, several gaps in current knowledge have been identified. A number of studies have addressed the positive relationship between organisational performance and T&D, while others have discussed the link between T&D and employee motivation and satisfaction. As most studies into the challenges confronting T&D delivery in the field of Human Resource Development (HRD) have been carried out in the United States of America, Canada and Europe, only a handful have taken place in developing countries, and even fewer in Saudi Arabia itself (Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 1995; Agnaia, 1996; Amos-Wilson, 1996; Gray et al., 1997; Bu Qefel, 1998; Elbadri, 2001; Wilkins, 2001; Poon, 2004; Abu Doleh, 2004; Altarawneh, 2005; Jamil, 2006; Jamil & Som, 2007; Bowman and Wilson, 2008, Van Eerde et al., 2008; Abdullah, 2009; Sherazi, et al., 2011; Elfazani, 2011; Abdulrahim, 2011; Ferdous & Razzak, 2012; Rodič et al., 2012; Shah & Gopal, 2012; Ensour, 2013; Atoki, 2013; Radwan, 2014; Ghufli, 2014; Elferjani, 2015; Shibani, 2016; Alqahtani, 2020). It has been clearly stated in the literature that the numerous issues in HR operations in developing nations require further research (Al-Hamadi & Budhwar, 2006; Moideenkutty, Al-Lamki & Murthy, 2011; Budhwar & Debrah, 2013; Elferjani, 2015; Alqahtani, 2020). As this lack inevitably makes generalisation difficult, new findings may be based on an implementation of the developed context in the developing one.

The dearth of research in the developing world has been explained by reference to differences in culture, context, and HRM systems between contexts (Cooke, 2018). Further empirical

research is possible only when there is a solid foundation of theoretical and conceptual development in the current literature. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by contributing to the existing body of knowledge in exploring the challenges confronting the delivery of T&D in Saudi public higher education institutions. In this way, it contributes to the current literature and reveals novel findings not previously established.

This study represents an opportunity to draw direct evidence and insight from a context presently under-represented in the literature, by exploring the challenges faced by T&D in terms of the specific areas of needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation in Saudi Arabian higher education from the perspectives of those from within the institutions themselves. (Harbi et al., 2017; Alqahtani and Ayentimi, 2020)

## **1.6 Research aims, objectives and questions**

### **1.6.1 Research aim**

This research aims to investigate, identify, and understand the challenges surrounding T&D delivery in Saudi public higher education universities from three angles: T&D needs analysis, T&D implementation, and T&D evaluation from the perspective of senior managers and academic staff. As a result of the research, a streamlined framework of measures will be developed to overcome these challenges and improve HR practices so Saudi public universities can gain the value of T&D programmes in order to enhance the performance of the institution, its staff and its students.

### **1.6.2 Research objectives**

In order to achieve these aims, the research has a number of objectives, representing the steps taken to move towards the research goal. These are presented below.

1. To critically review the relevant T&D literature and understand the challenges, theories and practices related to their delivery, as well as the factors which influence the effectiveness of T&D in public organisations.
2. To assess how the current situation with regard to T&D needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation in Arab countries might be determined.
3. To analyse the data obtained from the case study in order to identify the key challenges facing T&D needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation in Saudi public universities.
4. To examine the effect of the identified challenges on the delivery of T&D programmes in the universities.

5. In light of the research findings, to provide recommendations and suggestions for maximising training effectiveness to enable universities to gain the value of T&D programmes, and to set out contribution of the thesis to existing theory and practice.

### **1.6.3 Research questions**

The thesis works with four specific research questions in order to address the central research topic. These are formulated as follows:

1. What are the challenges confronting the delivery of training and development (needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation) in the Saudi Arabian Higher Education sector?
2. What are the effects of the challenges experienced by public higher education institutions in the delivery of T&D?
3. Are Saudi public Higher Education universities succeeding or failing to capture the value of T&D?
4. What can be done to overcome the T&D challenges and hence reduce the obstacles to T&D in Saudi public Higher Education?

These questions were posed to senior managers and academic staff in selected universities to obtain an understanding of the current situation and challenges surrounding T&D delivery in Saudi public universities.

### **1.7 Research methodology**

This study aimed at analysing and exploring the challenges facing T&D delivery processes from the perspective of senior managers and academic staff. The research adopts a qualitative and case study design approach. The research instrument is a semi-structured questionnaire guide used in interviews with the 85 respondents drawn from four public universities in Saudi Arabia. Secondary data was also used in the analysis, collected from electronic media sources, the existing literature, and reports from credible private organisations. The inductive approach is deemed suitable since significant research is unavailable in the context of Saudi Arabia (McLaren, 2010). Framework analysis was employed to analyse the data as this allowed comprehension of large amounts of disparate qualitative data and integrated related data drawn from the transcripts and notes.

## **1.8 Structure of the Thesis**

**Chapter 1** provides the introduction and an overview of the thesis. It presents the research motivation, aims, and objectives, and summarises the chosen methodology and overall structure of the thesis.

**Chapter 2** critically reviews the key literature concerning the concept of T&D in order to gain an understanding of its challenges, theories, and practices, as well as the factors which influence its effectiveness in public organisations. The end of the chapter provides the conceptual framework that underpins this study by presenting and discussing the theories used previously in the field of HRM to facilitate a focus on meaningful understanding in the study.

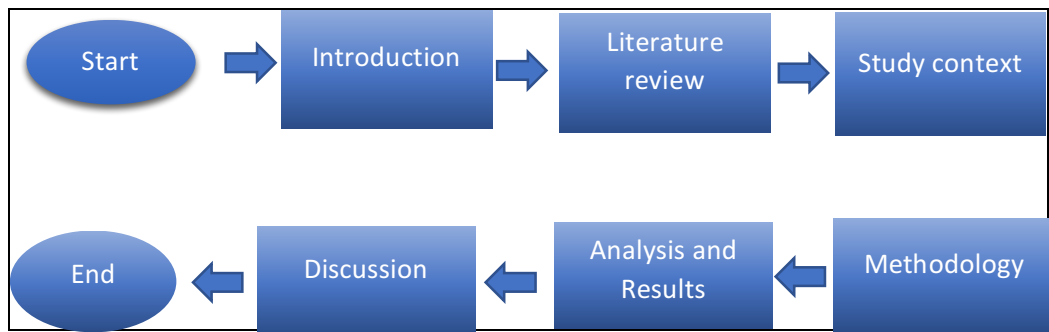
**Chapter 3** provides a comprehensive review of Saudi Arabia based on literature sources. It discusses the country's geography, demographics, government structure, and economy, along with its culture, traditions and religion. The chapter also examines the background of Saudi Higher Education, including the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Overseas Scholarship Program, and describes the Saudi Vision 2030 plan in context. Finally, an overview of HR departments in Saudi higher education is provided.

**Chapter 4** chapter describes the methodology adopted for this research in three main sections: research philosophy and approach, description of the techniques and procedures used to collect the study data, and discussion of the data analysis techniques employed.

**Chapter 5** presents the findings of the case study research designed to answer the first two branches of research questions. The first relates to the challenges facing T&D in Saudi Arabian public universities in terms of assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation. The second relates to the effect of these challenges with regard to T&D delivery in Saudi higher education.

**Chapter 6** addresses question three within a discussion of the findings of the present study in the context of the literature in the field supported by a theoretical framework that enables a degree of triangulation so the research topic can be more clearly understood. The end of the chapter discusses the findings of the present study in the context of the literature, supported by a theoretical framework that enables a degree of triangulation so the research topic can be more clearly understood.

**Chapter 7** summarises the main findings of the empirical analysis in line with the six research objectives. Conclusions are drawn from these findings, and, addressing research question 4, recommendations are made for a possible way forward, and the implications and contributions of the research are summarised



*Figure 1: Overview of the design and flow of the main chapters of the thesis report*

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to critically review the key literature concerning the concept of training and development, to understand the challenges, theories, and practices, and the factors which influence the training and development effectiveness in public organisations. The review is structured in five major parts. The first part begins with accentuating the theoretical background on T&D, presenting different definitions from the experiences of many researchers. It also presents the evolution of T&D from the early 1900s until the present day, outlining the benefits of T&D. The second part focuses on the situation of T&D in developing countries, T&D in the Arab world, and also summarises the literature on T&D with respect to these specific contexts between 1995 to 2021. The third part presents T&D in academic institutions, the link between T&D and a university's performance, and T&D in relation to the higher education sector in the Middle East. The fourth part presents the T&D process when deciding on T&D, including training needs analysis (TNA), the design of training programmes, training methods, the implementation stages, training evaluation, the training process as an integrated system, and training barriers. The final part focuses on the theoretical framework, which presents and discusses the theories used previously in the Human Resource Management field to act as lenses to aid a meaningful understanding of the study. This final part has a subsequent three-part structure to present the theories: first, the theoretical background of T&D is set out; second, the content of motivation theories is presented; third the discussion turns to Resource-based View Theory. Finally, to conclude this chapter, the researcher presents the conceptual framework derived from the study findings identified from the literature review and adapted to the present context.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Background on Training & Development

The social exchange theory, a brainchild of Homans (1958), proposes that when people enter a relationship, they are doing so to take maximum advantage of the benefits (Devan, 2006; Cook & Rice, 2003; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008). This way of thinking can explain the connection between the social exchange theory, employee performance, and training and development (T&D). While employers seek greater productivity when they send employees on training courses, employees attempt to work as hard as possible to reciprocate the actions of management. This situation results in improved performance (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008). This

is the basis on which one could propose that the anticipations of both parties mediate a formal mutual obligation between employers and employees regarding the training the employer offers. Therefore, making training available to employees could be seen as a social exchange between management and workers. The point of departure for this process is when the organisation intends to accede to the interests of employees by making training opportunities available (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008).

When employers accede to employees' training needs, the employees respond by exhibiting positive behavioural and attitudinal responses to help the business meet its objectives (Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011). Several studies have concluded that employees see a T&D opportunity as a signal that the organisation they work for desires to enter into a social exchange with them (Newman et al., 2011). Marimuthu et al. (2009) cite Becker's (2009) classic study of how investing in an individual's training and education is the same as a business investing in equipment. Becker (2009) also concludes that training and education is the most crucial investment a company can make in its human capital. He sees the idea of human capital as denoting the emphasis on expertise, knowledge, and skills individuals have due to their education and training. Central to this theory is the assumption that training and education results in increased learning in the process of boosting organisational and individual performance (Marimuthu, et al., 2009). Newman et al. (2011) support the idea that when an organisation lives up to individuals' expectations with regards to their different personal needs, such individuals become more committed to the organisation. While employers want employees to be loyal and committed, employees, on the other hand, are always looking for organisations that can provide them with better job security, a career, and self-development (Bulut & Culha, 2010). The social exchange theory does not explicitly show that T&D will necessarily improve the performance of an organisation. Instead, it advances the view that T&D can motivate employees to show more commitment to the organisation because they expect rewards in the future. This is the basis of the view that more committed employees also tend to be more productive. An alternative approach to explaining the connection between organisational performance and T&D comes in the reinforcement theory proposed by Skinner (1957) and improved by Klapper (1960). The reinforcement theory advances the view that that behaviour is guided by its consequences (Heath, 2007; Ellis & Johnson, 2014). This implies that if a behaviour seems to produce good results, people will likely repeat it (Jonck, 2001). For example, employees are likely to continue exhibiting behaviour that resulted in a promotion or pay increase. The expectation among employees is that when they attend T&D programmes,

they will acquire skills. They assume that these new skills will make it possible for them to be better in their jobs, which will result in desirable results such as better pay. Employees who hold this assumption will do more with regards to T&D. Also, they will be incentivised to apply better the skills and knowledge they obtain from T&D, a situation that will boost performance.

### 2.3 Definitions of Training & Development

Training and development is one of the most important activities in organisations to improve productivity; it can also drive an organisation to achieve a competitive advantage (Noe et al., 2014). Furthermore, T&D is a vital department in public and private enterprises to develop people, and human capital is one of the major assets for an organisation. The main purpose of any organisation is to improve work performance in order to achieve its goals and gain competitive advantage, but this can never be possible without looking after employees and developing them ( Hassan, 2020). However, in order to better understand what is involved in these processes, it is important to first determine what is meant by the term training and development. According to the literature, there are many definitions of T&D. The first introduction to the concept came in 1918 when the first training and development article was published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP)*. For clarity, the main themes, definitions and proponents of the various definitions have been set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Summarised definitions of T&D

Area of focus	Definition	Author & Year
Imparting knowledge and skills	Training is defined as imparting job knowledge and skills to employees.	Black, 1961; King, 1968
	Training is a well-organised opportunity for participants to acquire the necessary understanding and skills.	Lynton & Pareek, 1967
	T&D is a process of preparation for a set of tasks and activities linking to an organisation's target.	Ribler, 1983
	Training is a scheduled meeting of people under the guidance of an instructor or facilitator for the purpose of acquiring or renewing skills or knowledge.	Abella, 1985
	Training is a process of improving the skills and development; it has the ability to perform in both present and future jobs.	Goldstein, 2005



	Training is a way to develop specific skills or tasks.	Branine, 1996
	Training is a process to increase people's knowledge.	Fuller & Farrington, 1999
	T&D is a systematic approach to developing and enhancing employee skills, abilities and knowledge for increasing an organisation's effectiveness.	Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009
Performance	Training and development are a way to improve employees or organisations.	Katz & Kahn, 1978
	Training is defined as a process of improving job performance.	Holden, 1985
	Training is defined as the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that results in an improved performance in another environment.	Goldstein & Ford, 2002
Learning	Training is a way to learn other experiences and to improve an individual's skills.	Campbell et al., 1970
	Training is a way to learn related to the present job.	Nadler, 1984
	Training and development are planned learning experiences that teach workers how to perform their current or future jobs effectively.	Kleiman, 2002
Economic	Training is defined as a human capital investment that will increase the job outcome.	Becker, 1962

The definitions above show that T&D tends to be seen as a method that can be used to fix specific problems in the workplace and develop people to achieve the organisation's goals. It can be seen that the major area of focus and dependent variable is to develop knowledge, improve performance, develop skills and improve organisational efficiency. The purpose of training is to fill any gap between job objectives and the capability of employees to achieve them. In order to more fully discuss the main themes that emerge from the above definitions, authors other than those specifically mentioned there are engaged. Various works draw a distinction between training and development with respect to their short- or long-term functions. Thus, according to Schaupp (2020), training is a shorter-term, systematic process that develops an individual's knowledge and skills, whereas from the available information in

the literature on T&D, it is shown that the development process is used to change, or in other words, to improve knowledge and skills in the long-term. For example, Armstrong (2006) describes development as a way of improving employees' learning ability so as to progress from a present state of understanding and capacity to a future state in which higher-level skills, knowledge and competencies are required. Development has also been explained as "the planned growth and expansion of the knowledge and expertise of a human beyond the present job requirements" (Swanson, & Holton, 2009). It can also be defined as "the acquisition of knowledge and skills that may be used in the future, the preparation of individuals to enrich the organisations in the future and the act of being involved in many different types of training activities and classes" (Ketter, 2006). From the above definitions of T&D, it can be seen that training is a process focused on the present to improve the work performances of the employees; however, development is a process focused on the future to prepare employees for upcoming challenges. In addition, both comprise the main activity of human resources management in any organisation, not only to develop people knowledge or skills but as a way to support the organisation for its survival in the global marketplace and to competitive advantage.

#### **2.4 Establishing the Capacity Development Programme**

The concept of capacity building (which was later replaced by capacity development) received attention in the development discourse of the 1990s and was perceived as a better way of 'development'. Although the academic literature on capacity development was scarce during the early decades of T&D, over the past few decades, references to capacity development have increased dramatically, particularly, as already stated, from the 1990s onwards (Black, 1961; King, 196)

According to Armstrong, (2006) and Wright (2008) organisations have emphasised the importance of capacity building in their strategy documents, and for some of them, capacity building is the main purpose of their development assistance. Over the past two decades, the concept of capacity development has changed, from a concept focused on human resource development and individuals to a concept that encompasses individuals, organisations, and the wider society in which they work. Importantly, it has been recognised in development discussions that sustainable capacity development is an endogenous process driven by those who will develop their capabilities. This means that although external assistance can play an important role in capacity building, externally imposed measures are unlikely to develop sustainable capabilities. Therefore, sustainable development requires a demand-oriented and

results-oriented approach, while technical assistance is usually supply-oriented and investment-focused.

The World Bank (2004) offered the following definition of capacity: “capacity is the combination of people, institutions and practices that permits countries to reach their development goals. Capacity building is investment in human capital, institutions and practices.” Capacity development is an umbrella term covering concepts like institution building, institution development, and human resource development, improving management administration and institutional strength (Lusthaus et al., 1999).

Linnel (2003) supports this view and specifies more fully the areas to which capacity development can be related: for instance, in governance, mission and strategy, leadership, administration (including financial management, human resources, and legal matters), fundraising and income generation, programme development and implementation, partnerships and collaboration, diversity, advocacy and policy change, evaluation, marketing, planning, positioning.

In terms of individuals, whereas capacity is connected to the competency of an organisation to effectively complete tasks and maintain its capabilities over the long term, at an individual level capacity development covers leadership, defensive skills, training/speaking abilities, technical abilities, organisational abilities. Kaplan, (2000) proposes various interrelated components of capacity development that constitute a hierarchy where some aspects are more important than others: first is the conceptual framework that deals with a comprehensive understanding of the organisation’s domain, which without other skills and capabilities, will be powerless; second is organisational ‘attitude’ that covers confidence in acting and confronting the world in ways that the organisation believes can have an impact; third is the vision and strategy comprising a purposeful organisational structure, clear roles, functions, communication channels, decision-making processes; the fourth factor is the skills that deal with personal skills and abilities; and the last is material resources. Capacity building involves a continuous process of organisational development, peer learning, training and academic research, research, publishing and grants. Capacity development brings many stakeholders together to achieve the overall development purposes but on the other hand, capacity development is an arbitrary term having numerous meanings rather than relying on it rigorous development (Lusthaus et al., 1999).

## **2.5 Evolution of Training & Development**

Having examined the key themes and understandings of the term training and development, with its associated concept of capacity building, this section explores the development of the field and the significance of T&D in the present, before turning to the global reach of T&D ideas. The early 1900s saw the advent of T&D research and publication. One of the most impactful studies was the research by Geissler (1918) on planned uniform training practices for applied psychologists, a profession much in demand during World War I. This research probably paved the way for research on job-specific training (e.g., Sturdevant, 1918), as well as evaluation of learning rates among trainees (Chapman, 2018). Subsequently, the 1920s and 1930s saw an increased focus in studies on the efficiency of training, and acknowledgement of knowledge transfer as a viable laboratory concept (Bell et al., 2017). World War II (1940s) greatly influenced research in the field of T&D with an increased number of studies on factors involved in successful training, especially from a military perspective, in order to evaluate training progress (Bell et al., 2017). Subsequently, military research agencies played a huge role in T&D research in the 1950s, with emphasis on skills and attitude development for job supervision (Lawshe et al., 1959). T&D became more of an applied concept through close examination of human relations and the butterfly effect of the learning process, in which small modifications ripple out to effect a larger overall resulting change (Ponder et al., 2009). Overall, the early 1900s–1950s focused on identifying training interventions rather than looking in-depth into factors contributing to T&D effectiveness.

### **2.5.1 Theory-Driven Research (1960s–1970s)**

Following the trends of previous years, the 1960s saw much research focused on testing interventions (e.g., Mayo & Longo, 1966), and on training design variables as factors to successful T&D (e.g., Wiener, 1963). In protest to such narrowly focused research, Campbell (1971) made the assertion that “by and large, the training and development literature is voluminous, non-empirical, non-theoretical, poorly written, and dull” (p. 174). Most probably in response to Campbell’s (1971) review of T&D research, subsequent years (e.g., 1970s) saw the emergence of more theory-driven research: for instance, the use of a social learning theory to develop T&D programmes (Friedlander & Greenberg, 1971), studies on training as a team (Naylor & Briggs, 1965) and cross-cultural training (Fiedler et al., 1971).

### **2.5.2 Learner-Centric Approach (1980s–1990s)**

The T&D research in the 1980s put much importance on understanding from a learner-centric perspective and the trainees' approach to the T&D process. For instance, trainee ability, motivation, task demands and self-efficacy were studied for the impact on job performance and knowledge transfer (Frayne & Lathan, 1988; GIST et al., 2006; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). The most important contribution of research during this period was that the concept of trainability was separated from future success in employment. It was found that job specific and qualified employees required different T&D than employees who actually required training to upgrade their skill sets for the particular job (Robertson & Downs, 1989). Additionally, it was found that individual attributes played a significant role in successful T&D as compared to competent course materials. Increased interest was also observed in understanding training transfer, and the extent of its application to varied situations and settings (Goldstein, 1980). Continuing the trend, the 1990s saw more T&D research focused on understanding the training context and employee perceptions towards the work environment as impetus to participation in T&D activities. T&D research underwent a move to a broader viewpoint and expanded its evaluation techniques for successful implementation of employee training processes (Bell et al., 2017; Maurer & Tarulli, 1994).

### **2.5.3 Beyond traditional training (2000–present day)**

With decades of T&D research focused on theory building and evaluation tools, studies during the 2000s adopted a trainee-centric approach, especially focused on the influence and interaction of different training methods on training outcomes (Gully et al., 2002). Previous studies had proved that the training criteria depend on an individual learning process and knowledge sharing among trainees. The learning process in turn is not only an output of trainee behaviour but is also influenced by the environment in which the trainee interacts. This led to the development of a cognitive learning hierarchy which helps to synthesise efficient instructional design for an effective T&D process and knowledge transfer (Bell et al., 2017). For the first time, studies also focused on identifying and communicating the prospective benefits of training for trainees, teams and organisations, and compared the effectiveness of different T&D methods as well as the individual impact of firm performance (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009); Bell et al., 2017). Currently, the availability of advanced statistical tools is helping researchers to assess the complex relationship between individual trainee competency/skill set and organisational effectiveness, and the impact of T&D on organisational performance during times of economic downturns (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010).

Additionally, with an increase in technology advancements, researchers are looking into the optimal usage of online training techniques in organising better trainee engagement and learning processes (e.g., Orvis et al., 2009). But researchers need to also focus on understanding prospective trainee responses to new technology systems and user-generated content for T&D. Currently, there is also a need to study informal learning systems for developing ideal training designs composed of informal and formal learning systems. Researchers need to evaluate elements of employee work experience for designing ideal T&D as per their current skill requirements (Bell et al., 2017). Therein, this requires an in-depth understanding of the trainee learning process and knowledge transfer at the micro level.

## **2.6 The significance of Training & Development benefits in the present**

As already established, T&D has many definitions focusing on several areas, and as shown above there are many authors who seek to investigate the various objectives of the training. According to Armstrong (2006) and Wright (2008), T&D programmes have a major impact on an organisation's performance. Furthermore, they have significant benefits in terms of employee job satisfaction and retention (Barber, 2004; Gultek et al., 2006; Satterfield & Hughes, 2007), and also as a means of enhancing employee performance and productivity in developed countries. Some developed countries understand the importance of T&D and provide support as a way to achieve the organisation's vision and improve gross national product (GNP). For example, the United States spends \$164.2 billion on T&D every year (Garavan, 2021). According to the UK L&D Report (2018), even in the current economic climate, 94 per cent of the best performers surveyed say T&D is critical to success. At the same time, according to the Harrold study (2000, cited in Jacob and Washington, 2003), an organisation's productivity is going to rise and improve as a consequence of the firm's investment in training events. It can be seen that the main purpose of T&D is to improve the organisation's performance through developing people skills and knowledge to drive the organisation to achieve a competitive advantage.

However, the benefit and the impact of training and development on performance remains controversial among researchers. As illustrated in figure 2, some researchers maintain that training and development does not show clear effects and benefits on an organisation's performance.

Figure 2 sets out a number of previous studies that indicate the positive and negative impacts of T&D on organisational performance.

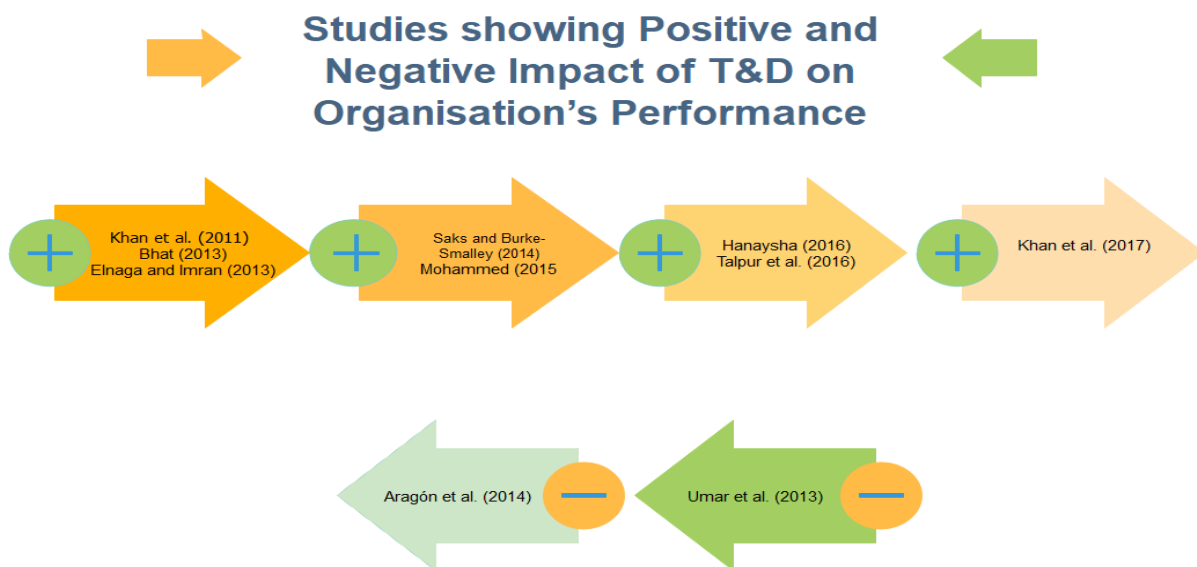


Figure 2: Studies showing the positive and negative impacts of T&D

With respect to the literature presented above, it can be seen that the majority of recent studies show that T&D has a positive impact on organisations from several perspectives. However, Aragón et al. (2014) and Umar et al. (2013), as an example of the opposite view, state that solving organisational issues does not depend solely on T&D programmes and they do not improve performance because the employees do not need better training for the organisations to change them. However, research conducted by Smith and Hayton (1999) and Schuler and Jackson (2006) summarised the benefits of T&D as a way of improving employee performance and employees' morale, and that is going to have a positive impact on the organisation's performance. The researchers in these studies deem that training will improve the adaptability and flexibility of the work done and therefore provide a higher level of service to the customers; as a result, the organisation will benefit by having more advantages than other competitors. Moreover, from the financial perspective, investment in T&D, in the employee's knowledge and skills is a way to reduce organisational operation costs and increase productivity and innovation (Cohen, 2017). In a study conducted by Shen & Tang (2018), data was collected from 230 employees and supervisors. This study has shown the importance of training to improve the job satisfaction, which will, in turn, improve the customer service quality. Moreover, this study also showed how the transfer of training is important for the satisfaction of both employees and the customers and raised the individual's inventory of skills. Figure 3 presents the main potential benefits of training as identified in the relevant literature.

## Benefits of Training

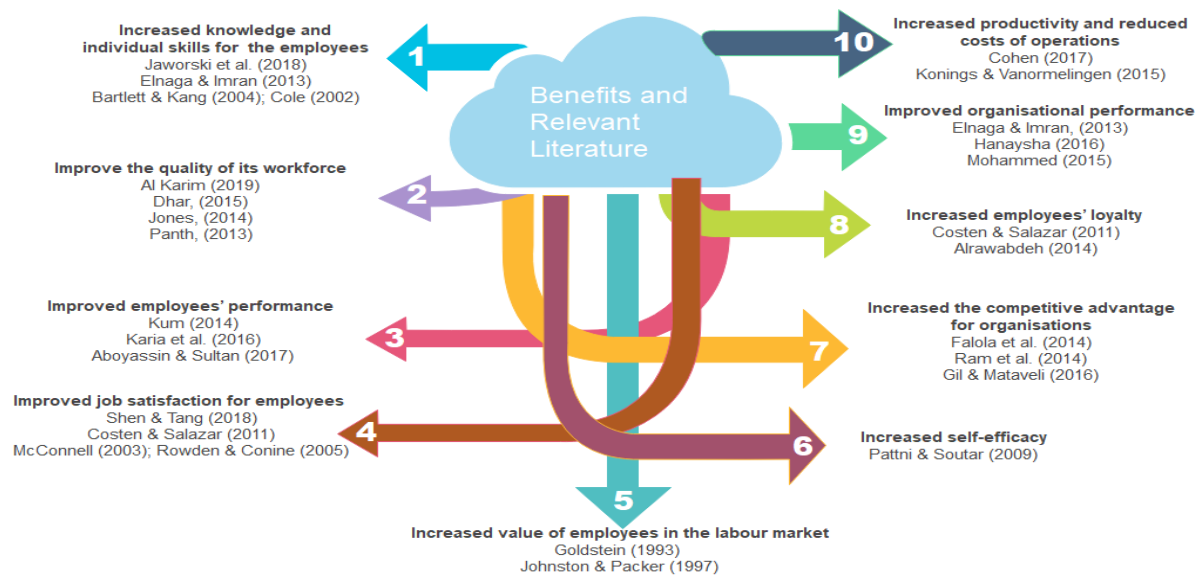


Figure 3: Benefits of T&D

Finally, balancing the typical costs and benefits of T&D is critical in any organisation (DeCenzo et al. 2016). These include, for example, the balance between the time cost of training and potential benefit of increased productivity; the cost of the actual training in materials as opposed to the potential gain in reducing staff turnover; the cost of facilities and equipment balanced with the potential benefit of a workforce with abilities to put into practice new capabilities; and any temporary lost productivity over the training time seen in view of changes in attitudes that improves efficiency in the long term. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

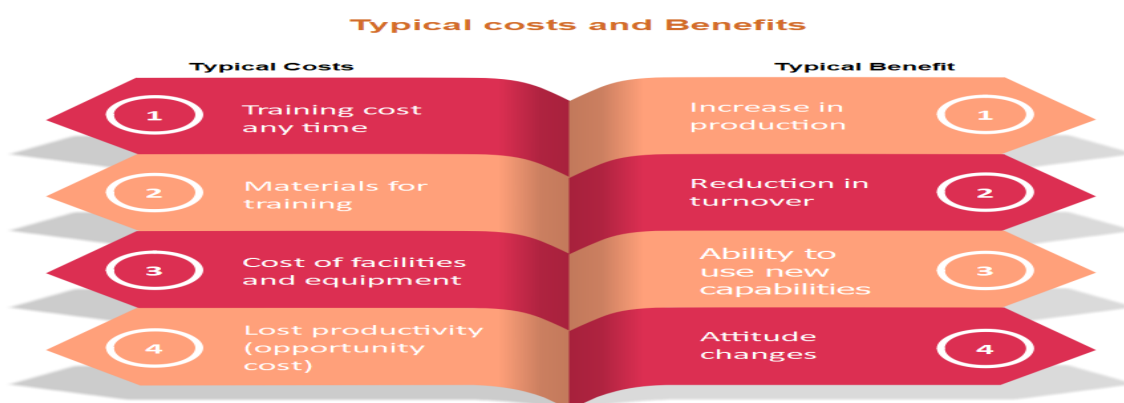


Figure 4: Typical costs and benefits of T&D

T&D has several benefits for an organisation's performance as well for employees. However, to realise the value of training programmes, organisations should have an understanding of the balance between their costs and benefits and there is a lack of research in this area. The



relationship between such costs and benefits and how they operate in practice needs to be explored further – especially in higher education. This therefore lends the present research further utility, especially as it relates to Saudi Arabian universities.

### **2.7 The growth of Training & Development in an international context**

The varied contexts of T&D have led to its advent as a multidisciplinary field, and previous research insights on T&D have directed academics and managers to view the roots and historic effects of T&D globally. Wider recognition of the value of discussing T&D at an international level improves its application and essential concepts in diverse geographical areas. In 2016, Mohan Thite carried out an overview of various international research projects from which he identified common characteristics of international firms, such as a greater level of adaptability to overcome the uncertainties related to external environment, the capacity to fill up the institutional gaps so the adversity can be turned into an opportunity (Khanna & Palepu, 2005), developing markets pursue a springboard strategy for simultaneous entry (also Luo and Tung, 2007), market entry through global alliances and acquisitions (Sun et al., 2012), and also the use of lower cost advantages (Madhok and Keyhani, 2012).

The concept of T&D has undergone many changes due to its dynamic nature worldwide. The specific objectives for T&D experienced a shift from programmed instruction to performance-based analysis (Sun et al., 2012). Its evolution as a source of competitive advantage globally persuaded trainers to define strategic goals, analyse strategic procedures and give better insights to improve organisational performance in a turbulent business environment. As organisations are striving to compete globally, differentiations based on the knowledge, skills and employee motivation become increasingly important, and particularly in such industries where there is a widening skill gap on the part of workers, T&D has assumed a key place in finding a way to bridge this gap (Madhok and Keyhani, 2012). The trends on spending on T&D are on a markedly upward trajectory worldwide (Figure 5). As an example, according to a recent industry report (2019), the US spent over \$87.6 billion in 2018 on training and development in corporations and \$83 billion in 2019.

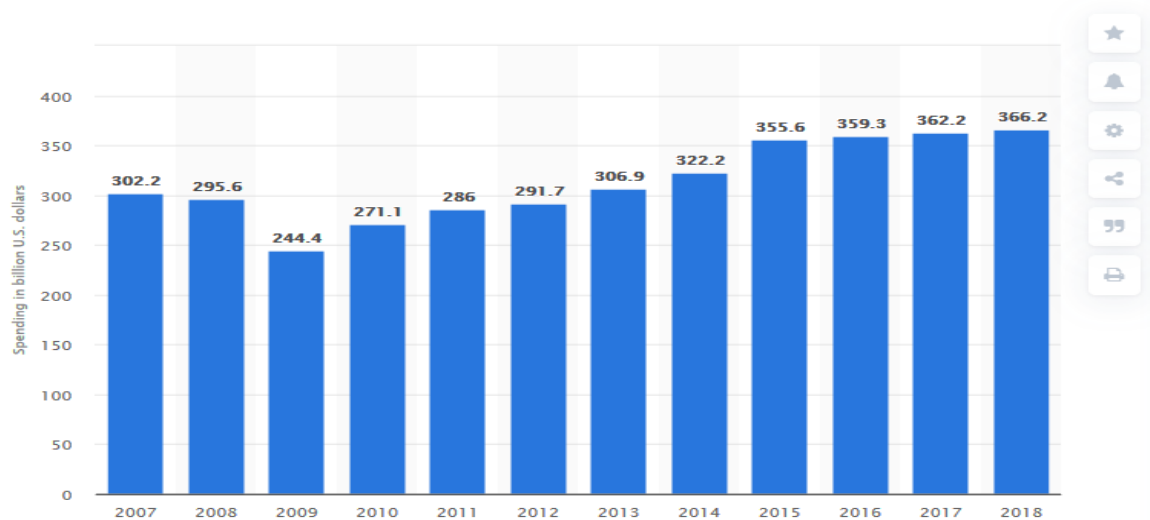


Figure 5: Spending in workplace T&D globally 2007-2018 (Bin othayman,2020)

Organisations are allocating higher budgets for T&D across different sectors like education, the Government/military, manufacturing firms, associations, retailers' wholesalers and services. Recent studies show an average expenditure on T&D in large firms reaching \$19.7 million in 2018, while the figure rose to \$2.1 million in medium firms, whereas small firms experienced a decline in T&D expenditures from 2016 and in 2018 hold a figure of \$1 million only (Industry Report, 2018).

According to Shaari et al. (2019), in most organisations, intellectual capital is seen as key to achieving its strategic goals, and thus human resources development must likewise take a strategic approach. For example, organisations in South Korea, Singapore, and India invest heavily in people to generate higher quality human capital. At the same time, in Australia and New Zealand, investment in learning and development is considered a trajectory to train future leaders and high-potential talent.

The increased emphasis on improving performance opens the path for finding effective ways for identifying, recruiting, measuring and enhancing the education and training of employees. It seems that international organisations are moving from traditional hierarchical structures to cross-functional, knowledge based and self-directed structures to get closer to their employees to meet with global challenges and changing performance excellence standards. Due to the recent emergence of the globalised urge for T&D, the key learning trends are continuously changing particularly with respect to the training design process, the delivery process, and the materials and content used (Learning Trends Report, 2019). The said report identified seven important emergent areas widely used for developing the talent comprising identifying and

assessing the required skills (skill gap analysis), engaging individuals in learning sessions, improving frameworks for career developments, provision of learning opportunities globally, soft skill training, delivering companywide training to bridge skill gaps, identifying issues in the utilisation of technology for skill development. Conversely, the growing concern for T&D can subsequently create numerous challenges for learners. They may face technology concerns and challenges, issues with training accessibility and its timeframe, have to negotiate variations in individual knowledge and skill levels, the ever changing contents of training, inappropriate selection of training material, managerial or stakeholder issues, issues concerning the job environment, dealing with work engagement, level of motivation, knowledge acquisition, retention and transfer, and different geographical characteristics (Learning Trends Report, 2019). Thite (2016) identified many human resource challenges for multinational corporations in South Africa, which include the development of global human resources capabilities, innovation-centric thinking and the development of global leadership channels – rather than relying too much on local talent to move abroad in order to develop and manage their skills – to enhance staff capabilities and manage their expectations in foreign business.

Yadapadithaya (2001) identified three key drivers for training and development in international contexts. First was seeking higher standards for quality, productivity and effectiveness in order to survive in changing environmental settings; secondly, the need to consider the prevailing realities to meet with competition; and third, to understand corporate culture. Oseghale (2018) framed the key drivers for training and development in terms of three levels, where the first includes the individual level factors (e.g., qualifications, career aspirations, nature of the job, work experience), the second organisational level factors (e.g., nature of the industry, ownership, size, sub-sector) and third are factors related to the external environment (legislation, client influence, customer needs, market forces talent, client influences and competition for skills).

Another area of study in terms of global T&D concerns the importance that this is given in the overseas arms of companies, and how expatriate workers are treated with respect to their development. According to a number of studies, this is an area of weakness across various multinational companies, often Chinese companies (Shen & Darby, 2006) and US multinationals (e.g., Tung 1998) which were found not to have any formal development plan for expatriates. According to Dong (1998), there was no guarantee for 60 percent of foreign workers who moved to the US that they would be in company positions and only one-third of

the headquarters staff who moved abroad were guaranteed to be at the same organisational level they were prior to their repatriation.

This finding was supported by Bossard and Peterson (2005) who concluded that US multinationals have no long-term career plans for their workforce before moving abroad, and future positions are not guaranteed. Similarly, a study on the Indian HRM found that it is inadequate in applying the basic objectives of internationalisation (Zheng, 2013), while Kang (2017), researching T&D practices in China and the South Korean context, argued that South Korean and Chinese firms do not offer expatriates the necessary training. Lane (1998) noted that British multinationals tended to focus on the short-term, less on training and development. However, against this prevailing trend, many European multinationals provide a written guarantee that an employee will stay where they are when they return (Scullion & Brewster, 2002). Most Finnish multinationals guarantee at least similar positions on repatriation, some of which agreed to provide specific work on repatriation before international missions (Suutari & Brewster, 2001).

Kang (2017) discussed how South Korean organisations classify training into three categories, namely, pre-employment training, on-the-job training, and retraining. However, in China the main training forms involve enterprise training and vocational education, whereas the firms in Germany and the United Kingdom take a different perspective as respondents to Kang's research classified professional or continuing education and job rotation as among the most effective training techniques.

## **2.8 Training & Development in the Arab world**

Having traced some of the ways T&D is perceived and has been adopted across the world, this section turns its focus to the Arab world as the particular context of this current research. In their quest to compete on a global stage, Arab organisations face mounting challenges. As they compete with global companies, Arab firms realise that customer demands, technological advances, and growing populations become more challenging to work with. Therefore, to maintain competitiveness and deal with escalating pressure from globalisation, it will be vital for Arab countries to develop and expand their human resource (HR) capabilities. To do this, organisations in the Arab world will need to focus on T&D to boost their efficiency and productivity. Belonging within the human resources department (HRD), T&D is an influential way of increasing an organisation's overall success.

Notwithstanding, for developing countries, T&D presents several challenges (Ensour, 2013). In the Arab world, for instance, the management approach is generally inefficient and underdeveloped. The area suffers from a dearth of a coherent management theory. This leaves the field disorganised and beset by several problems (Tlaiss, 2015). Examples of problems faced in the field include managers lacking requisite qualifications, hiring more employees than required, over-centralisation of authority, ineffective planning in the HR departments, and hiring based on personal ties and nepotism. In addition, managers in Arab countries tend to underestimate the importance of T&D (Allamnakhrah, 2013).

Many fail to realise the role that proper training protocols can play in the improvement of companies (Bu Qefel, 1998). This view is also acknowledged by Al Muqarshi, (2022) by noting that Arab management theory is still in infancy and an Arab management profession does not exist. If one considers that Arab countries do not prioritise T&D, it becomes clear that this part of the world lacks good quality T&D programmes. Where training programmes do exist, they lack appropriate training needs analysis (TNA), leaving T&D programmes generally lacking order. Also, considering that training is not done regularly, the skills obtained by employees during training are not reinforced, leading to low levels of success. To correct this situation, there is a need to modernise the T&D curriculum and protocols, especially as they usually include inappropriate and irrelevant material (Atiyyah, 1993; Al-Ali, 1999; Altarawneh, 2005).

Moreover, the majority of Arab organisations isolate HRD because they do not have any research conclusions to underpin their programmes. This leads to a situation where the T&D is not connected to other programmes within organisations, resulting in challenges for managers and employees alike (Al-Bisher, 2003). This situation results in insufficient TNA practices, with the selection of candidates for training being a common issue (Shibani, 2016). To provide further insight into the situation, the findings from different studies carried out in a number of Arab countries are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of studies in T&amp;D in the Arab world

Researcher	Findings
Bu Qefel (1998), United Arab Emirates	Government agencies and the Institute of Administrative Development (IAD) fail to clarify trainees' needs before enrolling them in T&D training. Candidates were not properly screened, because there are no official criteria for choosing trainees. Limited TNA methodologies were employed which did not produce reliable results. Training goals were not designed based on the needs of each trainee. Therefore, it is difficult to meet training expectations. Bu Qefel lists several problems that inhibit T&D's success: training personnel's lack of or limited skills in programme design, lack of resources and insufficient training budget, socio-cultural values, which tend to influence the way trainees are selected to, and how they were appraised within their organizations.
Al-Ali (1999), Kuwait	T&D system suffers from major systemic problems. states that most Kuwaiti companies lack an official T&D programme; therefore, they do not have proper T&D training protocols. Kuwaiti organizations also lack comprehensive, long-term training procedures, and conduct training in a small scale, informal manner. Furthermore, they do not properly evaluate T&D programs and, therefore, cannot improve programs based on research findings. Two other noted problems are a lack of a systematic organizational TNA, as well as the use of conventional methods.
Belhaj (2000), Yemeni	The theme continues with Yemeni banks which, like their Arab neighbours, also suffer from T&D problems. Without long-term planning and understaffed training programmes, success is limited. Also, without a reward scheme, trainees lack proper reinforcement, and are not encouraged to participate and retain learning materials. Therefore, many trainees do not take T&D seriously, skipping classes; however, since banks do not keep track of attendance, the participation problem cannot be properly addressed. Bank managers also do not allocate enough time to complete training programmes. Furthermore, training departments tend to be disconnected from other departments in the organization, limiting co-ordination and cooperation between units within banks. Overall, despite recognizing its importance, Yemeni banks fail to modernize T&D and favour traditional approaches to TNA.
Al-Bisher (2003), Saudi Arabia	Training theory and practice were frequently not joined together, creating problems for both training personnel and trainees. Training personnel and managers carefully screened and chose appropriate candidates; they also outlined appropriate training objectives. However, reaching these goals became problematic, because little time was spent preparing training programmes, so the timing and length of each training session was often not considered important.
Ghufli (2014), UAE	TNA in the ADP is generally conducted formally on a regular basis. To a certain extent, all the methods are in use by the ADP in identifying its training needs, and the overall perceptions of the respondents regarding TNA practices are high. However, the study has identified some barriers to the implementation of effective TNA practices in the ADP. It is to be noted here that lack of expertise of the trainers; nepotism, kinship and personal relations between the supervisors and the employees, disrupt the training selection process in the ADP.
Al-Mughairi (2018), Oman	he objective of this study is to identify those training variables (pre-training interventions and activities, trainee readiness, training environment, training methods, trainer performance and behaviour, training content and objectives) and their effect on improving employee performance.

From the literature, it can be concluded that there are a number of resemblances in T&D characteristics in Arab institutions, which could be summarised in the following way:

- In Arab societies, the family represents the strongest social unit, with tribal loyalties infiltrating all facets of life. Thus, tribal and family ties constitute the mainstay of Arab culture. The other elements that have a strong influence on the Arabic collective culture include the neighbourhood and hometown.

- Generally, Arab institutions manage processes, including T&D, based on social factors like relations, tribal ties, and kinship, which prioritise qualifications, experience, and professional ability
- From the literature, it can be deduced that Arab organisations do not have a systematic way of dealing with T&D, specifically regarding TNA, designing, implementing, and evaluating programmes.
- Little foresight is involved in designing T&D programmes, leaving the programmes unable to meet systematic long-term organisational goals because the focus is often on temporary goals and fleeting needs. Thus, T&D suffers from a dearth of a general and comprehensive strategy.
- The literature shows that T&D evaluation methods are a major challenge for Arab public organisations.
- Companies in Arab countries face challenges regarding T&D processes, which hinders attempts to make T&D effective.

## **2.9 Training & Development in the Middle East**

Arab countries are referred to primarily on a geographical basis as members of the Arab League: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, the Palestine territory (Gaza strip and West Bank), Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (Benamer, 2009). Some of these countries are considered as rich, such as the Gulf countries, mostly as a result of being rich in natural resources, such as oil. The strong economies of these countries should therefore support their human capital to become more developed as they have sufficient financial capabilities (El Mallakh, 2015). However, these countries still have a lack of human development; in other words, investment in human capital is very low (Alsahlawi and Gardener, 2004; Abdullah, 2009; Rhema, 2010; Zahla, 2007). In the same regard, Budhwar and Mellahi's (2007) study showed that there is still a lack of research in T&D in Arabic countries. In reviewing the human resource development literature in the Arab world over the past 18 years, it can be seen that while there were approximately 59 research articles published between 1995 and 2013 relating to 22 Arab countries (Karam & El-Hajj, 2013), a study undertaken in 2018 by Budhwar et al. reported about 382 research articles published in the Middle East, including the GCC and MENA, in the area of human development. This indicates that the research in these countries has increased sharply. On the other hand, despite the signs of progress, training in most Arab countries is unlikely to reach the desired level of efficiency

and effectiveness (Al-Elobeidy, 2016); this means that this part of the world is an interesting ground for studying and researching.

In 2014, Al-Sayyed (2014) showed that HRD in Arabic countries lacks management support, and these countries need to develop human capital by improving T&D programmes. Also, Al-Athari and Zairi (2002), when studying Kuwaiti organisations, found that they still faced a challenge measuring T&D programme and evaluating their effectiveness. In most Arab organisations the same problem existed. Abdalla and Al-Homoud (1995) showed that the method to measure T&D effectiveness on employees and an organisation's performance was still not clear. More research is needed to assess the impact of human resource practice on organisations in the Gulf countries. In the same way, Yamnill and McLean (2001) commented that the majority of human resources development is "written from North America and, more specifically, the US-American point of view" and many scientists have called for more research in Arabic countries as developing countries (Achoui 2009; Al-Kazi 2011; Dirani 2012; Tlaiss 2014). Moreover, T&D programmes should be linked with the country's plan to achieve benefits from these programmes. According to Abdalla and Al-Homoud (1995), there is a lack of this in Arabic organisations because the majority of them insist on a length of service and personal rapport relating to the way employees are selected for T&D programmes.

This part of the world is interesting ground for research because of the unique nature of its workforce. According to Al-Madhoun (2006), most Arabic organisations suffer from a lack of training facilities, and they need to develop that to achieve T&D targets. Additionally, many organisations in Arabic countries try to fill this gap by sending many employees to developed countries such as the United Kingdom to seek further education for a year or more through a training scheme. On completion, they return to their native countries to share their experience with others and will have extra responsibilities (Hsu, 2006). However, Al-Madhoun (2006), in light of his conclusion that Arabic countries have a lack of training facilities, maintains that employees who train in developed countries with high training facilities cannot share their experience and develop the organisation because they do not have the same quality facilities. Arab organisations face other issues regarding the T&D project, for example, reliance on personal connections, community attitudes, beliefs and customs, as well as staffing (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). Moreover, Arabic culture reduces the effectiveness of T&D programmes, where, for example, training and learning opportunities for Arabic women are less than for men. Tlaiss and Dirani (2015) reveal how organisational discrimination and gender-biased cultures and tension influence women's learning. In light of these challenges and gaps, this



current research thus has the potential to contribute to enlarging the body of knowledge regarding the role and implementation of T&D in this part of the world

### **2.10 Training & Development Programmes in Academic Institutions**

As this research is focused on higher education within Saudi Arabia, it is important at this point to specifically consider T&D in relation to academic institutions. This section reviews the literature relevant to this particular sphere, highlighting the key themes that emerge from the studies. In today's competitive world training is not only seen as a method to improve an employee skill-set and organisational performance, it is also used to strengthen an employees' commitment towards their organisation. Similar to the corporate world, T&D programmes provide academic institutions with the necessary competitive edge to stand out globally in terms of academic performance and ranking. In the academic community, T&D programmes within and outside universities help academicians to refresh their existing knowledge, and to bring themselves up to date on the latest technical and technological developments in their area of specialisation.

Al-Mzary et al. (2015) studied the attitude of administrative leadership in Yarmouk University, Jordan towards the training programmes provided at the university. Specifically, the authors looked into the perceived impact of internal training programmes on the performance of academicians in the university. The leadership felt that existing training programmes were designed and based on current requirements of the university and the abilities of the academicians, while favouritism played a major role in the selection of the trainees. It was observed by the administration that training not only increased the efficiency and level of employee performance, but also helped to increase self-confidence and the level of job satisfaction among the trainees. It was also perceived that the repetition of training content increased the subject mastery of the academicians. Overall, the administrative leadership exhibited a positive attitude towards the identification of training needs, selection of trainees and design of training programmes to improve competency of the academicians in Yarmouk University.

Hanaysha (2016) examined the effects of training, empowerment, and teamwork on employees' commitment to academic organisations in the Malaysian context. The quantitative study collected data from public universities of north Malaysia using an online survey method. The results revealed that training improved the academic performance. Also, in the Malaysian context, Bashir and Long (2015) conducted a study to understand the relationship between

employees' perception towards training and commitment to their organisation. The target population consisted of academic staff of a public university in Malaysia. The study revealed that employees attached higher relevance to the access or probability of access to training programmes and recognised it as a sign of recognition from the university for their contributions. Additionally, employees with a higher motivation to learning were found to participate more diligently in training programmes, while exhibiting a higher sense of attachment to the university. The positive attitude of employees towards the training programmes was found to help in the successful implementation of those programmes in the university. The support provided by colleagues and superiors through training was also found to be a strong motivator for employees to continue in the university and to increase the academicians' productivity. However, training by itself was not identified by employees as impetus enough to commit to staying with the organisation. Other studies, on the other hand, have linked T&D programmes to increased job satisfaction (Masum et al., 2015), also noting that they act as 'moral' obligations for employees to continue with the same organisation (Adekola, 2012), and create a sense of belonging among employees. Thus, the impact of T&D needs to be properly utilised by universities to decrease employee turnover ratios.

Masum et al. (2015) studied the factors that contributed to an increase in job satisfaction among academicians in private universities in Bangladesh. The authors studied eight factors: namely, team cohesion, career growth, organisational culture and policies, compensation package, job security, supervisory support, working condition, and T&D for their contribution to job satisfaction. Whilst a compensation package, working conditions and job security were found to be influential to job satisfaction, T&D initiatives by the universities were found to be severely lacking. Therefore, it was recommended that universities improve their training programmes in order to increase the sense of job security among academicians. Adekola (2012) did a comparative study on the organisational commitment among public and private university employees in Nigeria. It was found that perceived job security among public university employees was more due to guaranteed training programmes than any other factor in their universities. This, in turn, led to greater employee commitment towards their respective institutions. Additionally, Tan (2016) found that face-to-face communication methods like training and brainstorming sessions among faculty helped to improve knowledge sharing within the academic community.

Ahmad et al. (2017) studied the impact of T&D and transformational leadership style on organisational commitment among the academic staff of sixteen public tertiary education

institutions in Pakistan. Organisational commitment was described as the agreement of academic staff to align with the goals and values of their respective organisations, while the transformational leadership style was understood as increasing the morale and performance levels of the team via inspiration by the team leader. The study found that T&D led to an improved skill set and performance by academicians and was transferred into positive associations with their institutions. The academicians depended on the institutions to help them adapt to new technological changes, and often felt indebted to their institutions for this support to their career growth. However, contrary to the observations made by Bashir and Long (2015), co-worker support was not found to moderate the impact of T&D on organisational commitment. Overall, various studies found that T&D programmes in academic institutions often led, among others, to increased employee commitment, better job performance, increased self-confidence, higher knowledge sharing, and greater involvement among employees with institutional performance.

#### **2.10.1 Link between Training & Development and university performance**

Efficient training and professional development depend on significant and effectual curricula and instructional strategies; it is essential for the educational growth of the students and the university's performance (Joyce and Showers, 2002). In addition, good T&D provides many benefits, such as improving the capability of a faculty, increasing the expertise of the faculty, the gaining of extra knowledge, and also increasing the teachers' competence to observe the students in the classrooms. In this way, good productivity on the part of students might be attained, as well as favourable feedback from them, both of which can then affect the university's reputation. According to Graham and Bennett (1995), training and qualified development boosts the chances of a good career. It encourages the satisfaction of the employee which increases the performance of the employee and the overall output of the organisation. Armstrong's (2001) study found that T&D and professional development play a vital role in the progress of organisations and universities and these goals can be attained by facilitating the employee/students with skills development programmes, with expert courses to the staff and short courses (Pareek and Rao, 1992). Furthermore, the opportunity to access T&D advances the general revenue of the workers, and finally, the universities or organisations will gain benefits if skilled workers continue for a longer time in the organisation.

Schmalenberg et al. (2008) established an important positive link between T&D and the performance of the staff in academic institutions, which is supported by a number of other studies similarly acknowledging the essential role of T&D and professional development in

personal motivation, leading to improved job satisfaction across university faculties (Boerebach et al. 2013; Ashford et al., 1989). An investigation undertaken by Rahman and Parveen (2006) in Bangladeshi universities, noted that the faculty demonstrated displeasure and weak performance if they were not provided with the appropriate training and professional development, thus affirming that training and skills are important determinants for the performance of these universities.

Appropriate training increases the satisfaction of the faculty and decreases the stress of the job. According to Ahmed (2016), the skilled and trained faculty have great importance in any educational institution for its ranking, research output, and productivity in relation to other universities and institutions. Moreover, a university should follow a clear programme to expand its capability, and its teaching and management expertise (Ssesanga and Garrett, (2005). It can be seen from the above that T&D programmes in universities play an important role in helping the universities to increase their performance. This has encouraged the researcher in this study to explore the impact of training and development on universities' performance in the Middle East, specifically within Saudi Arabia.

#### **2.10.2 Link between Training & Development and faculty motivation and job satisfaction in higher education**

In higher education, the motivation of academic staff plays a crucial role as it contributes to desirable outcomes in the students' learning and to the quality of the institution. A university's success is tied to its academic staff (Stankovska et al., 2017). Not only do academic staff have a crucial role in assisting universities in achieving their objectives (Yee, 2018), they determine how successful students will be (de Lourdes Machado et al., 2011). Thus, scholars and practitioners must understand job satisfaction among academic staff because the performance of universities depends on it (Yee, 2018). Therefore, it is relevant to this thesis to examine here literature that more specifically focuses on the links between motivation and job satisfaction to better understand in what ways T&D does and might further contribute to this area.

Viseu et. al (2016) advance the view that employee motivation is closely connected to the process of work and signifies a crucial factor in job satisfaction. Dalal et.al (2012) conducted a study that concluded that motivation is the leading indicator regarding how much an individual is satisfied in their job. Tentama et al. (2020) support the idea that motivation in the job constitutes a significant element impacting job satisfaction.

In terms of what might determine job satisfaction, a number of studies conclude that academic staff care more about extrinsic satisfiers (Place, 1997), whilst other studies produce mixed results regarding extrinsic and intrinsic satisfiers, suggesting that both play a role in predicting job satisfaction among members of academic staff (Bentley et al., 2013; Herzberg, 1987). Responsibility and teaching activities constitute the most significant factors behind their intrinsic satisfaction. Extrinsic factors associated with academic staff job satisfaction include the availability of institutional resources, salary, and perceived support from colleagues in terms of management.

Yuen et al. (2018) define job satisfaction as an affective variable resulting from a person's work experience. This means that job satisfaction is the extent to which someone enjoys the work they do (Shmailan, 2016). Job satisfaction can be explained using the theory of equity. For Shmailan (2016), job satisfaction can also come naturally when employees are allowed to self-direct. In most cases, satisfied employees are the most highly committed and high performing in organisations. This is why successful organisations emphasise desirable relationships between the employer and employee (Shmailan, 2016).

If the employer is perceived as being unfair in terms of assessments, evaluation reports, granting of salaries, and promotions, employee job satisfaction will be impacted (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019). This is the reason an employer should ensure that all assessments are appropriately evaluated so that no employees feel dissatisfied with the organisation, since employees often evaluate their jobs either favourably or unfavourably based on the degree to which they believe that the job conditions meet their expectations (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019). Highly satisfied employees will outperform their dissatisfied colleagues (Yuen et al., 2018), and as Sánchez-Beaskoetxea and Coca García (2015) report, several scholars have concluded that when employees are satisfied, they come to work more often (low absences), are more productive, make fewer mistakes (as is seen in the quality of their products), and have stronger intentions to continue working for the organisation.

Job motivation is one element determining academic staff job satisfaction (de Lourdes Machado et al., 2011). One of the leading motivation theories identified by Mehrad (2020) is Herzberg et al.'s (1987) two-factor theory. The theory is based on the assumption that some job factors can help prevent dissatisfaction while others can facilitate satisfaction. It categorises these factors into two groups: hygiene factors and motivational factors. Motivation factors are linked to achievement, personal growth, recognition, advancement, the work itself, and

responsibility. Hygienic factors include matters controlled by the company, such as its policies, salaries, working conditions, interpersonal relationships and supervision (Herzberg, 1987).

Based on the main theories of motivation described above, academic staff members would have better job satisfaction if they were happier with their jobs. However, the reality is that many members of the academic workforce deal with heavy workloads. Apart from educating students, they also have to engage with management activities that require them to multitask, resulting in dissatisfaction (Omar et al., 2020), which Ridzuan et al. (2018) note will show in their work and behaviour. It is also important to realise that employees may sometimes be satisfied with certain aspects of their jobs and dissatisfied with others (Kalleberg, 1977). Thus, a study on factors impacting job satisfaction and motivation among academic staff is crucial to ensure that job satisfaction and motivation are always at levels that enable universities to achieve future goals.

### **2.10.3 The role and potential of Training & Development in Higher Education**

This section looks at a number of studies that have examined more broadly the role T&D has and might play in the higher education sector in various contexts. In an important study, Ramdani (2014) examined the example of a Nigerian university where HR practices were playing a role to improve the system. Ramdani acknowledged that T&D is a sincere effort of the employer to increase opportunities towards employees and other stakeholders and outlined the areas towards which training was directed. Training can be related to information, material, skills, ethics and the ways to convey knowledge towards students through various platforms. Training directed towards teachers is a direct effort to ensure students keep a consistent level of improvement and to move with other world countries. The modern education system is technology-based, updated and dynamic where skilled and technical staff can fulfil the needs. Teaching and administration workers are being trained to handle the functional and information-based systems that are the ultimate requirements to improve performance in the education industry. Higher education needs strategies in relation to the external world due to the advent of international organisations (Ramdani, 2014). International firms recruit employees from universities where modern technological education and developments are consistent to improve knowledge.

Likewise, Kiweewa and Asiimwe (2014) have elaborated the training efforts and its substantial results in terms of Ugandan universities such as Africa Graduate University. Their report also communicated that education departments set training programmes according to the level of

education that left a positive impact on the job performance of teachers. Teaching skills are also part of training programmes that ultimately improves the thinking level of teachers. The creativity in teaching enables the students to learn more comfortably and that enhances the overall results of teaching institutions. Training to strengthen capabilities is also a source for strengthening decision-making powers. For example, a qualified tutor or administrator will communicate with the customers (students) effectively, and there will be a prompt response to issues. Ultimately, the teaching organisations, by focusing on training, will optimise the employees' potential to compete with rivals.

Similarly, in the Ugandan context, Ologbo and Sofian (2013) have indicated that employee engagement is a sign of improved performance in the education sector as employees seek to understand from their co-workers the complexities that ultimately benefit the organisation in the long run (Ologbo and Sofian, 2013). Employee engagement is also a technique to improve their learning as it is necessary to keep a continuous skills development. Bagyo (2013), researching to improve the organisational culture on the performance of employees, has also selected employee engagement as a tool to continuously improve performance after setting up training programmes. Bagyo indicated developmental mechanisms that can minimise the internal weaknesses for delivering knowledge towards students. Trained employees can communicate their expertise into different departments, like the rotations at the administration level; they can be helpful in quickly offering skills.

Moving more specifically to the Middle East, Amin (2013) emphasises employee performance in the education sector; it is a technique to gain performance positive results that is necessary to achieve the organisational goals. The ultimate goal of an organisation is to be productive and that requires fundamental changes in the educational institutes. The universities in the Middle East have found training to be a major resource to deal with the external world as the current scenario is indicating that HR practices have an impact on the education system. Universities are arranging T&D for the employees based on information technology, learning skills and modern techniques to deliver knowledge. Amin (2013) has also elaborated that, due to the need for creativity, technical skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills and judgements, the teacher must be provided with training programmes. T&D leaves a positive impact on the performance due to the collective efforts of HR practices. Set against this, by reviewing the body of work specifically dealing with T&D in the Arab World, it seems that more commonly, diversity in culture in the Middle East was not supportive of the HR functions because of language policies and the distance from the English language. Due to the lack of

communication skills, personnel in the Middle East are not able to work with the diverse forces of an international organisation.

Another tension with respect to T&D in the Middle East is evidenced in two studies from 2018. Hervie (2018) has argued that T&D in Middle Eastern universities has changed the face of education, and international universities are targeting the region as a place to locate their educational institutes. This view echoes Ralston et al. (2012) who maintained that education standards in the Middle East have improved organisational performance due to highly skilled employees. Global high-performance practices are adopted by the education institutes to reach the economic development of firms directly. Ralston and Winful (2018) on the other hand, suggest that the trends have been reversed as training alone was not found to be an effective tool for change within the education system. Training does not impact effectively, and in-service training results in a poor performance. Educational organisations need to keep T&D as an integral part of continuous performance improvement. The HR department assesses training needs; therefore, independent HRs can focus strongly and clearly on the evaluations.

In concluding the literature review, it is understood that in general, T&D is leaving a positive impact on the educational organisations as these moves with world trends. Change and developments in the education sector are based on T&D that is ultimately beneficial for the students, employees, employers, and the economic growth of the institution. The authors have emphasised the importance of T&D for the organisation. Continuous development in the education system is the only pathway to be competitive with other world regions.

### **2.11 The Training & Development Process**

The process of T&D is one of the most important aspects for achieving the best results of training programmes. According to Torrington and Hall (1991), the training process usually starts with an assessment and ends with an evaluation and a follow-up stage. Different authors have put forward systematic processes for the training and development of employees but the following steps are necessary for any well-designed T&D programme. From a training perspective, the sub framework forms a quality training cycle. This cycle is generally presented as comprehensive training stages and shows how such stages should sequence. Oakland (1993 and 2014) illustrates that quality training activities can be considered in the form of a cycle of improvement (Figure 6). The factors named there are explained in detail in the following sections.



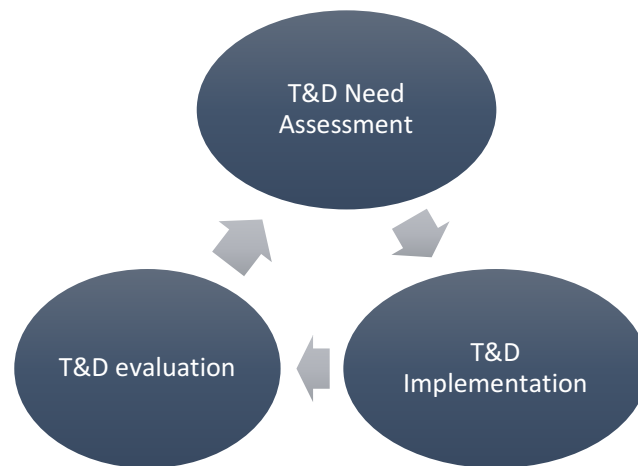


Figure 6: The T&D delivery cycle (Noe, 2008; Garner, 2012)

## 2.12 Training Needs Assessment (TNA)

### 2.12.1 Definition of training needs assessment

TNA is defined as a thorough HRM study to identify aspects of the performance and the problems of the workforce so that the basic reasons and corrections can be identified through training (Pennington, 2011). TNA provides information about the current level of effectiveness of employees, skill areas most wanting development and the best ways to achieve it, according to Ludwikowska (2018). In addition, the TNA as defined by Barbazette (2006), is the collection process for information on an organisational need, expressed or implied, that can be met by training. It may be concluded from a variety of definitions of TNA that TNA is a method for analysing gaps by describing and analysing the current condition versus the desired organisational outcomes, identifying training needs and skill development to fill the gap so that an organisation can understand the problem and consider the optimum solution. An analogy of the need for an organisation is provided. Appropriate use of TNA verifies if training programmes can achieve the organisation's needs thus preventing the unnecessary spending of money. TNA focuses on programmes that move the company towards its goals as well as impact on the efficiency of its employees.

According to Armstrong (2003), the underlying understanding and the importance of doing each thing, as well as the reason for doing it, must be built into everything you learn or train. The systematic identification of needs is therefore a critical step in the design of training and can have significant impact on the value of training programmes. The identification of training needs is a key process which should be undertaken by organisations, as stressed by authors such as Armstrong (2003), Buckley and Caple (2004), Torrington and Hall (1991) and

Robinson (1988), because the lack of this process seems to be a key factor in not always favourable training results. In summary, TNA is an important task for designing training programmes, defined as the systematic research and analysis of the current and desired organisational levels of efficiency.

### **2.12.2 Determining training needs**

From the definitions above, deciding T&D needs is the critical factor in helping organisations to achieve the value of T&D programmes. This section examines how this assessment process might be carried out. According to both Armstrong (2003) and Stewart (1999), the training should be assessed by looking at the corporations' needs with regards to company objectives, as well as with respect to the interests of groups and the people involved. Also, in the same vein, Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) came to the conclusion that there were many methods to identify training needs, such as involving the employees in this process. Investigating and asking the advice of those supervising the employees. Asking managers or employees who are knowledgeable about the project and about the results to describe it in terms they term of progress or benefit, such as customers, colleagues, and subordinates. Determining the viability of the participants.

Armstrong (2003) also proposed a "Deficiency Model" as one of the highly crucial techniques where the requirements for training are determined by the gap between people's ability and knowledge, and what they should learn and can implement in their lives. This model illustrates the elements of training as per the given expertise and skills and sought-after expertise and skills. An alternative model was suggested by Goldstein and Ford (2002), which comprises four diagnostics as essential in the discovery of efficient training requirements, as set out in Figure 7.

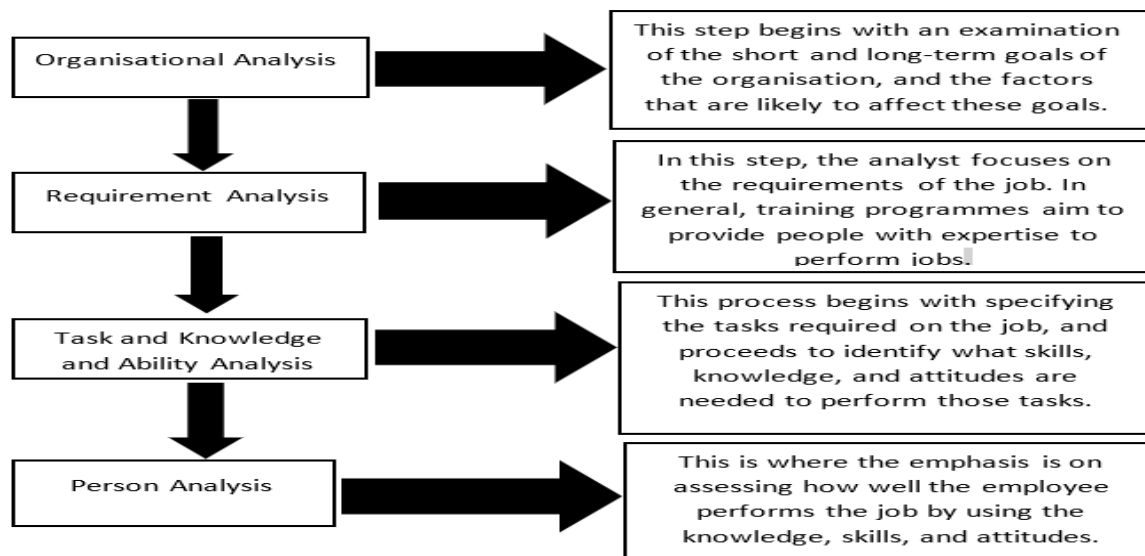


Figure 7: The deficiency model (Goldstein and Ford, 2002)

In summary, when TNA is undertaken, there are those in the organisation who must be involved in how it is conducted (Erasmus et al., 2006). Since needs assessments are conducted to decide whether training is required, it is imperative to involve the managers and the employees in the assessment process (Du Plessis et al., 2010). Grobler et al. (2006) argue that management involvement in needs assessment is important given that managers in general have accurate information concerning their employees' performance and managers are "in an improved position "to assess the need for training in the work groups" Werner and DiSimone (2011) also refer to management involvement in training needs assessment, maintaining that immediate managers play a specifically important role in person analysis. Person analysis is that which "examines knowledge, skills, and current performance to determine who needs training"

### 2.12.3 Challenges facing training needs analysis

Even though the importance of TNA has been deliberated by theorists and researchers, it has also been indicated that many companies do not regard performing TNA as a priority (Anderson, 1994; Smith, 1999; Budhwar et al., 2002; Saeed, 2010). According to Singal (2009), one of the causes for insufficient TNA practices in organisations is the lack of clarity on who is responsible for doing what. Agnaia (1996) found that managers in charge of assessing training needs are not usually specialists and lack the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their tasks. Abdullah (2009) also stated that the absence of needs assessment and analysis is due to lack of expertise. Agnaia (1996) goes on to argue that assessing training needs

on the basis of performance records by bosses may not reflect the actual situation because this assessment is, or might be, subject to family, nepotism, kinship and personal relationships between the supervisors and employees. In addition, Abdalla and Al-Homoud (1995) found that there are no specific procedures for determining training and educational needs due to the lack of reliable information, and turbulent political, economic and fast-changing social environments. Others Arab researchers argue that the lack of job descriptions, clear performance appraisal and the approach used for assessing the development needs of employees are impressionistic and generalised rather than systematic (Altarawneh, 2005). However, these problems should be addressed in an appropriate manner. According to Ludwikowska (2018), although many training programmes are conducted fairly, instead of identifying needs, they tend to be based on tests and errors. Ludwikowska (2018) argues that most organisations do not implement TNA properly and sufficiently. Many companies see the analysis of training needs as too expensive and time consuming. Anderson (1994) argued that the TNA is rare, and most organisations follow traditional, office-based procedures, and various internal and external pressures. They are less systematic. Mayombe (2020), Burke and Cocoman (2020), Hussain (2013), and Taylor and O’Driscoll (1998) address the challenges of the TNA and the development of staff, including inadequate financing, poor standards of literate instruction, poor pay for facilitators, poor skill, and favouritism. It is perhaps valuable at this point to detail more fully the range of literature that discusses TNA from diverse geographical contexts. These are set out in Table 3, with the main findings of each study.

*Table 3: Previous studies into TNA challenges*

<b>Author/Year name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Agnaia (1996)	Assess the training needs of the Egyptian public librarians: analytical study of the traditional ways and possibilities of application of modern methods	This study confirmed that the traditional methods still are used in estimating the training needs of public librarians.
David & Chan (2000)	University school collaboration and need assessment in the training of student leadership and peer support in Hong Kong	Findings indicated that schools were in need of student leaders in different student activities, especially in those less related to academic concerns. It was stressed that in providing opportunities for student leaders to continue practising their skills in school activities, other students might eventually benefit through

		participation in school activities and peer support programmes organised by student leaders.
Lucier & Kathleen (2008)	A consultative training programme: collateral effect of a need's assessment	This study reveals a series of significant and effective changes that resulted from administering a needs assessment to managers working in a bank undergoing a major change in the organisational culture.
Gómez et al. (2008)	Organisational practices of the management of in-service training in the Turkish national police	The emerging training-related issues were grouped under some thematic areas: policymaking and central planning; training needs analysis; training research and development; training delivery; training evaluation; employment of both training staff and trainees, and inspection practices relating to the training function.
Tao et al. (2010)	Improving training needs assessment processes via the Internet: system design and qualitative study	Findings of the study showed that (HR) managers demonstrated positive acceptance of both the needs assessment model and the process improvement generated from the web-based prototype system.
Luoma (2011)	Training for public information officers in communication to reduce health disparities: a needs assessment	It shows that government public information officers and risk communicators bear the burden for reaching all Americans with public health and emergency messages. To assess needs specifically regarding communication to reduce health disparities.
Blaz et al. (2012)	Introducing training needs analysis in Slovenia's public administration	The results obtained indicate that the influence of hierarchical position prevailed, although the managers are less involved in needs analysis than expected. Empirical data also demonstrate that the majority of employees are aware of the importance of training needs analysis and the importance of clearly defined training objective.
Azadmarzabadi & Zarei (2018)	The Need Assessment of Family Training Programs (FTPs) for Military Parents: Case Study of	Results showed that boys have more severe physical-health training needs than girls and there was no significant difference between the views of

	High Schools in a Military Town in Tehran, Iran	mothers and fathers on the selection of educational needs.
Rashid (2018)	A Study on Training Need Assessment	The findings revealed that TNA helps to develop employee and organisational knowledge, skills, and abilities, to identify areas of need. Once the training needs are identified, then it is necessary to determine/develop objectives to be accomplished by the training.
Mwansisya et al. (2020)	Validation of TNA Questionnaire Among Health Care Workers in Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health Care in Low-Income Countries	Adapted TNAQ appear to be reliable and valid for identifying professional training needs of health care workers in health care settings. They further suggested that future studies with a large sample size are required to test the use of TNAQ in wider health care systems and learning opportunities.

The studies shown in Table 3 indicate that there is a lack of research exploring the challenges facing TNA in public universities, especially in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia. There are indeed few HRD analyses in the GCC nations as a whole, particularly in Saudi Arabia (Moideenkutty et al., 2011; Harbi et al., 2017). This affords a window of opportunity for this research to fill this gap.

#### 2.12.4 Designing training programmes

In line with the aforementioned processes of TNA, its outcomes should form a guideline framework to design training programmes. It is necessary that the training programmes satisfy both the organisation and personnel (Stanley, 2002). Armstrong (2003) argues that the success of a training programme requires well-established training objectives. Similarly, Odiorn and Rummler (1988) indicate that setting clear training objectives provides good understanding for designing training programmes to meet the needs of training. In addition, the proper implementation of training programmes relies on an effective design which considers trainees, learning skills enhancement, knowledge imparting and skills development in the training subject matter (Martin, 2010). On the other hand, Saner and Yiu (2005), Linghame et al. (2006), and Bhatti et al. (2013) point out that elements such as the nature of training, the availability of resources, and the involvement of trainers represent the basics of designing training programmes.

Hackett (2003, cited in Elferjani, 2015, p. 35) arranges the key steps required in designing a training programme thus: “designing a programme involves identifying relevant competencies, clustering and sequencing them, defining specific learning objectives, determining resources, choosing learning methods and providers, deciding how to monitor, evaluate and setting up an administrative system.” Not only then, is it vital to conduct TNA but also to formulate a set of training objectives to design appropriate training programmes accordingly. This takes into account specific knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be obtained by trainees as a result of the training activity. According to Baldwin and Ford (1988), training design received the most important research attention in terms of quantifying the results of the entire study. Existing meta-analysis research focuses on design features such as over-learning (Driskell et al., 1992), practice (M. Arthur et al., 1998) and training delivery methods (Arthur et al., 2003; Sitzmann & Kraiger, 2006). In addition, two quantitative reviews were conducted for specific training methods for behaviour modelling (Taylor et al., 2005) and error management training (Keith & Justus, 2008). Berry and Morris (2005) argued that the ultimate goal of training should be an active transfer to the organisation. Unfortunately, estimates indicate that only about 10 percent of learning is actually transferred to job performance (Holton et al., 2000; Georgenson, 1982; Kupritz, 2002), which has led human resources professionals to hasten to prove their work and sponsor value for training plans (Tompkins, 2002; Becker et al., 2011). As a result, training in public and private organisations has shifted from examining learning outcomes to focusing on personal outcomes such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, performance evaluation, performance improvement, along with organisational performance outcomes such as profitability, revenue growth, and shareholder value (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Burke & Baldwin, 1999; Tompkins, 2002; Richman-Hirsch, 2001).

According to the training literature, there are several training design factors that influence the transfer of training: instructional techniques and learning principles (e.g., Alvarez et al., 2004); self-management and relapse prevention strategies (e.g., Tziner et al., 1991; Wexley & Nemeroff, 1975); and goal setting (e.g., Gist et al., 1989). Thus, organisations should design their training programmes to include such factors will increase the likelihood of transfer. To assess whether training is designed with these factors in mind, the LTSI (learning transfer system inventory) measures what is named as transfer design. Transfer design refers to the way in which training in its delivery provides trainees with the ability to transfer learning back to the job (Holton et al., 2000). argue that part of transfer design is the degree to which training instructions match job requirements. Trainees are more likely to transfer the training content

to the work context when they perceive that the training programme was intentionally designed and delivered in such a way that maximises their ability to do so (Holton, 1996; 2005). Consequently, when trainees have previous knowledge and practice on how to apply the newly learned knowledge and skills to the job and when training instructions are congruent with job requirements, an increased likelihood of transfer should exist.

In their literature review, Burke and Hutchins (2007) identified a number of training design and delivery factors that emerged from the training transfer research. These included the following: need analysis, learning goals, content relevance, practice and feedback, over-learning, cognitive overload, active learning, behavioural modelling, error-based examples, self-management strategies and technological support variables. Content relevance or content validity of the training goals and materials to the transfer tasks was critical in training transfer. A study conducted by Bates & Poole (2005) investigated the predictive abilities of the factors affecting training transfer in a Thai company, and revealed that managers perceived content relevancy as the primary factor predicting successful transfer. Table 4 (below) summarises a number of important studies related to T&D design characteristics.

*Table 4: Summary of studies into T&D design characteristics*

Study	Findings
Velada et al., (2007)	The results indicate that in order to strengthen the transfer of training, organisations should design training to enable trainees to have the ability to transfer learning, strengthen trainees' belief in their transfer ability, ensure that training content is retained over time, and provide appropriate information about employee work feedback on performance after training activities.
Lim & Morris, (2006)	Results showed that trainee characteristics, instructional satisfaction, and organisational factors significantly influenced the trainees' perceived learning and learning transfer immediately after and three months after the training.
Grossman & Salas, (2011)	We identify the factors relating to trainee characteristics (cognitive ability, self-efficacy, motivation, perceived utility of training), training design (behavioural modelling, error management, realistic training environments) and the work environment (transfer climate, support, opportunity to perform, follow-up) that have exhibited the strongest, most consistent relationships with the transfer of training.
Taylor et al., (2005)	Behavioural modelling facilitates transfer when both positive and negative models are used, and when opportunities to practice are provided.
Burke & Hutchins, (2007); Heimbeck et al., (2003)	Error management promotes the transfer of training by allowing trainees to anticipate potential issues, providing them with



	knowledge of how to handle such problems and highlighting the negative outcomes that can occur if training is not transferred.
Martins et al., (2019)	Our study highlighted the diversity in the design of studies And in the program's effectiveness evaluation.
Keith & Frese (2008)	Effectiveness of error management training: a meta-analysis.
Bell & Kozlowski (2008)	Active learning: effects of core training design elements on self-regulatory processes, learning, and adaptability.
Matachi (2006)	Capacity building framework.

## 2.13 Implementation of Training & Development Programmes

### 2.13.1 Definition

The implementation phase is where organisations practice the T&D in real life, and where the decision also needs to be made whether training will be delivered in-house or externally coordinated (Gusdorf, 2009). According to the available literature, this is the most challenging part of the T&D delivery system because one erroneous step can determine the failure of the entire programme. Also, choosing the right methods (on-the-job training and off-the-job training) have a crucial part in ensuring training effectiveness (Arthur et al., 2003). These two implementation methods are expounded in more detail below.

### 2.13.2 Off-the-job training

Off-the-job training (OJT) means taking employees and training them away from the work situation (Robinson, 1989). Some studies found that OJT is a necessary training method employed to assist in the reduction of work stress by eliminating some of the hustle and bustle and inevitable frustration of a day-to-day job, giving employees greater capacity for effective absorption of the training programme (Beardwell and Holden, 1997). According to Vasanthi and Basariya (2019), there are five different forms of off-the-job provision: lectures and conferences, vestibule training, simulation exercises, sensitivity training, and transactional guidance. Al-Athari (2000) found that training methods adopted by several organisations in the Arab world have performed inadequately in the process of supporting trainees during the course of their learning. It could be that instructors are not sufficiently familiar with the latest training methods like group-discussions and reviewing of case studies, or perhaps the trainees themselves might find it difficult to accept that these new methods have any real value, and

therefore, the introduction of new training methods is seen as time-consuming and a waste of money. Atiyah (1991) notes that predominant training methods used most frequently in Arab organisations are traditional and predictable. They are very limited in scope – lectures being the most commonly used vehicle for the dissemination of information. Open discussion groups, researching interesting case studies, participation in role-playing exercises, playing appropriate games and creating helpful simulations are all seldom used. They could be combined for use in a conscious effort to drive employees to change their environment, which in turn gives those participants opportunities to share experiences with different people and other cultures.

### **2.13.3 On-the-job training**

According to Arthur et al. (2003), training efficiency appears to vary depending on the training delivery system chosen and the assignment or special skill being taught (Arthur Jr et al., 2003). Supervisors perform on-the-job training in some organisations, preferring it to off-the-job training for reasons outlined by Klink and Streumer (2002), who claimed that the positive relationship between training benefits and costs, the ability to train just-in-time, and the expectation of successful transfer of what was learned to the workplace are the three main incentives for widespread use of on-the-job training. This might be the most satisfying training method for the whole group. It can range from participants simply observing and then imitating the ways and processes used by experienced employees, to taking part in carefully structured programmes intended as office practice or workshops. This type of training, which takes place on an organisation's premises, could involve watching a skilled employee perform (Kumareswaran, 2018) and is typically reserved for and provided to new or inexperienced workers, who learn mainly by watching peers or superiors perform tasks and then trying to imitate their actions (Jackson, 2020). When new technology is introduced, it can be used to enhance the skills of existing employees, such as cross-training employees in a particular department or work unit or orienting transferred or promoted employees to their new stations and responsibilities (García-Juan et al., 2019). Reid and Barrington described the technique of "observing an experienced worker" as a "well-established on-the-job procedure" (Collier, 2017). Managers and properly qualified workers provide new hires with any information they need in this situation, and these new hires gradually absorb the company's practices and standards (Kum et al., 2014).

However, although this is the most widely used training method by various organisations, and despite its value (particularly for inexperienced workers), it has flaws. Beardwell and Holden pointed out that while this approach might well instil the skills that a person is expected to

demonstrate to new employees, that person might lack the ability to train new employees on how to develop those skills (Beardwell et al., 2004). Unfortunately, crucial information could be misplaced or omitted as the demonstrator makes deeply ingrained and, therefore, possibly irreversible decisions about what is and is not necessary in the process being taught. Essentially, this is a technique known as “learning by exposure” (Kennedy et al., 2020). It assumes not only that a knowledgeable employee has some expertise, but also that a new employee is capable of learning skills and gaining knowledge without pre-designated assistance, except for co-workers’ guidance (Beardwell et al., 2004). As a result, as there are few incentives to learn and the results are often unsatisfactory, as the would-be trainers are unqualified or unprepared to carry out the required tasks or fulfil the training role. Other techniques, as Cole (2002) notes, are used in on-the-job training, one of which is job instruction, which allows trainees to access routine instructions in manual and clerical jobs. Unlike the option of watching an experienced colleague, the instruction here is always carried out by properly qualified instructors.

Another effective strategy is coaching, which consists of a manager assisting a colleague in developing managerial skills through a mentoring process (Cole, 2000). Employees might also benefit from ‘shadowing and work rotation,’ which allows them to gain new skills and knowledge by moving from one department to another, or even to different branches or subsidiaries of the same company. This method has the potential to significantly improve an employee’s learning experience (Cole, 2000). One disadvantage of job rotation is that employees are not always accepted by their colleagues and are often regarded as roadblocks by managers and other employees in performing their daily duties (Cole, 2000). Although rotation allows workers to demonstrate effective skills during their temporary jobs, Raelin (2000) claimed that there is little opportunity for them to reflect on these skills, though they are performed successfully.

Gomez-Mejia et al. (2001) reported nearly the same results with regard to cross-functional training, in which employees are expected to work in several departments or areas of the institution. The objective here is to teach employees how to perform processes in a variety of related fields, not just in their assigned jobs. Most businesses use team training because they believe that increased efficiency can be achieved through the organised use of collective and cooperative units (Morlà-Folch et al., 2019). Typically, employers prefer to implement on-the-job training because it requires less investment of money or time in terms of resources, trainer wages, and instructional design strategies, as noted. However, the strategy has some

drawbacks. Managers and supervisors, for example, might not advocate using the same procedure to find work. They might advocate for less effective techniques because they do not fully comprehend the importance of extensive practice, consistent and meaningful demonstration, and the accumulation of feedback in effective on-the-job training. This type of training could result in poor results if these potential dangers are not anticipated and addressed (Morlà-Folch et al., 2019). Another way to explore and theorise about learning that occurs in the workplace, according to Sambrook (2005), is to think about it in terms of training “at” and “in” work. Learning “at” work refers to the more formal provision of training and education programmes, such as the familiar induction process and a variety of other official and unofficial in-house programmes (Sambrook, 2005). A significant benefit of training “at” work is the separation of training from actual work, in which training is done away from the workplace at a purpose-related venue or technical space that is still within the primary workplace. Workplace learning, on the other hand, is a more casual process (Sambrook, 2005).

#### **2.13.4 Reasons for choosing external or internal training**

Reid and Barrington (1999) arranged core training types under the following titles: on-the-job training; planned organisational practice; in-house programmes; external planned practice; and exterior programmes. In general, these may be distinguished as internal and external strategies. They also offered a suggestion that four standards may be used to help in deciding which of these approaches would be most applicable. They are as follows:

- Degree of compatibility with stated training requirements.
- Anticipated likelihood of successful transfer of knowledge gained to the workplace.
- Availability of appropriate resources.
- Appreciation of trainee-related issues.

Regarding compatibility with training needs, Hayes (2002) contested that some strategies might be quickly rejected, for example on-the-job training, because there may be no project teams presently operating in the organisation which would be capable of providing the appropriate work experience.

In relation to the satisfactory transfer of learning acquired during training, both external and internal courses could facilitate the transmission of skills and encourage a positive and constructive attitude towards other trainees in the workplace (Reid and Barrington, 1999).

With regard to the availability of resources, absence of sufficient time might be a critical factor that could impede progress of both internal and external training. Also, the available budget rather than the opportunity cost might be a factor that would work against full provision of the external course; the in-house course might cost less to produce (Reid and Barrington, 1999).

According to Armstrong (2003), external (off-the-job) training is useful for acquisition and development of managerial and technical skills and should be able to supply a high-level quality of instruction which, in an internal context, might not be economically viable. It appears that different areas of the world depend to varying extents upon external training. Armstrong's view seems justifiable since external training could provide a degree of quality that might be uneconomic, or even impossible, to provide internally. Certainly, this is the situation observable in Jordanian organisations since they are sending the majority of their employees for training in external institutions owing to a lack of internal training facilities and qualified instructors. Appreciating trainee-related issues, the fourth of Barrington and Reid's criterion for decision making, involves understanding motivation, and the wholistic nature of training. According to Charney and Conway (2005), the most telling motive for personal contributions to training programmes is the extent to which each believes they will benefit by contributing. In other words, individuals consider whether attending the training course will be a chance to gain something valuable that will enhance their work, or simply be a waste of precious time. Clark et al. (1993) contended that an incentive to train is directly related to individual perceptions of the degree of career or job usefulness which the participant believes will be provided by the training. Nikadrou et al. (2009) urged for recognition by trainees of the usefulness and relevance to their jobs of the training undertaken.

A good, well-designed training programme is, however, not sufficient by itself to guarantee the quality of the training experience. A number of researchers (Carliner, 2003; Charney and Conway, 2005; Gauld and Miller, 2004; Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006) make it clear that every aspect which relates to the training programme's implementation and design – the effectiveness of the trainer, relevance of the training goals, nature of the environment, efficiency of the training process, quality of content and material can influence trainees' learning levels and the supposed usefulness of the programme.

#### **2.13.5 Challenges facing Training & Development implementation**

The feasibility of practice approaches, the effectiveness of training of the material of these platforms for the preparation objectives, expertise, and also the context of the instructors are

by far the most significant factors to consider when adopting training programmes. In addition, is the training budget, which is an important element in putting quality programmes in place. Training methods, cultural influences, organisational culture, expertise and competence of trainers, compensation programme, and training expenditure all impact training activities and goals in an organisation, according to Ridoutt et al. (2002). Training effectiveness, according to Harrison (2000), is dependent on a number of factors both inside and outside the organisation. Absence of managerial organisation and managerial capacity to prepare the instructors inside the administration may have an effect on training, leading to inadequate assistance for training. Often, issues including apprehension about transition inside the administration or an incapability to accurately identify the beginners' talent also have a bearing on the quality or level of training. The external environment, which contains cultural and social factors as well as government training initiatives, may also influence the goals of training programmes. In a similar vein, Forster (2000) argued that culture has a profound impact on people's actions. Culture shapes a person's beliefs, behaviours, motives, morals, learning experience, and personality to a large degree. The volume, scope, level of technology, and economic condition of the organisation itself are likewise all-important factors that influence the life of T&D programmes. According to Hackett (2004), the training budget is a critical determinant of training implementation. The nature, duration, and content of training; the performance of training institutions; the specific preparation price; the preparation constituent part functioning as a distinct income entity; and cost of additional units for its facilities can all have a major impact on training effectiveness. Furthermore, Mondy et al. (1999) observe that there are several issues that must be addressed in advance of any training in order to achieve the right implementation level. These issues include:

- Awareness of the situation of managers. The majority of managers have the same response every time. They do not have enough energy or time and are too preoccupied to consider skills development.
- It is important to have a good trainer. Skilled trainers with excellent communication skills, a thorough understanding of management theory, goals, and the significance of training programmes are not always accessible.
- One of the challenges that an organisation faces when adopting training and development programmes is record keeping. This knowledge may be beneficial for organisation in evaluating the programme's efficacy by comparing trainee productivity pre- and post-training.

- The management of training programmes performed outside the organisation, which has numerous and costly criteria.

### **2.13.6 Implementation and the training environment**

The T&D environment is the place or area where a training programme is conducted (Charney and Conway, 2005). Moreover, a good training environment, for example, a good quality of physical facilities, equipment, accommodation, classrooms, and so on, will help the trainer to achieve training goals and objectives (Iqbal et al., 2011). As Brown and McCracken (2009) note, the training environment can affect the training quality as well as affecting the learning of the trainees, which means, if the training and development is designed and organised very well but the training environment does not have the right facilities, these programmes will fail (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2012). Many researchers have discussed the link between the learning environment and training, such as Iqbal et al. (2011) and Tan et al. (2003) who find a strong link between the two, where the training environment significantly influences learning, and similarly Facteau et al. (1995) and Charney and Conway (2005) state that the right training environment has a positive impact. On the other hand, Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2012) maintain that the training environment does not affect the learning outcomes. This issue of the training environment is of particular interest to the researcher with respect to Saudi universities, as the Government of Saudi Arabia is facing issues with about 79 percent of Saudi employees and students who have studied training in developed countries expressing the willingness to extend their stay abroad (Hilal, 2015). This maybe because they have an excellent training environment that encourages them to stay abroad to find the same workplace environment. However, in the Arab organisations, the T&D facilities are traditional, limited and used infrequently (Sweis, 2019). That could be one of the reasons for the turnover in Arab organisations; employees are unable to practise the skills they have learned in their workplace. Charney and Conway (2005) stress the importance of the training environment areas being similar to the workplace in order to help the participants practise what they learn in the workplace. They also suggest that these facilities should be comfortable and convenient for the trainers and trainees, which will have a positive impact on the transfer of learning. Additionally, these facilities should be linked to training purposes and based on the training being provided. Table 5 presents an overview of a range of studies that focus on the impact of the T&D environment on trainee reaction and satisfaction, which may affect T&D objectives.

Table 5: Summary of research into the impact of T&D environment on trainee reactions and satisfaction

Researchers	Research findings
Basarab Sr. & Root (1992)	Training environment had a clear impact on employees' reaction and satisfaction.
Iqbal et al. (2011)	Training environment had positive impact on employees' reaction.
Franceschini & Terzago (1998)	The training environment is one of the most important parts in the training process that will increase the satisfaction for the participants.
Storr & Hurst (2001)	A good training environment will help the training programmes to raise the trainees' satisfaction.
Al-Mughairi, (2018)	The training environment had a positive impact on trainees' reaction.
Diamantidis & Chatzoglou (2012)	The training environment had an insignificant impact on learning.

As stated above, an aim of this research is to investigate the T&D environment in Saudi universities because there is a lack of research in this area. This aspect may directly lead to a failure of the entire training and development programme, which will affect an organisation's performance. Also, it could be one of the reasons for weak T&D outcomes in service-oriented public organisations such as universities in the Arab world.

## 2.14 Training & Development Evaluation

### 2.14.1 Definition

T&D programmes are meant to be evaluated as they have aims and objectives which need to be fulfilled, so evaluation is a very important aspect. These evaluations help to bring about the change in the behaviour of the staff as well as the change that is required in the organisational structure (Farjad, 2012). Evaluation is also key as training programmes are backed by investments in terms of money and time, and thus need to achieve their aims and objectives. Farjad (2012) maintains that evaluation must be ongoing as being and formative in that it serves to improve the design and implementation of training, has the potential to redefine training roles, assesses the adequacy of the budget, management commitment and individual motivation, among other things.



Lim (2020) states that the process of training evaluation is meant to analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of the training programmes. This process of evaluation is helpful for the learning and development professionals to identify the gaps as well as the opportunities to train employees, and to gather information which could help to bring improvements to the training programmes and whether they should continue or not. Moreover, Lim (2020) maintains that training evaluations help to assess whether the programme is linked with the objectives and goals of the organisation.

Haddock (2015) places evaluation within a wider context of working towards long-term change. Rather than using training as a medium to quickly fix the immediate situation, monitoring and evaluation should be part of detailed thinking about how change will take place, should facilitate ways that support, motivate and review the learning process, and is able to provide a trial and error-based environment. Taking this into consideration, there should be investment of time and resources in order to carry out monitoring and evaluation to look out for what might work.

The monitoring and evaluating process (M&E) should be able to add value rather than wasting time and resources from the development and personnel aspects. When the M&E process is carried out well, it helps too in deepening communication, building trust and understanding levels between stakeholders in order to bring about a sustainable change.

Another study by Shahrooz (2012) states evaluation should inform the actual presentation so that a programme is well-planned and executed in a proper way to enhance the involvement of the participants, awareness and sympathy with the organisation's goals and strategies, and provide a platform for the application of newly acquired skills and knowledge at the workplace. Monitoring and evaluation should thus also look at awareness among employees about the objectives of the training courses, the timespan of the course, and its applicability at the workplace, as well as whether the programme is implemented in a systematic manner. If a programme is well-planned and executed in a proper way, it will bring about the involvement of the participants, the change in their attitudes and provide a platform for the application of newly acquired skills and knowledge at the workplace, promises job commitment and employees being aware or likeminded with their organisation's vision and strategies.

According to Rama and Shaik (2012), the influence of effective evaluation of training and development can contribute in a way that the employees can improve their dexterity. The relationship between employee performance and training is very casual: training evaluations

can help the companies to achieve strategic goals and objectives, thus providing a competitive edge. The process of evaluating the training process helps in the better development of future programmes. Getting the evaluation done in a proper way is the base or pillar for effective training to take place. The evaluation process should be a regular system as the trainees undergo training to acquire skills and later apply those skills at work. As this is an ongoing process, with the changing times, skills and knowledge will need to be updated or enhanced, and new training programmes required.

A summary of T&D evaluation definitions is provided in Table 6.

*Table 6: Summary of definitions of T&D evaluation*

<b>Definition</b>	<b>References</b>
A systematic process used to determine the merit or worth of a specific context	Giberson et al., (2006, p. 43)
Assessment of the value of a training system, training course or programme in social and financial terms.	Al-Athari and Zairi (2002, p. 241)
The process of collecting descriptive and subjective information that is essential to making effective training decisions regarding the selection, adoption, <u>value</u> and modification of training activities.	Goldstein and Ford (2002, p. 138)
The determination of the extent to which a programme has met its stated performance goals and objectives	Saks and Burke (2012, p. 119)
A process that may be used to determine the effectiveness and/or efficiency of instructional programmes	Brown (2007, p. 820)
Any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effects of a training programme and to assess the value of the training <u>in light of</u> that information	Topno (2012, p. 16)

### **2.14.2 Benefits of training evaluation**

Even though many organisations are aware of the benefits of training, many often fail to consider the importance of evaluating their training. Kearns and Miller (1996) advance the view that training evaluation can result in commitment and buy-in at all levels. Brinkerhoff (1988) agrees and adds that it can be the source of evidence of the benefits of training to the organisation, to jobs, and to individuals when done effectively. For instance, evaluation can indicate how much those who took part in the training enjoyed the process, the progress made in gaining new knowledge, attitudes, and skills, how well the knowledge is transferred to the workplace, the organisational benefits, and accomplished costs benefits. Three particular areas of benefit are highlighted in more detail below

#### **2.14.2.1 Supports decision making**

Training evaluation can support executives to decide if a particular training programme should be continued or stopped (Kraiger, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006) or if any

improvements should be made to the programme (Wick et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Chaturvedi, (2013) defines the process of decision making as the use of given criteria to choose from two or more alternatives. Training evaluation can also support decisions regarding participation development programmes for human resources (Topno, 2012). One way in which evaluation can ensure that the decision-making process regarding training is more effective (Stewart & Brown, 2011) is by helping to create credibility and a robust foundation for T&D decisions.

It can also be used to determine areas in which training interventions can be improved (Kirkpatrick, 1996). The employees participating in HR development programmes or activities can review the material they learn and determine how they can change the things they have learned in their day-to-day jobs (Easterby-Smith, 1994).

#### *2.14.2.2 Transfer of learning*

Ajjawi (2020) contends that training evaluation needs to assess training outcomes and how the learned skills are applied in the workplace. Grove and Ostroff (1991) agree and note that the transfer of learning can gauge how appropriate the training programme is for the job. It can also be used for determining any changes in the behaviour (Saka & Burke, 2012) and the degree to which the skills learned have been transferred (Topno, 2012). For Bartlett (2001), training evaluation can help measure the level of performance improvement and taught skills transfer in the place of work to determine how effective the training was. Brinkerhoff (2006) assumes that when employees indicate desirable changes in behaviour in the place of work, the implication is that the training has been successful.

#### *2.14.2.3 Determining training effectiveness*

Baldwin and Ford (1988) and Arthur et al. (2003) advance the view that the criteria selected for the evaluation of training assists in determining the training's effectiveness. Homklin et al. (2006) define training effectiveness as the degree to which the training programme's goals or objectives are achieved. This is done through an evaluation that seeks to find ways to improve the effectiveness of the training (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). This is a view also acknowledged by Collis (2020), who adds that in instances where learning or training is not evaluated, it is easy to misunderstand the training because the process of evaluation delivers an opportunity to reflect on the training, the content of the training, materials, performance of the trainer, and methods used, among several other elements. It is on this basis that evaluating the

outcomes of the training is perceived to be a crucial part of the process (Mann & Robertson, 1996).

### **2.14.3 Challenges to training evaluation**

Many managers approach training with the idea that it is the ‘magic bullet’ that will guarantee that employees can perform their duties, with no need to evaluate it (Hashim, 2001); there is no need for evaluation because training always leads to good results. This view is acknowledged by Barron (1996), who says that many managers think that an employee who is well trained is going to be automatically a good employee. Consequently, professionals either do not believe in the value of evaluation, or they generally lack the skills to conduct the evaluation (Swanson, 2005). Other professionals are not conscious of the ways in which the evaluation can add value or have desirable effects on the organisation (Spitzer, 1999). Another organisational difficulty is that many hold the opinion that training evaluation is expensive and requires a lot of time while also impeding the company’s activities. This view is acknowledged by Bedingham (1997) and Athari and Zairi (2020), who say that the barriers to training evaluation in many companies are that managers see it as an expensive and time-consuming procedure. In a similar vein, Mohammed Saad & Mat (2013), suggest that there may be practical hurdles and hindrances to evaluating training effectiveness that basically lie within the functioning of human resources departments. They note that some organisations do not have a proper job description against which any evaluation can take place; there has to be a linkage between training functions and personnel functions like career planning and succession, in order to facilitate the proper collaboration.

Another study by Berge (2008) examines why it is difficult to evaluate the effect of T&D in organisations. The study found that the evaluation of training can be challenging as the managers are more inclined towards greater performance and not learning, which is the main area of judging success for the trainers after they deliver their training. The study also found that the effectiveness of training which helps to increase the performance, is decreased because the skills that are developed after the training may not be applied on the job and therefore leaves no impact.

Table 7 sets out a summary of the critical challenges identified in the literature.

*Table 7: The challenges of T&D evaluation*

<b>Challenges for T&amp;D evaluation</b>	<b>Related literature</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general beliefs of top management regarding training evaluation</li> </ul>	(Hashim, 2001) Ahuja (2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of experience and tools</li> </ul>	Wang and Wang (2005) Vidal-Salazar et, (2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational obstacles</li> </ul>	(Hung, 2010)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of systematic training evaluation</li> </ul>	(Othayman,2020)

#### **2.14.4 Models of evaluation**

In the last forty years, many types of training evaluations have been developed (Velez, 2012). Thus, organisations have a variety of choices when it comes to the techniques, they will use for evaluating their training effectiveness (Topno, 2012). The aim of these models is to assist evaluators in finding the factors of dimensions that should be taken into account when evaluating the effectiveness of training (Jeng et al., 2007). Training evaluation models can generally be grouped into two major categories (Philips, 1991; Dahiya & Jha, 2011). One focuses on systems-based techniques, which groups together such methods as the training validation system, the input-process-output model, and the context, input, process, product models. The other focuses on goal-based approaches, as exemplified by Kaufman's five levels of evaluation and Kirkpatrick's four-level model employed by this study.

Generally, the goal-based model may assist practitioners in considering the reasons they need evaluation (Eseryel, 2002). Such an approach to evaluation assists in arriving at goals that are well defined and attempts to determine if such goals are accomplished. The systems-based approach assists managers in determining the phases they should go through if they want to achieve the goals of the training and also makes available ways through which the findings can be utilised to make the training better (Eseryel, 2002). Its main area of focus is on the efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention (Armstrong, 2015). Another way of approaching evaluation that works within those categories is by defining the perspective of the training. The focus of the micro-view approach is on a specific training event, and it attempts to explain and analyse the activities of the event without attempting to directly account for the environmental. The focus of the macro-view approach is on a specific training event, and it attempts to explain and analyse the activities of the event without attempting to directly account for the environmental factors under which the training activities occur. On the other hand, the focus

of the macro-based model is on the external and internal organisational elements that impact training activities (Al-Khayyat & Elgamal, 1997).

Diverse structures for the evaluation of training programmes have been suggested based on these varying approaches (Eseryel, 2002). Many of the models developed in the academic area have the goal-based approach as their basis, like, for example, Kirkpatrick's four-level model, used in this study. While the goal-based approach leans in the direction of the micro view, the systems-based approach takes the macro perspective (Dahiya & Jha, 2011). The systems-based techniques are not always able to deliver adequate granularity, as they do not characterise the dynamic connections between design and training evaluation. Not many of the techniques deliver in-depth descriptions of the processes involved in the various steps, and none of them deliver evaluation tools (Dahiya & Jha, 2011). The ten evaluation models for organisational T&D as suggested by a number of scholars (Chang, 2010; Topno, 2012; Jamjoom & Al-Mudimigh, 2011; Werner & DeSimone, 2012; Passmore & Vele, 2012; Russ-Eft et al., 1997) are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Models to evaluate T&D outcomes

	Model	Levels	Weakness
1	Kirkpatrick 's four-level model (1959)	Reaction, learning, behaviour, results	Fails to consider intervening variables affecting learning and transfer.
2	Kaufman 's and Keller 's five levels of evaluation (1994).	Input and process, acquisition, application, organisation output, societal outcomes	Lack of clarity on Kaufman 's five levels of evaluation aspects.
3	Phillips 'return on investment model for evaluation (1996)	Reaction, learning, application, implementation, business impact, return on investment	Return on investment is difficult to measure because it is subjective.
4	Stufflebeam 's Context, input process, product model (1983).	Context, input, process, product,	Fails to give information about what standards are more operant and what processes are essential to enabling decision makers to apply value criteria.
5	Bushnel 's Input, process, output model (1990)	Input process, output, outcomes,	Lack of knowledge to operate and implement instructions and factors that influence evaluation results
6	Kraiger et al. 's learning outcomes model (1993)	Cognitive, skill-based, affective	Inadequate to measure learning and unable to differentiate between learners at higher levels of cognitive progress
7	Brinkerhoff 's Success case method (2003)	Focus and planning, impact model creation, administration of a survey to gauge	Lack of understanding of the difficulties that trainees will face when back at their workstations

Higher Education plays a significant role in driving social and economic progress for nations in a globally competitive and interconnected world. Governments consider universities as

engines in knowledge-based economies for the expansion of prosperity and social change (Negassa & Engdasew, 2017). Hence, the requirement for highly skilled and trained graduates. In higher education, teachers come with minimal formal professional training in the field of teaching as compared to the content of their discipline (Negassa & Engdasew, 2017). The improvement and promotion of learning and teaching must be a preference for all higher education in pursuit of the national strategy of excellence.

Higher Education is moving towards serious transformation in the face of international competition, the knowledge-based economy, instigation of new educational and information technology, and elevation in social and demographical diversity among students (Alqahtani & Ayentimi, 2020). According to Negassa and Engdasew (2017), have indicated that conventional teaching practices cannot provide high-level workers or thinkers needed for the labour market. However, as Bandali et al. (2018) indicate, recognition of the need to adapt and modify approaches have led to universities globally developing programmes intended to provide training and resources for improving the effectiveness of learning and teaching procedures. A pivotal role is played by Higher Education in fulfilling the socio-economic needs of the country and protecting democratic and social justice values. Higher education institutions further play an essential role in the so-called training fields and local development networks (Nelson et al., 2017). Universities help in developing new businesses and ideas as well as producing highly qualified and skilled human resources (Islam et al., 2020). At present, the higher institutions are allocated essential roles, including addressing the demands of the workplace, the continuous evaluation of professional development needs of faculty members, appealing to the demands of the community, commitment to quality standards, and bridging the gap between the educational outcomes (Binmohsen & Abrahams, 2020). In terms of the specific focus of this study, there is an escalating interest in designing a model for quality control in higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is an essential aspect to see elevation in a number of private and government colleges and universities. In this respect, criteria such as creative teaching methods, achieving quality standards, and innovative technology are used to emphasise the skills of faculty members. However, in most Arab countries, including the Gulf countries, there is a lack of research that has explored the challenges of T&D evaluation in public universities, including in Saudi Arabian higher education. Moreover, an increasing number of researchers consider that the numerous issues in HR operations, like poor wages and no benchmark to assess performance, are prevalent in developing nations and needs more investigative studies (Al-Hamadi & Budhwar, 2006;

Moideenkutty, Al-Lamki, & Murthy, 2011; Budhwar & Debrah, 2013; Alqahtani, 2020). Likewise, poor HRD analyses in GCC nations especially Saudi Arabia (Harbi et al., 2017; Moideenkutty et al., 2011; Alqahtani, 2020) are pointed to. This development thus allows this research a window of opportunity to close the deficiencies in the literature review. This study serves to fill this gap by conducting exploratory research that aims to investigate the challenges faced in the training and Development (T&D) evaluation process from the point of view of faculty members and the senior managers in Saudi Arabian Higher Education. Also, the study finds how these challenges influence the effectiveness of T&D programmes in public universities.

### **2.15 Theoretical framework and background of Training & Development**

This section presents and discusses the theories used previously in the Human Resource Management field to act as lenses to aid a meaningful understanding of the study. The theories are presented in three parts. The first part concerns the theoretical background of T&D, the second part presents the content of motivation theories, while the third part introduces resource-based view theory. The findings derived from this section together with the study findings identified from the literature results, then form the basis of the conceptual framework that underpins this study.

Two particular theoretical frameworks are significant for fully understanding the background to T&D: motivation theory and resource-based view theory. The social exchange theory, developed by Homans (1958), proposes that when people enter a relationship, they are doing so to take maximum advantage of the benefits (Devan, 2006; Cook & Rice, 2003; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008). This way of thinking can explain the connection between the social exchange theory, employee performance, and training and development (T&D). While employers seek greater productivity when they send employees on training courses, employees attempt to work as hard as possible to reciprocate the actions of management. This situation results in improved performance (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008). This is the basis on which one could propose that the anticipations of both parties mediate a formal mutual obligation between employers and employees regarding the training the employer offers. Therefore, making training available to employees could be seen as a social exchange between management and workers, beginning at the point when the organisation consents to the interests of employees in offering training opportunities.



When employers accede to employees' training needs, the employees respond by exhibiting positive behavioural and attitudinal responses to help the business meet its objectives (Newman, Thanacoody & Hui, 2011). Several studies have concluded that employees see a T&D opportunity as a signal that the organisation they work for desires to enter into a social exchange with them (Newman et al., 2011). Marimuthu, Arokiasamy and Ismail (2009) cite Becker's (1993) classic study of how investing in an individual's training and education is the same as a business investing in equipment. Becker (1993) also concludes that training and education is the most crucial investment a company can make into its human capital. He sees the idea of human capital as denoting the emphasis on expertise, knowledge, and skills individuals have due to their education and training. Central to this theory is the assumption that training and education results in increased learning in the process of boosting organisational and individual performance (Marimuthu, Arokiasamy & Ismail 2009). Newman et al. (2011) support the idea that when an organisation lives up to individuals' expectations with regards to their different personal needs, such individuals become more committed to the organisation. While employers want employees to be loyal and committed, employees, on the other hand, are always looking for organisations that can provide them with better job security, career, and self-development (Bulut & Culha, 2010). The social exchange theory does not explicitly show that T&D will necessarily improve the performance of an organisation. Instead, it advances the view that T&D can motivate employees to show more commitment to the organisation because they expect rewards in the future. This is the bases of the view that more committed employees also tend to be more productive. However, this theory will not assist in creating a connection between improved organisational performance and T&D. This is an assumption supported by the reinforcement theory proposed by Skinner (1957) and improved by Klapper (1960). The reinforcement theory advances the view that behaviour is guided by its consequences (Heath, 2007; Ellis & Johnson, 2014). This implies that if a behaviour seems to produce good results, people will likely repeat it (Jonck, 2001). For example, employees are likely to continue exhibiting behaviour that resulted in a promotion or pay increase.

The expectation among employees is that when they attend T&D programs, they will acquire skills. They assume that these new skills will make it possible for them to be better in their jobs, which will result in desirable results such as better pay. Employees who hold this assumption will do more with regards to training and development. Also, they will be incentivised to apply better the skills and knowledge they obtain from T&D, a situation that will boost performance.

## **2.15.1 Motivation Theories**

### ***2.15.1.1 Expectancy Theory***

Several previous studies have turned to the expectancy theory to explain performance management (Hartog et al., 2000; Lucas et al., 2006; Armstrong, 2014). The theory relates to the cognitive process of motivation. Its basis is the assumption that individuals believe that there is a relationship between the efforts they put into their work and their performance, and that there is a connection between the rewards attained by individuals for their effort and performance (Armstrong, 2014). Thus, individuals will be motivated in instances where they believe that exerting more effort will lead to better performance that will, in turn, result in more desirable rewards. The standard work setting is linked to the expectancy theory because of its significant role in job performance. This is a view also acknowledged by Turner (2018), who stresses that work environments that motivate and inspire employees can expect to see high levels of performance, meeting organisational and individual expectations.

The first attempt at developing the expectancy theory with a direct connection to the work context was by Vroom (1964). Vroom advanced the view that human motivation is based on minimising pain and maximising pleasure. At the same time, humans can make choices based on attitude, beliefs, and perception. The ideas advanced by Vroom are founded on three variables, forming the basis for committing the effort required to accomplish a particular action: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Lunenburg (2011) later explores these three concepts and proposes that an individual is motivated to the extent to which they believe that

- i) effort will result in satisfactory performance (expectancy)
- ii) there will be a reward for performance (instrumentality)
- iii) the rewards have an extremely positive value (valence)

The approaches above have important implications regarding human motivation with respect to the way national and organisational human resources management systems are designed. The authors mentioned above suggest that organisations which hope to attain high performance need to have effective short and long-term structures in the management of financial rewards and human capital development.

### ***2.15.1.2 The Concept of Expectancy***

When humans transact based on effort, the gain in performance outcome and rewards linked to the performance is called ‘expectancy’ (Lunenburg, 2011). In this sense, performance denotes an individual’s estimate of the potential that the effort required by a task will result in

a specific performance level. Therefore, people are likely to put more effort into a task when they believe that doing so will help them attain the expected performance levels; a concept referred to as the effort-performance (EP) linkage.

#### *2.15.1.3 Effort-to-performance expectancy implications*

Leaders have an important role in raising the confidence of employees that they have the capability to successfully fulfil the requirements of the positions they occupy in the workplace. For instance, leaders are responsible for hiring candidates that possess the required skills and knowledge, sign off on the development programmes for employees, clarify the requirements of the job, assign tasks to employees based on their T&D, listen to suggestions of employees and decide which ones should be accommodated, try to deal with challenges that may affect employee performance, and deal with the differences among employees with regards to levels of self-confidence and self-esteem (Isaac et al., 2001).

#### *2.15.1.4 The effort-performance (E-P) linkage*

Regarding the EP linkage, Isaac et al. (2001, p. 217) identify five leading considerations that should be kept in mind by leaders. The first consideration is that an effective system involves work that the employees would find reasonably challenging in relation to their abilities, education, experience, self-confidence, and skills. When employees find tasks not to be challenging, the result could be frustration and marginal performance. However, if the tasks become too challenging, the employees may push back or completely reject them, perceiving the challenge as being impossible to attain.

Secondly, the leader considers the follower's ability. This is a view based on the assumption that when individuals arrive at work, they bring different skills, talent, knowledge, education, and levels of training. Where employees believe that they do not have the capacity to perform duties linked to the task, their levels of motivation decline because of the weakness inherent in the EP linkage. This is an issue that can be avoided if leaders are careful in considering the capabilities of employees and how the employees perceive a task before they allocate tasks. Doing this sends a message that the leader cares about the employees, preventing an undesirable effect on the EP linkage. Determining the weaknesses and strengths in the EP linkage is contingent on the way the employee thinks and how this influences their motivation level. This is a view based on the assumption that every individual assesses the potentials connected to various work pathways regarding the outcomes based on their self-concept (Isaac et al., 2001). In light of this, expectancy theory supports the assumption that HR professionals

in the organisation should develop systems, challenges, and improve the abilities of individuals, leaving the employees with a feeling that they have what it takes to complete the task.

The third consideration is that the leader needs to be aware that the self-esteem and self-confidence of individuals differs considerably when dealing with a task (Mousa, 1996). In this case, again, each person considers the different courses of action and the probabilities regarding the outcomes that confirm their self-perceptions (Isaac et al., 2001).

In the fourth consideration, the leaders must make sure that the outcomes accepted as success and those that will be perceived as failure are clearly understood by both parties. Under this consideration, performance measurement plays a significant role in guiding behaviour for both the leader and the follower (Katzenbach, 1996). This is a view supported by Isaac et al. (2001), who also propose that a participatory approach involving both the leader and the follower should be embraced. Such an approach presents a chance for role players to assess the weakness and strength of the EP linkage from a complete understanding of the established expectations (Isaac et al., 2001).

The final consideration relates to the leaders' understanding that disbursement of effort by the followers leads to job satisfaction (Brown & Peterson, 1994). This implies that employees want to have an opportunity to show that they are productive, competent, useful, and involved through their employment tasks. When they are provided with a chance to showcase this, the employees attain a sense of achievement. Thus, leaders should play the role of reinforcing these feelings in followers by providing the support that makes it possible for followers to attain their needs. When leaders take the time to reinforce the employees' feelings, the EP linkage becomes stronger through making sure that the employees have a full comprehension of their contribution to the achievement of organisational goals (Isaac et al., 2001).

### **2.15.2 Instrumentality**

The way individuals perform as connected to rewards is called performance outcome (PO). The connection to expectancy occurs when people start to realise that job performance is linked to an increase in compensation. Where an increment is obtained, the PO rate is given as 1, and where it is not achieved, the rate is given as 0.

#### ***2.15.2.1 Performance-to-outcome reward expectancy***

Instrumentality denotes the supposed probability that high job performance will lead to desirable job-related rewards. As stated above, it is measured using a scale from 0 (meaning

that there is no change) to 1 (representing an outright conviction that a reward will be achieved). Through the use of the EP expectancy rationality, a PO expectancy outcome can be specified as being founded on an employee's past experiences and objective situation of working in a similar position or environment (Buchanan, 2019). Buchanan proposes that PO is important if one considers that PO is to a great extent impacted by the practices and policies in an organisation. The organisation has the ability to change its situation and, in the process, change PO expectations, since PO is based on the actual work situation, and the organisation can manage and control crucial aspects of this. Thus, Buchanan (2019) suggests that HR managers should develop structures that improve performance by offering rewards. In the same vein, Lunenburg (2011) emphasises the important role played by leaders in enhancing the PO beliefs of employees and making sure that the PO will result in desirable rewards through its ability to accurately measure performance. According to Buchanan (2019) the leader should clearly indicate the rewards available to those who meet the performance specifications. This can be achieved through using the example of other employees who gained rewards as a result of performing well. Thus, the organisation needs to be clear about how it executes a robust compensation system and pay-for-performance policies.

#### *2.15.2.2 Performance-outcome (P-O) linkage*

The strength of PO depends on three crucial employee beliefs, as identified by Isaac (2001). The first is that the employees believe in the ability of the leader to keep their word regarding the promised rewards. This implies that when the leaders fail to live up to their word regarding the promised rewards, the PO linkage will become weaker in the employee's mind, a situation that results in the loss of trust. Thus, it is important that leaders guard against losing their credibility, meaning that they should do everything in their power to keep their promises. The second is that leaders should always ensure that the employees are treated fairly in a way that is easy to predict (Isaac et al., 2001, p. 219). Therefore, a crucial motivational state is equity, achieved by having consistent practices that ensure each employee is treated fairly. Although Harris and Foster (2010) warn that fair treatment should not be perceived as equal treatment, but the treatment of employees based on their needs and outcomes, making the arrangement look fair to those employees who are talented. Lastly, leaders need to be honest. This ensures that the leaders are not ambiguous when providing feedback to employees so that they are not misinterpreted. Leaders can also take advantage of several available opportunities to provide feedback, such as providing feedback during times of evaluation, with the focus being on performance as opposed to the person (Isaac et al., 2001; Yang, 2009).

### 2.15.2.3 Valence

According to Vroom (1964), valence is connected to the strength or value that an employee bestows on a reward. The reward can be in various forms: an increase in pay, a sense of accomplishment, or recognition. Using the  $motivation = expectancy \times instrumentality \times valence$  formula, the requirement is that all elements should be able to receive a score of 1. Where any one of the elements scores zero, then the overall motivation will also be zero. For example, in the event that an employee believes that a positive reward will emanate from the performance put into a job, if the valence of the reward the employees predicts they will get is zero, motivation will be zero (Lunenburg, 2011). Employers aiming to raise motivation levels among employees need to realise that the attractiveness of outcomes differs among employees. Thus, the leaders need to have the aptitude to determine which of the available rewards would be most attractive to the employees so that they can be motivated.

Isaac et al. (2001) advances the view that not all employees would be motivated by money. This means that leaders should see the importance of other types of rewards such as saying, ‘thank you,’ praise, tokens, or other types of recognition. Therefore, leaders have a vital role to play in developing effective systems through the efforts they put in place to ensure that the organisational and personal goals of employees are aligned. Added to this, leaders also need to ensure that there is a connection between the aspirations, interests, and goals of employees and the vision of the organisation both from a short- and long-term perspective (Berg, 2015). For this reason, it is vital to consider the implications for motivating employees in the organisation based on effort-to-performance expectancy, performance-to-reward expectancy and reward valence, all crucial factors in studies within the field of TM.

The responsibility that needs to be assumed by leaders towards increasing the value of rewards is highlighted by Isaac et al. (2001), where they emphasise the need to provide a reward that is valued by the employee. Therefore, rewards need to be individualised. It is also crucial that leaders avoid counter valence rewards, meaning rewards that could result in negative valence. Rewards that result in counter valence can demotivate employees and result in decreased job performance. It has also been noted that formal rewards have a greater potential for motivating employees for high-level performance (Isaac et al., 2001; Lunenburg, 2011, p. 4).

### 2.15.3 Equity Theory

Adams’s (1963) equity theory (Figure 8) is a social comparison theory whose primary concern is individuals’ feelings regarding how managers treat them when compared to their

contemporaries. Satisfaction is determined by looking at how individuals see equity, which determines the input-output balance, making it possible to make a comparison. This implies that the focus of the theory is on the comparative under-rewarding of individuals and over-rewarding of others, a situation that could result in some people feeling as if they have been treated unfairly and, in the process, becoming dissatisfied (Agarwal, 2016).

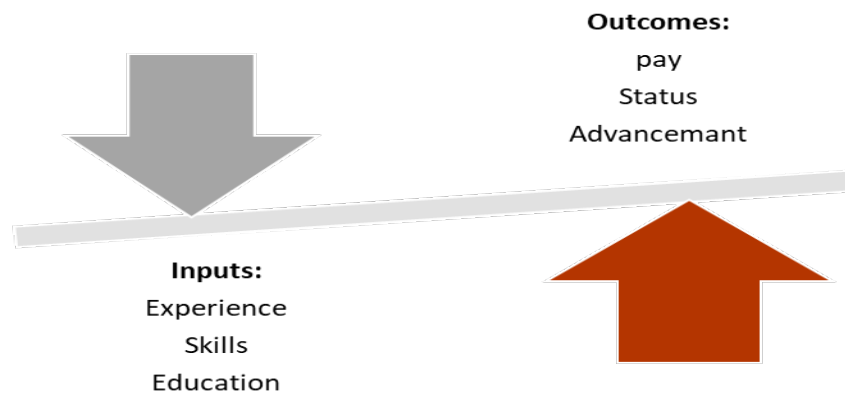


Figure 8: Equity theory (Adams, 1963)

Equity theory is grounded in three primary elements connected to how motivation is understood: inputs, outcomes, and referents. Workers come to a job with inputs (skills, experience, and education) while rewards related to the job such as advancement opportunities, fringe benefits, pay, job security, and status are called outcomes (Figure 8). The inputs and outcomes of one individual are matched to those of a referent, most of the time that of a colleague (George & Jones, 2005). Job satisfaction comes about when inputs and outputs are maintained at the same level because workers are driven to maintain the ratio at that level or attempt to upsurge inputs to escalate outcomes. In a situation where the ratios unbalance or workers perceive the environment as being filled with rewards, the result is job dissatisfaction (Adams, 1963). When people feel that there is inequality, tension results. Because tension is not pleasant, individuals often work hard trying to lower inequality by reducing or increasing their inputs or outputs compared to those of others within the group. A worker who perceives inequality may also change their referent by leaving a particular environment (Adams, 1963).

The equity theory has its critics. For example, Gruneberg (1979) argues that it provides explanations only related to workers' satisfaction about pay but fails to take other practical elements of the workplace into account. This is a view also acknowledged by Vroom (1969), who argues that it is impractical to test, and it is also complicated. Mowday (1987) casts doubt on the presumption that overpaid workers would not be happy with the situation. While an

employee may perceive inequality, employee perceptions are not always accurate. Riggio (1990) advances the view that individuals' sensitivity will vary regarding the inequality of ratios. Similarly, Thomas (2019) notes a vagueness concerning individuals' comparisons if one considers that the equity theory does not elucidate how referents are selected. Consequently, this process has not been empirically examined. Lastly, the theory is based on the unrealistic proposition that employees evaluate inputs and outcomes based on only one referent.

Even though the equity theory has been criticised, various scholars such as Jost and Kay (2010) and Muchinsky (2000) support the propositions it makes. According to Bolino and Turnley (2008), the theory has garnered substantial attention, particularly from organisational scholars. Research done by Sweeney (1990) and McKenna (2000) shows how it has assisted in furthering the comprehension of motivation and job satisfaction.

### **2.16 Resource-based View Theory**

In the field of strategic management, the resource-based view theory (RBT) has appeared as one of the numerous significant explanations of an organisation's effectiveness. Barney (1991) was the first to present the firm's resource-based perspective. Resources and skills have since been identified to be significantly inconsiderate of the origins of long-term competitive advantage. The most significant part of RBT is the phases on resource characteristics that could lead to long-term competitive advantages. Resources and skills are required to have the features of being inimitable (I), rare (R), valuable (V) as well as non-substitutable (N) to lead to long-term competitive advantage, hence the VRIN structure. Experimental and theoretical work in another non-strategic management disciplines, such as HRM (Wright et al., 1994), management (Priem & Butler, 2001), marketing (Srivastava et al., 2001), international business (Peng, 2001), and economics, have all mainly emerged from the RBT logic (Lockett & Thompson, 2001). Figure 9 illustrates the key points of RBT theory.





Figure 9: Resource-based view theory (Barney, 1991)

### 2.16.1 The significance of Human Resources in achieving competitive advantage

The importance of human resources was supported or explained in the work of Edith Penrose (1959), who developed the resource-based theory of competition. In an overview of the development of the field of HR, Drucker (1993) a company's or industry's competitiveness is dependent on efficient usage of information as well as knowledge (Drucker, 1985), or on the achievement and application of knowledge (Drucker, 1993). Other scholars highlight the importance or role of managers in HR management in terms of concerns or problems.

According to Wright et al. (1994), the resource-based method proposed by Penrose to highlight the potential of HR as a source of long-term competitive advantage. Employees' skills and abilities were observed as a source of competition by Snell et al. (1996), who sought to incorporate the resource-based approach and the principle of organisational learning. According to the World Competitiveness Report of the International Institute for Management Development (1995) there are eight important factors related to competitiveness, and three of them deal with employees' skills and capabilities directly or indirectly. The report also highlights the role or importance of human resources management in achieving a competitive advantage, naming the following factors:

- Managerial capability that delivers long-term coordination to respond to changes in the global environment; for integration of business activities there is a level of entrepreneurship and expertise.

- The opportunity to apply existing technology in effective and creative ways to gain a competitive edge. For gaining innovative information investment in research and advanced activities.
- A knowledge-based society with professional workforce that boosts a nation's efficiency and competitiveness. Krueger and Lindahl's (2001) work also highlight the effect of human resource on macroeconomic productivity and economic development.

According to Ismail (2002), a number of studies highlight that the key to improving productivity in the economies studied was by making sufficient investments in human capital through higher education and skilled training that improves abilities. Human resources have a social dimension that makes them much more valuable than physical resources in a complex situation (De la Fuente, 2003). Other human resources researchers and managers claim that the organisational unit (division, department) for human resource management is critical for enhancing company efficiency (Strandber, 2009). The contribution of human resources to improving a company's competitive position is determined by the attributes of the workforce, as well as and more importantly, how well they perform their roles. The VRIO system, created by Barney, can be used to make this estimation (Barney 2001). The application of the VRIO system should address the question of whether the company's resources, involving human resources, would be a measure of strength or weakness.

This system's name is an acronym made up of the first letters of the names of its constituent parts (Barney, 2001; Wright, 2009). These can be defined as follows:

**Value:** Is one of the sources that is useful in response to fending off threats or capitalising on environmental opportunities.

**Rarity:** Rarity is a resource that infrequently presents between current or future competitors.

**Inimitable:** This is the resource that is difficult or problematic to duplicate or reproduce.

**Organisation:** Does the company use the resource, or is the company structured in such a way that the resource can be used efficiently? If the company's management is unable to understand these characteristics of its human resources, it cannot be assumed that the company has the ability to create or improve competitive advantage through human resources. Human resources that are defined by VRIO system components, on the other hand, can be considered high-quality human resources that can provide a long-term competitive advantage. Figure 10 sets out the relationship between the VRIO system components.

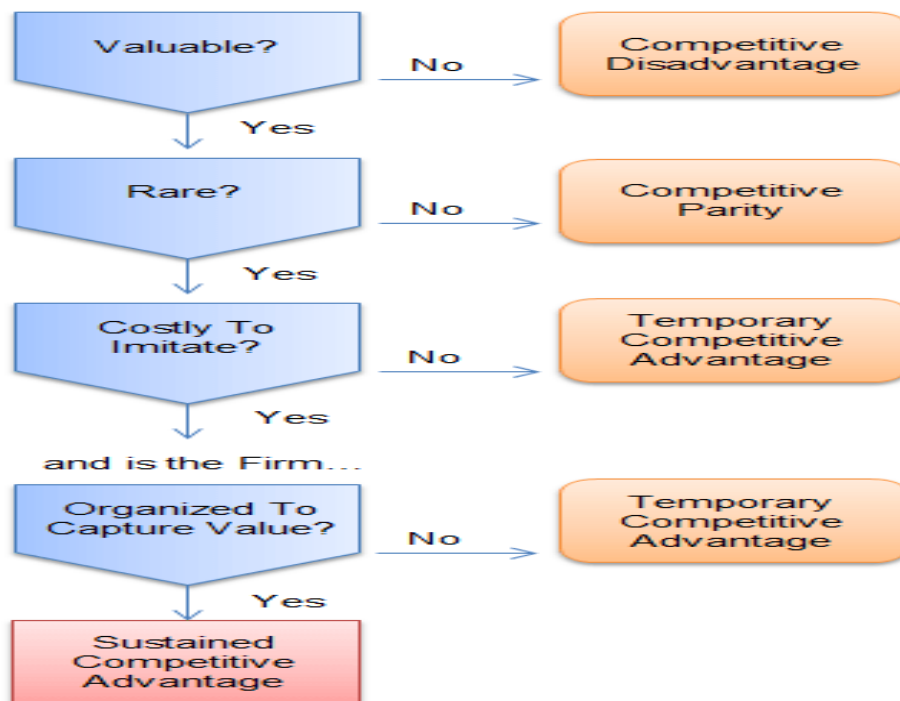


Figure 10: Relationship between VRIO system components (Barney, 1991)

### 2.16.2 Applying resource-based view theory to public sector organisations

The concept and principle of RBT in private organisations is now being extended to public sector organisations (Crilly et al., 2013), raising important questions about its application in this sphere. For some researchers, as can be seen in their discussions, it is problematic and challenging. According to Hansen (2007), it is more challenging or complicated for public sector organisations to be familiar with their line of business and the powers that influence that business. Furthermore, RBT emphasises competition, while public organisations emphasise cooperation (Hansen, 2007). RBT emphasises the importance of an organisation's ability to acquire specific exclusive resources to achieve a competitive advantage over other organisations. According to Carmeli and Tishler (2004), there are close ties between resource elements and a public organisation's success. RBT can be used in the public sector, according to Ferlie (2014), since elements of the strategic tools used in private organisations can also be used in public sector organisations.

RBT principles were used by Burton and Rycroft-Malone (2014) to examine the effects of (often complex) quality management measures in public organisations. They concluded that the principles were useful in comprehending the effects of dynamic quality management

programmes. As already noted, RBT stresses that the most effective way for an organisation to attain a competitive edge is to make the best use of its internal capital (Hansen, 2007). According to Matthews and Shulman (2005), public-sector organisations can provide efficient and effective distribution and production of services for the advantage of the general public. Popa et al. (2011) found that public sector organisations distinguish between various forms of competitive advantage when identifying an advantage. They aim to achieve a competitive advantage by identifying and cultivating the distinguishing characteristics and basic skills that set them apart from other public institutions. As a result, applying RBT theory to public sector organisations will help provide a clearer understanding of how HRM theories are transferred from one sector to another. In the field of HRM, RBT has had an insightful impact on the gradually more rising strategic aspects of the HRM function (Barney et al., 2001). It has helped to establish a theoretical connection between strategy and HRM by providing a better relationship between HRM and organisational success (Mueller, 1996; Wright et al., 2001). According to the RBT theory, human capital, or exclusively workers' actions, leads to a competitive advantage in a company (Poloki & Vidovi, 2007).

HRM activities, according to Sabiu et al. (2016), can be measured as an important internal factor affecting organisational success, since they enable the workforce to perform through the efficient use of an internal resource base. Many HR researchers have presented evidence that HRM has a significant effect on the success of companies (such as Lazim and Azizan, 2010). For example, a study by Qureshet et al. (2010) discovered a link between HRM practices and the financial performance of 46 Pakistani banks. A more recent Middle Eastern study by Karami et al. (2015) looked at the impact of HR practices in private banks in an Iranian city and found that using appropriate HR practices that align with an organisation's strategy can improve organisational efficiency. According to the findings, all HR activities tested have a positive relationship with an effect on financial results.

### **2.17 Chapter summary**

This chapter has summarised the key literature concerning the concept of T&D in order to assist understanding of the relevant challenges, theories, practices, and factors which influence the effectiveness of T&D, particularly in public organisations. Theories previously employed in the field of Human Resource Management have been explained to aid meaningful understanding of the study and present the background to the conceptual framework within which the current study is set. In terms of the theories that specifically underpin the thesis, the researcher has used motivation theory and resource-based view theory. Such a theoretical

framework is used as lenses through which to view the results in order to achieve a meaningful understanding of them and to engage with the express objectives of the study.

This chapter has also highlighted several gaps in current knowledge, specifically in terms of exploring the challenges confronting T&D delivery in the field of Human Resource Development (HRD), and in terms of further research around numerous issues in HR operations in developing nations. It is in light of such gaps that the present study makes its contribution by exploring the challenges confronting the delivery of T&D in Saudi Public higher education, providing evidence and insight from a unique context currently under-represented in such research.

Having reviewed the literature and theoretical background to the thesis, the next chapter discusses the context of the study in terms of an overview of key aspects of Saudi Arabia as a country, the place of higher education within that, and the particular characteristics that have played a part in both education and perceptions of training.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Saudi Context**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The background of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is reviewed in this chapter. It begins with a brief review of Saudi Arabia's geography; the second section clarifies the demographics of Saudi Arabia, which is followed by an explanation of the Saudi government structure and the economy of Saudi Arabia. The chapter continues by giving a brief explanation of the culture, traditions and religion of Saudi Arabia, and is followed by a discussion of the background to the Saudi higher education system. The subsequent section discusses the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Overseas Scholarship Program of Saudi Arabia and the future of the scholarship programme and Saudi higher education. The next section provides an explanation of the Saudi Vision 2030, while the final section provides an overview of the training and development system in Saudi Arabia across various sectors by first reviewing the history of workforces in Saudi Arabia, then discussing the current state of training and development of Saudi Arabia before concluding the chapter.

#### **3.2 Geography of Saudi Arabia**

Within the Southwest of Asia, Saudi Arabia has a landmass of approximately 2.15 million square kilometres. According to Vassiliev (2013), Saudi Arabia is the fifth largest state in Asia and the second largest state in the Arab World. The capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is Riyadh, which in 2019, had a population of 7,070,665 (World Population Review, 2019). Riyadh is strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. As shown in Figure 11, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is bordered to the west by the Red Sea, to the east by the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, to the north by Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, and to the south by Yemen and Oman (World Population Review, 2019). The Gulf and the Red Sea coastlines of Saudi Arabia span about 560 and 1760 kilometres respectively (Geography of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019).



Figure 11: Map of Saudi Arabia

### 3.3 Demographics of Saudi Arabia

The total population in the Kingdom is 33,413,660, of which 12,645,033 are of non-Saudi origin (General Authority for Statistics, 2019). Saudi Arabia had an estimated population of 34,117,380 in 2019 (General Authority for Statistics, 2019) and recorded population growth of 1.75% between 2018 and 2019 (World Population Review, 2019).

Table 9: Saudi population by nationality and gender (General Authority for Statistics, 2019)

Nationality	Female	Male
Non-Saudi	3,979,972	8,665,061
Saudi	10,192,732	10,575,895

Concerning the gender of non-Saudis, females account for 31.47%, and 68.53% are males, indicating more males than females (Table 9). On the other hand, with regard to the gender of Saudi nationals, males account for about 51% and about 49% for females. Non-Saudis may only obtain visas during their stay in the Kingdom and have the option to either renew the visa when it expires or leave the Kingdom (Peck, 2017); they cannot seek citizenship. In terms of age distribution, the population of Saudi Arabia can be divided into three age groups: 0 to 14 years comprise 32.4% of the total population, 15 to 64 years comprise 64.8% of the total population, while 65 years and above comprise only 2.8% of the total population (World Population Review, 2019). The population has an average sex ratio of 1.21 males per female, but 1.05 males per female at birth. For the age group below 15 years, the average sex ratio is

1.05; 14 males per female. The ratio is 1.03 for the age group 15–64 years. For the age group 65 and above, the ratio is 1.03. According to Jamjoom (2016), the population of Saudi Arabia is approximately 0.43% of the global population and is ranked number 41 amongst other countries (and dependencies). Table 10 shows the annual increase in the population of Saudi Arabia. In 1990, for example, Saudi Arabia ranked 51 with a population of 16,326,815. By 2010, the population surged to 27,425,676 and the country ranked number 45. The population further increased to 34,117,380, and the country ranked number 41 in 2019. According to the World Population Review (2019), the population is expected to reach 39.1 million by 2030 and 47.7 million by 2060. Contrariwise, the Review forecasted a decrease in the growth rate to 1.09 by 2030 and a further decrease to 0.277 by 2060.

*Table 10: Historical population of Saudi Arabia be year (World Population Review, 2019)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population Rank</b>	<b>Growth Rate</b>
2019	34,117,380	41	1.75%
2018	33,413,660	41	1.87%
2017	32,938,213	41	2.05%
2016	32,275,687	41	2.85%
2015	31,557,144	41	2.79%
2010	27,425,676	45	2.86%
2005	23,905,654	46	2.08%
2000	20,764,312	48	2.79%
1995	18,735,841	48	3.08%
1990	16,326,815	51	4.36%

### **3.4 General overview of Saudi Arabia**

#### **3.4.1 Governance and political structure**

According to its General Principles, Saudi Arabia is an Islamic State, where the state requires that its religion is Islam. The constitution is to be defined by the Holy Book of Islam or the Book of God, the Quran. The fundamental law of governance defines governance as monarchical (Article 5, Royal Order A/91). The law dictates that Saudi Arabia shall always be ruled by a king (Article 56, 58, 60, Royal Order 1/91), and governance is passed down to the Founder King's sons.

Article 38 of the Royal Order A/91 states that penalties and punishments in Saudi Arabia are to be carried out on a personal basis and that crimes committed, and any punishments based on



those crimes, will be defined according to *Shari'ah* Law, which is a religious law that is also one of the constituents of Islamic tradition.

In Saudi Arabia, the state authorities are stated in Article 44 of the Royal Order A/91 to be comprised of judicial authority, an executive authority, and regulatory authority. While the Judiciary is an independent body with no authority going higher than a judge in their judicial function (Article 46), the Islamic Shariah law will, by default, have authority over any statements made. The judicial duties fall on the King or whomever he deputises.

The nation's affairs are run by the King, who is charged with integrating the law of Islamic Shari'ah into the state's general policies (Article 56). In order to assist the King in his functions, a Council of Ministers is to aide him. The vice presidents of the Council of Ministers are selected by the King (Article 57). The Council of Ministers can be dissolved by the King and be reconstituted by him. In the absence of the King, a Royal Order is to be issued.

#### **3.4.2 The economy of Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia depends majorly on crude oil production and is a member of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest global oil exporters and has the most extensive underground oil reservoir (Cole, 2015). Saudi Arabia also has the fifth-largest gas reserves and is the ninth-largest producer of natural gas (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2019). The Saudi government recently launched the Vision 2030, which outlines the country's long-term objectives and aspirations and represents its capabilities (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). Vision 2030 is built on three pillars: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. The pillars draw on the country's resources to help the Saudi people achieve their aspirations (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). At the present time, Saudi Arabia is making moves to reduce its dependency on oil revenues by seeking to diversify its economy, which resonates with the pillars of Vision 2030 (Jouini, 2018).

The Kingdom focuses on four main factors in order to achieve its goals: rewarding opportunities, being open for business, investing for the future, and leveraging its unique position (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). Concerning "rewarding opportunities," the younger generations' abilities are among the most significant and valued assets of the country. The younger generations will be remunerated by developing a culture that values ambition and fosters their abilities and resources to attain their individual goals. Therefore, to create genuine job opportunities for the younger generation and attract foreign

talent, the country will improve its economy (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). “Open for business,” the second factor, explains that Saudi Arabia will enhance its business atmosphere, restructure its economic cities, create specific regions to make the energy market more competitive, and deregulate the market. Specifically, the country will create more business opportunities to improve productivity to be ranked among the biggest global economies (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). The third factor centres on the government’s ability to create a sustainable, diverse economy for its long-term plans. Additionally, the goal is to privatise government services. “Leveraging its unique position,” the last factor, is concerned with enabling Saudi Arabia to enhance its economy by promoting new strategic partnerships to grow its influence and assist Saudi firms in increasing exportation of their products (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). Saudi Arabia is strategically located at the confluence of international trade routes between the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, so is ideally situated to see this happen.

### **3.4.3 Culture, traditions, and religion of Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia’s culture is described by its Bedouin traditions, a historical position as an ancient trade centre, and Islamic heritage (Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013). Saudi traditions are grounded in Islamic principles and Arab customs. However, Saudi culture has developed and adapted to the modern world, in terms of values, traditional customs, and hospitality to styles of dress (Aldossary et al., 2008; Culture, Traditions and Art, 2019). The official language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic (Albirini, 2015). However, in recent years in Saudi Arabia, English is commonly spoken by ‘formally educated’ Saudis as a second language. Socio-economic development in Saudi Arabia currently conforms to Islamic principles (Budhwar & Mellahi, 1996, Branine & Pollard, 2010; Littlewood & Yousuf, 2000). The Islamic religion’s leading code is the Holy Quran and Hadith. As already noted, Saudi nationals practise only the religion of Islam (Aldossary et al., 2008). The two holy cities, Makkah and Medina, are located in Saudi Arabia, which gives the country exceptional standing in the Muslim world. Makkah is the Prophet Muhammad’s birthplace and the Hajj’s focal point, attended by over three million Muslim pilgrims from across the globe annually (Almasri et al., 2019). Islamic practice is linked to social traditions, spirit, food, behaviour, and language. Muslims believe that all these life incidents derive from Allah (the Arabic name of God) (Akhtar et al., 2017; Rassool, 2000). For example, Muslims have faith and believe that Allah brings disease, health, and death. Therefore, they do not consider illness as a way of expiation for an individual’s sins rather than punishment (Al-Shahri, 2002). Although Islam is the main factor that shapes Saudi Arabian

culture, other factors such as education levels, economic status, and environmental factors also contribute (Al-Shahri, 2002; Harbi et al., 2017).

#### **3.4.4 Transformation plan: Vision 2030**

Saudi Vision 2030 reflects the ambition of the King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, to make the country an outstanding and effective global model of excellence in every respect (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). The Vision is primarily presented by Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Al-Saud, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019), and is built on three main pillars. The first pillar is the country's status as the heart of the Arab and Islam worlds. Saudi Arabia recognises the importance of having, in the country, the Two Holy Mosques, which are the direction of the Kaaba (Qibla), to where more than a billion Muslims turn at prayer. The second pillar is the determination to become a global investment driving force. Saudi Arabia has great investment potential to diversify its economy to make it sustainable. The third pillar uses the nation's unique strategic location to become a global centre linking three continents – Asia, Europe, and Africa. Saudi Arabia's location between the major global waterways makes the country a focal point of trade and the gateway to the world (Khan, 2016; Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). Alongside the three pillars, the 2030 Vision consists of three themes: a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). The first theme is the foundation for a flourishing economy and is essential to achieving Vision 2030. Saudis live a safe life, have been surrounded by loving communities, are proud of their national identity and ancient cultural heritage, and are enabled by the empowerment of social and health care systems (Khan, 2016; Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). The second theme creates opportunities for all by developing an educational system that meets business requirements and provides entrepreneurs and small and large businesses with financial opportunities. Therefore, the Saudi government is trying to expand its investment resources to open up more economic sectors, increase economic diversity, and build job opportunities. In this theme, the Saudi government aims to close the gap between job markets and higher education outputs. The government also seeks to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in the international rankings by 2030 (Ministry of Education, 2019). In the third theme, the Saudi government will use effectiveness and accountability at all levels to ensure an effective, open, accountable, and high-performing government. The Saudi government will also build the best climate for its people and the private and non-profit sectors to take responsibility for and provide initiatives to confront the

challenges and opportunities (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019). In each of these themes, the Saudi government highlighted the responsibilities and goals that reflect its ambition and aims.

### **3.5 Higher Education in Saudi Arabia**

#### **3.5.1 Government Higher Education**

In Saudi Arabia, education was previously provided in Kuttabs (the Islamic schools attached to mosques). The main objectives of these schools were to ensure students learn by heart the holy book of the Quran and other religious texts and teach writing and arithmetic (Alghafis, 1992; Alhebsi et al., 2015). After the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was united in 1932 by King Abdulaziz, a Directorate of Education was established to be answerable for all educational matters in the Kingdom. In 1954, the Directorate of Education became the Ministry of Education (Rugh, 2002). The establishment of internal institutions began with the College of Shariah in Makkah in 1949, followed by the College of Education in Makkah in 1952. The College of Shariah in Riyadh was established in 1953, and the College of Arabian Language in Riyadh in 1954. These institutions follow several curricula to prepare and produce qualified teachers for general education (Al-Karni, 1999).

As the number of graduates increased, there was the need to establish higher education in its modern form. King Saud University was Saudi Arabia's first university established by royal decree in 1957. Initially, it had only nine staff and 21 students (Saleh, 1986). However, the number of students continued to increase, and new universities were required. Four other universities were established: the Islamic University in 1961, King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals in 1963, King Abdulaziz University in 1967, and Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud University in 1974. In 1975, the Ministry of Higher Education was established to manage universities. Three further universities were founded from 1975 to 1999: King Faisal University in 1975, Umm Al-Qura University in 1981, and King Khalid University in 1999. Twenty-one publicly funded universities were subsequently established between 2003 and 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2019). Currently, Saudi Arabia has 42 universities, comprising 28 publicly funded universities, 13 private universities, and one independent university. The 28 publicly funded universities are geographically distributed across the region (see Table 11). King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST) is classified as a public university. However, unlike the other public universities controlled by the Ministry of Education (Higher Education 21 Council), KAUST is managed by its own Board of

Trustees. Therefore, KAUST operates as an independent university and is the first of this kind; it is also the first university in Saudi Arabia with a mixed-gender campus (Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013). For these reasons, this research has classified KAUST as an independent university rather than a public university.

*Table 11: Publicly funded universities in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education, 2020)*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Institution Name</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>
1	King Saud University	1957
2	Islamic University	1961
3	King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals	1963
4	King Abdulaziz University	1967
5	Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud University	1974
6	King Faisal University	1975
7	Umm Al-Qura University	1981
8	Taibah University	1999
9	Taif University	2003
10	Qassim University	2003
11	University of Hail	2004
12	AlJouf University	2005
13	King Saud bin Abdulaziz University of Health Sciences	2005
14	Jazan University	2006
15	Al Baha University	2006
16	University of Tabuk	2006
17	Najran University	2007
18	Northern Borders University	2007
19	Northern Borders University	2008
20	Shagra University	2008
21	Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University	2009
22	Al-Majmaah University	2009
23	University of Dammam	2011
24	Saudi Electronic University	2013
25	Jeddah University	2014

26	University of Bisha	2014
27	University of Hafr Al- Batin	2014

### 3.5.2 Funding and delivery of Higher Education services

In Saudi Arabia, funding for Higher Education comes from the government, but in recent years, private business sectors have also made significant contributions to higher education in terms of both money and resources (Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013), including for public universities, and in the form of major endowment projects. This observation of private sectors making contributions to endowment projects for universities in Saudi Arabia is partly influenced by religious practices of donations, which, in Saudi Arabia, is argued by some scholars to be the natural evolution of higher education (Al-Eisa & Smith, 2013).

The universities themselves generate most of their research funds, and reliance on the government is slowly decreasing. Therefore, universities in Saudi Arabia need some governance reform to better control where to focus their finances (Abouammoh, 2013).

The quality of education delivery in the higher education sector has long been criticised by scholars (Abouammoh, 2013). Saudi Arabia mostly follows a traditional teaching method where the teacher delivers lectures to their students in a classroom setting (Darandari & Murphy, 2013). However, (Abouammoh, 2013) suggest deficiencies in the delivery of education are primarily due to insufficient training of teachers and academic staff, a lack of incentives to improve the quality of education, and lack of promoting critical thinking and problem-solving. Particularly, assessment of the students' extent of knowledge raises questions of the Saudi higher education system since the examinations and tests do not reflect the quality of education delivery or the teaching practices employed by higher education institutions.

The government often stresses its use of Information and Communication Technology in Saudi higher education, but there is a significant lack in the way ICT artefacts are utilised or how the Internet is viewed and treated in the classroom. Particularly, there is a lack of ICT infrastructure to support a sustainable format of e-learning, and the teachers do not get any formal training in utilising ICT for higher education (Abouammoh, 2013). To improve the delivery of education, most Saudi universities are attempting to implement professional development processes; however, staff selection and performance evaluation still leave a lot to be desired (Abouammoh, 2013).

### **3.5.3 The reputation of Saudi Higher Education**

Global rankings have become a big issue for higher education institutions (Brankovic et al., 2018). Stakeholders directly or indirectly affiliated with higher education, such as lawmakers, managers, administrators, policymakers, agencies, academia, and students, have increased their emphasis on this agenda (Stergiou & Tsikliras, 2014). Global university rankings build their data based on several indicators: (1) a set of quantitative parameters and measures with different weights, such as quality of teaching, quality of faculty, study and pre-capital results, number of Nobel Prize winners among their employees and student ratio; (2) presence, visibility and access to the web; and (3) reputation, such as the World Reputation Rankings (Stergiou & Tsikliras, 2014). Reputation is mainly measured, in these indicators, by scientific publications (Lukman et al., 2010).

The reputation of an institute of higher education is described as the picture of value or quality, influence, and trust that it has in the eyes of others (Stergiou & Tsikliras, 2014). However, the designers of ranking scales commonly evaluate a university's reputation based on the reputations of its researchers and academics, followed by education indicators. Environmental issues are often ignored (Lukman et al., 2010). The ARWU and the Times Higher Education Ranking (THE) are the most influential of the world's ranking tables (Hunt et al., 2006).

Table 12: Rankings of Saudi universities according to various key ranking tables (sources below)

No.	Ranking	Year	KSU EST: 1957	KAU EST: 1967	KFUPM EST: 1963	KKU EST: 1999	UQU EST: 1981
1	QS Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings	2019	256	231	189	448	541-550
		2018	221	267	173	471-480	551-600
		2017	227	283	189	501-550	501-550
		2016	227	283	189	501- 550	501-550
		2015	237	303	199	551-600	551-600
		2014	249	334	225	601-650	551-600
		2013	253	360	216	601-650	551-600
		2012	197	334	208	501-550	501-550
		2011	200	NR	NR	NR	NR

No.	Ranking	Year	KSU EST: 1957	KAU EST: 1967	KFUPM EST: 1963	KKU EST: 1999	UQU EST: 1981
2	ARWU Academic Ranking of World Universities – Shanghai	2018	101-150	101-150	301-400	NR	NR
		2017	101-150	101-150	401-500	NR	NR
		2016	101- 150	101-150	301-400	NR	NR
		2015	151-200	151-200	401-500	NR	NR
		2014	151-200	151-200	401-500	NR	NR
		2013	151-200	201 -300	301-400	NR	NR
		2012	201-300	301-400	301-400	NR	NR
		2011	201-300	NR	301-400	NR	NR
3	THE Times Higher Education	2019	501-600	201-250	601-800	NR	NR
		2018	501-600	201-250	601-800	NR	NR
		2017	501-600	201-250	401-500	NR	NR
		2016	501-600	251-300	501-600	NR	NR
		2015	501-600	251-300	501-600	NR	NR

No.	Ranking	Year	KSU EST: 1957	KAU EST: 1967	KFUPM EST: 1963	KKU EST: 1999	UQU EST: 1981
		2014	351-400	351-400	NR	NR	NR
		2013	NR	301-350	NR	NR	NR
		2012	NR	301-350	NR	NR	NR
		2011	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

Created by the author. EST: Established; KSU: King Saud University; KAU: King Abdulaziz University; KKU: King Khalid University; KFUPM: King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals; UQU: Umm Al-Qura University; NR: Not ranked. Source: Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS) (2019); Academic Ranking of World Universities – Shanghai (ARWU) (2018); and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) (2019).

Although most Saudi publicly funded universities were established after 2000, several government universities have been listed among the top global universities (Table 12). Three Saudi government universities – King Saud University (KSU), King Abdulaziz University



(KAU), and King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) – have appeared frequently in the three major university rankings: the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS), the Academic Ranking of World Universities Shanghai (ARWU), and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE). Since 2012, King Khalid University (KKU) and Umm Al-Qura University (UQU) have also emerged, but only in QS. By analysing the QS and ARWU rankings, Saudi universities, especially the three best performing universities (KSU, KAU, and KFUPM), are gaining higher positions each year. However, in THE ranking, Saudi universities have not yet obtained high rankings, and the KAU is the first university to be identified. KAU is improving rapidly in this ranking, compared to KSU and KFUPM. The new Vision for 2030 is now being adopted by all Saudi universities (Ministry of Education, 2019), through which they are committed to compete to secure a position in the top 200 universities worldwide by the year 2030. The major challenge of this mission is that most Saudi universities are relatively young, less than 15 years old (see Table 12). However, is not impossible for Saudi higher education institutions to achieve this goal if they invest in human resources (Vision 2030 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019).

#### **3.5.4 The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Overseas Scholarship Programme history**

This programme was established in 2005. Since the foundation of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 by King Abdul Aziz, the Saudi government has been funding students to study overseas (Bukhari & Denman, 2013). The Saudi government initially sent students to 35 Arab and Islamic studies in other Arab countries, such as Egypt. The King extended the sponsorship scheme in 1960 to offer students opportunities to study in the United States and Europe (Bukhari & Denman, 2013). By 1975, Saudi Arabia's government had extended the sponsorship scheme to include thousands of students who could study abroad to receive higher education degrees (Taylor & Albasri, 2014). The number of Saudi students who study abroad has increased since King Abdullah founded the scholarship programme to the point where a total of 85,508 Saudi students studied several degrees and topics in various countries abroad in 2019 (Ministry of Education, 2019). Of this number, female students make up about 35%. Most students enrolled in business, medical and medical services, and courses in engineering and industrial engineering (Table 13). Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, doctorates, and languages are mostly studied (Figure 12).

Table 13: International course enrolments of Saudi students (Ministry of Education, 2019)

Number	Course Name	Number of Students	percentage
1	Business	17696	21
2	Medicine and Medical Services	17415	21
3	Engineering	17283	20
4	Humanities	8806	10
5	Information Science	8801	7
6	Life Sciences	2859	3
7	Other Courses	1548	18

Saudi students are now studying in different countries worldwide (Ministry of Education, 2019) (Figure 12), with the bulk of Saudi student enrolment growth having occurred in three countries: The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Saudi students choose to study in these countries because they speak English, and English is now the international language (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2019). Saudi investment is the fourth highest (after China, India, and South Korea) of the countries that send their students to higher education in the United States (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2019). Although there is significant investment in overseas education, the Ministry of Education also funds students at private universities in Saudi Arabia, thereby offering Saudi students who cannot study abroad opportunities to earn degrees.

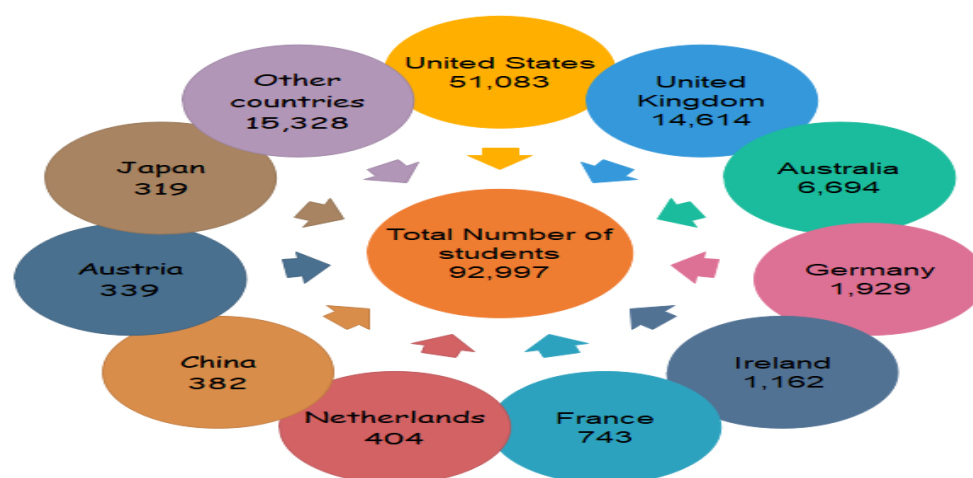


Figure 12: Breakdown of Saudi students abroad (Ministry of Education, 2019)

### **3.6 Human Resource Management in Saudi Higher Education institutions**

As context to the specific enquiry of this research, it is important to examine more closely the situation regarding HR in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. With respect to public universities, the chief objective of HR is to improve in the departments of tutoring, research, and involvement with society (Gilbert et al., 2011). But there are complexities in the HR operations in public universities due to a lack of precision. According to Gilbert et al. (2011), the HR division in Higher Education institutions lacks practicality at its core due to numerous players in HRM, such as head of schools and deans. More significant obstacles in the departments may be that they do not have employees with the preferred HRM skills and expertise to impact HR activities (Mellahi & Wood, 2013). These findings provide more tools for this study in ascertaining the training essentials in public universities by considering the possible absence of responsibility for and skills within HR operations in higher education institutions.

Publicly funded universities in Saudi Arabia have understood the significance of HR divisions as crucial components to succeed in their objectives, dreams, and missions. A study and investigation of the Saudi university websites demonstrate that most HR divisions are known as either the Deanship of Human Resource or Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs. The head of the deanship is one of the leading executive officials of a university and is an academic division employee. The foremost duties of the Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs are as follows:

- Monitor and design strategies for the procedure of sabbatical leave, staff promotion, leave and release period, grants, and complaints within and outside the borders of the Kingdom.
- Assist the university staff in receiving all administrative documents such as work permits and visas (King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals, 2019).
- Creating and mailing suggestions to the Rector for the acceptance or reviewing the aspects of promotions, staff issues and requirements, pay rises, staff dismissal, and other problems that can arise in the academic year.
- Organise and schedule the annual appointment of department staff from within the Kingdom and overseas.
- Handle situations related to employee's terms of employment, such as income, medical and health services, grants, and the eligible kin for schooling.

### 3.6.1 Human Resource Development in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's government has taken multiple steps to support human resource development in the Kingdom. For instance, a US\$51.73 billion budget was allocated towards education and human resource development (Bin Othayman, 2020). The country's education system is also improving gradually, as shown in the two graphs provided in Figure 13. To achieve the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, the Kingdom has launched 13 national HR development plans. The most prominent of these is the 2020 National Transformation Plan, which includes many initiatives in line with the national development themes. The training and qualification of human capital to reduce the gap between supply and demand in the industry is an integral part of this plan.

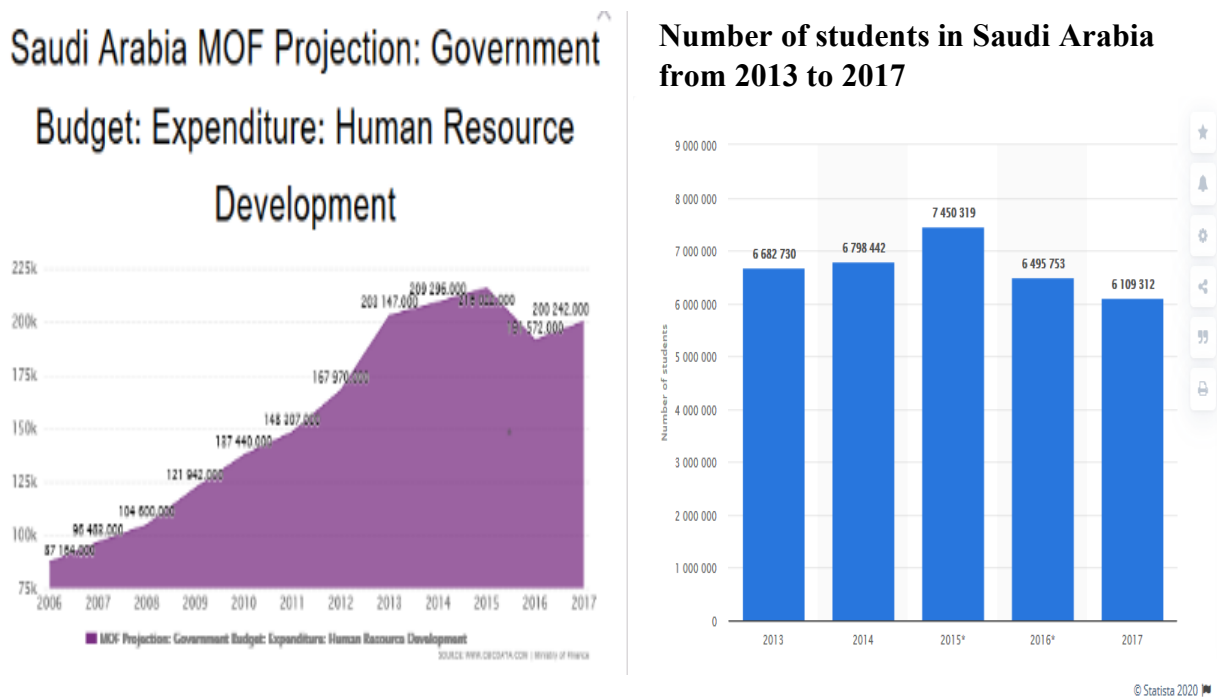


Figure 13: Improvements in the Saudi education system (Bin Othayman, 2020)

As a key part of this plan, the development of the local IT industry and the transition to a new stage of foreign IT products based on increasing local technology production is also an important aspect. It is expected that the plan will not only facilitate an environment for attracting investment and stimulating e-commerce and other business restructurings, but also enable the integration of digital work at the national level and offer a unified infrastructure for the work of government. This should also see impacts within the T&D field.

Saudi Arabia's government is heavily emphasising T&D programmes under Vision 2030. To implement the concept of Saudisation, the government has taken different initiatives. One is

the launch of the Noor programme, a school administration system powered by advanced technology. The system is designed to bring together teachers, students, and parents in schools that come under the ministry of education. The particular objectives of the programme include the initiation of a comprehensive school administration system, extending the efficiency and effectiveness in the educational system, timely and accurate data management, transparency, and linking KSA schools with the Ministry of Education (Hussain, 2020).

The Nitaqat programme (also known as the Saudisation Motivation Programme) is the latest form of the Saudisation steps taken by the government for the private sector. The programme offers incentives to firms for preferring Saudi workers for jobs, where firms are rated under six categories based explicitly on the firm's Saudisation rate: yellow (firms that have not yet achieved the Saudisation rate), red (firms with the lowest Saudisation rate), low green (the Saudisation rate falls within low third), medium green (firms falling in the middle third rate of Saudisation), high green (the Saudisation rate falls within top third), and platinum, the highest level of Saudisation (Al-Hanawi, 2019). The programme requires private companies to recruit at least 30 percent of employees from Saudi nationals rather than only hiring expatriates. The Ministry of Labour and Development is compelling firms not to recruit non-Saudi employees unless there is a non-availability of national labour qualified to perform the required tasks. The same ministry concluded from different surveys and research that it is necessary to recruit expatriate workers due to factors such as the lack of necessary skills among Saudi employees, and the disinclination of Saudi workers to take some occupations or jobs, and that there will be occasions where for whatever reason, it is not possible to recruit a Saudi national. The overreliance on expatriates has become a challenge for Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the Nitaqat programme is not only aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Programme but also serves a vital role in strategic transformation programmes and different initiatives of the Ministry of Labour and Development, such as labour market performance, proper job provision, provision of safe and attractive jobs to Saudi Arabians, minimisation of non-productive employees, effective placement of Saudi nationals, reducing the dependence on expatriates, and lowering the unemployment rate.

### **3.6.2 History of Training & Development systems in Saudi Arabia**

In reviewing the history of T&D systems in Saudi Arabia, it is important to understand how Saudi Arabia first came to have a recognised workforce. Its inception was in the 1930s oil boom and developed from its aggressive commercialisation in the 1970s (Tlaiss & Elamin, 2016). The commercialisation of Saudi Arabia resulted in exponential growth of the workforce

and a great demand for skilled workers, most of whom did not come from Saudi Arabia but came as cheap skilled and unskilled labour from South Asian countries (World Bank, 2004). This resulted in a gap in skillset among Saudi Arabian workers since most of the workforce requirements were being fulfilled by the imported human capital from South Asian countries.

Saudi Arabia still progressed to fast urbanisation while maintaining a developing nation status. Despite the urbanisation, the country still remains highly traditional and conservative, with most of its laws, politics, social norms, cultural values being directed by the Islamic ideologies predominant in the Kingdom (Hussain, 2020). Several factors, including the high rate of unemployment among Saudis, concerns for women's rights and human rights, nationalisation programmes, all create a complicated situation for the T&D of the Saudi workforce and the potential as contributors to a knowledge-based economy. However, Saudi Arabia still has to move away from its reliance on the South Asian labour force.

To effect this shift to local Saudi Arabian labour, the government-initiated improvements in HRM functions in 1994 (Mellahi, 2007; Atiyyah, 1993). This move was termed Saudisation, which was primarily focused on shifting the skills to the local workforce in phases (Mellahi, 2007). Saudisation was updated in 2007, where the focus shifted to unemployment with the eventual goal of a fully competent Saudi workforce (Tlaiss & Elamin, 2016). To further the participation of Saudis in the local workforce, the 'Vision' project was launched, focusing on economic diversification, HR development, and private sector expansion (Tlaiss & Elamin, 2016). These rely heavily on a knowledgeable workforce, which Saudi Arabia had been recruiting from Western nations.

To shift the reliance for expert knowledge away from Western nations, the Saudi government invested heavily in the education sector to create future leaders to lead the Kingdom. This resulted in the creation of several universities, international colleges, and centres for education. More than 75 training institutes are supervised by the General Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training (EVT) (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2005). Initiatives were also taken to fund education programmes abroad in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, with 25 percent of the budget allocated to education in 2013.

Despite the efforts, the unemployment rate continued to soar, owing to lower T&D outcomes on the part of the Saudi workforce than expatriates (Jadwa Investment, 2014). The expatriate labour force still proved to be more competent with higher English proficiency, which resulted in private sectors favouring expatriate workers over the local Saudi workforce. Another

challenge faced was the hesitation among Saudis to pursue careers that were deemed to hold a lower social status, which, paired with the private sectors' perception of the local workforce being less disciplined and more difficult to control and train and develop, showed that Saudisation effectiveness was in question (Tlaiss & Elamin, 2016)

In effect, Saudisation was an attempt to increase the number of Saudi employees, and was not necessarily linked to improving the local workforce's T&D. The Nitaqat program in 2011 introduced a quota to employ a certain number of Saudi employees in private companies, which resulted in ethically questionable behaviour displayed both by the employers and the employees. Effectively, these companies hired the local workforce and kept them on a payroll but would not require them to come into work, which was not contested by most employees (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014). This presents a false representation of the employment statistics in Saudi Arabia and increased the cost of labour for private companies (Sadi, 2013). These events all played significant roles in shaping the current state of T&D in Saudi Arabia.

### **3.6.3 The current state of Training & Development in Saudi Arabia**

A study by Tlaiss (2015) reveals that currently T&D in Saudi Arabia is still lacking for Saudi locals compared to expatriates. Interviews with HR managers in private sectors raised conclusive concerns that long-term development strategies rarely exist, with no focus on continuous education and learning programmes for Saudi locals. T&D programmes, in general, are lacking and not reflected in company budgets. Tlaiss noted that T&D requirements at the time of the study (2015), as highlighted by the HR managers who were interviewed, were stated as being on-and off-the-job training, for programmes directed towards decision-making, time management, motivation, and being receptive to the advice of mentors and coaches. The interviews further reflected the perception that T&D programmes were expensive hindrances instead of a necessary investment for growth and development. In comparison, expatriates displayed a higher level of eagerness and a willingness to learn from the T&D programmes. Regarding the education sector, Saudi teachers show little to no effort to participate in T&D workshops, while expatriates are the first to enrol in such programmes. In order for Saudi Arabia to be able to rely on its own knowledge-based workforce, it requires the country to undertake education reforms to better train the young generation to be future leaders of the Kingdom (Jehanzeb et al., 2013).

The importance of the T&D programme comes into sharper light when considering the education reforms under Saudi Vision 2030. As the education reform is aligned with the aims

of economic reform from an oil-based economy to a knowledge-based economy (Elyas & Picard, 2010), education reform is necessary because, despite efforts by the Saudi government, the university dropout rate is still considerably high, at around 50 percent (Al-thresher, 2020). As noted above, education reform is also necessary for fulfilling the Saudi government's intentions of relying less on expatriate workforce knowledge and shifting the economy to rely on the local workforce (Allamnakhrah, 2013).

The education system still consists of "outdated-school criteria, inefficient teaching methods, and low education standards" (Mosaad, 2016, p.210). The place of T&D programmes comes in rectifying the inefficient teaching methods highlighted by Mosaad (2016). In due process, it also improves the educational standards and updates the curricula to stay on par with the higher education standards.

#### **3.6.4 Overview of challenges facing Training & Development in Saudi Arabia**

An antecedent of T&D is a TNA, which plays a crucial role in determining on which areas focus should be placed for training the workforce (Bee & Bee, 1994) and identifying who needs to be trained and how much time should be allocated for training. Based on this understanding, Altarawneh and Aseery (2016) conducted a study that observed TNA and T&D programme approaches in Saudi Arabia. TNA undertaken by teachers and principals were found to be extremely rare.

This suggests that the T&D programmes themselves would be ineffective and counterproductive. The study further found that, in general, the management decides what sort of training needs to be done. However, these decisions are not necessarily based on previous training curricula or the feedback of participants regarding how training needs should be assessed, but rather from direct orders from superiors who are not entirely knowledgeable on immediate training requirements. Participation in training programmes was also very low. To be effective, the training programme requires participation of teachers since the importance of T&D programmes is seldom appreciated.

TNA programmes in Saudi Arabia are also influenced more by bureaucratic policies and patronage than job requirements, job descriptions, and workforce planning (Agnia, 1996). T&D programmes are lacking, for instance, where someone is moved from one department to another, when new technological artefacts are introduced into the workplace, when a new method of work is introduced, or when employees are required to fill important vacancies (Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 1995). Altarawneh and Aseery (2016) identified that T&D in Saudi



Arabia faces challenges of a lack of motivation, which comes from insufficient support from the external environment, budget constraints that cannot support frequent training programmes, a lack of appreciation for investing the time in T&D programmes, weak content of T&D programme strategies, low applicability of the content of the T&D programmes, insufficient training centres, and a poor TNA programme.

### **3.6.5 Inability to appreciate the importance of Training & Development programmes**

The problems related to T&D programmes can be traced to their inception in the Arab regions (Jehanzeb, 2013). T&D programmes are often perceived to be a nuisance rather than a requirement by Saudi employees. A concerning practice in Arab countries is treating the T&D workshop days as holidays. This is mostly abused by senior officials in the organisation who do not recognise the value that such workshops can contribute to the organisation, work ethics, and professional and personal growth. There is also a tendency among organisers to evade proper execution of T&D programmes (Abdalla et al., 1998). While the T&D programmes superficially might presume to be consistent with current theories, they lack TNA (Jehanzeb, 2013). Challenges also come from the trainers, who do not conduct themselves professionally with inefficient planning and execution, lack of feedback, and assessment (Bahar et al., 1996). Earlier research identifies favouritism and the nature of relationships with co-workers and acquaintances, all stemming from culturally influenced factors, as contributing to ineffective T&D outcomes (Jahanzeb et al., 2013). T&D programmes basically result in the trainers giving certification or scoring performances based on favours, relationships, and motivations for future benefits.

Challenges facing T&D are not specific to any industry or any sector. Rather, it is a system-wide failure of management from all governing bodies that hinder successful progress. Although the Saudi government has been pushing for a knowledge-based economy since 2000, and initiatives such as the Vision 2030 reflect of progress in terms of the attitude and demeanour with which a country wants to progress, there is, however, as yet no noticeable progress due to system-wide problems in almost all sectors of governance, starting from low public sector productivity, low level of transparency, and low efforts to tackle corruption (Albassam, 2017; Aldukheil, 2017). A systematic level of corruption, lack of ethics, and general disregard for welfare and the growth of the public sector that has been present since the early days of privatisation and urbanisation, will possibly have a lasting impact that is also

expected to affect any other efforts made by organisations and institutions in Saudi Arabia, including T&D efforts.

### **3.6.6 Indecisive strategies**

In the pursuit of a knowledge-based management system in Saudi Arabia, several programmes have been launched, but research progress has been slow due to an overall lack of data and frequent switching of strategic plans and goals by the government (Albassam, 2019). Constant changing of strategies reflects an overall lack of focus and vision, and lack of confidence that the government has in their programmes to improve the knowledge-based management system. Challenges to such progress include an inability to decide the knowledge type needed by the country, to decide whether diversification of existing knowledge is essential, or whether new knowledge focus would further progress, along with the inefficient quality of the workforce in charge of enhancing a knowledge-based economy (Alamri & Abumaghayed, 2016). T&D is imperative in the expansion to a knowledge-based economy which should begin with the education system, with large-scale reforms and heavy investment, and not just for appearances, but in terms of the sincerity with which the education system emphasises the importance of an effective knowledge-based management system for a knowledge-based economy (Nour, 2014). One of the biggest challenges therefore comes from those in governance, who refuse to act with sincerity or are unable to recognise and put aside prejudices against the effectiveness and necessity of T&D programmes.

Efforts towards a knowledge-based economy are evident from the Saudi government's actions and the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, which have emphasised that ICT applications such as e-learning are crucial for future development in the country (Al Gamdi & Samarji, 2016). In late 2006, the National Centre of e-Learning and Distance Learning was established along with the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (MOHE, 2014; El-Rashidi, 2007). While it is apparent that the ministry and the centre have the intention to improve the education delivery system through e-learning, and that there are bodies to oversee the quality of delivery of education using the e-learning system, there are still numerous barriers affecting the T&D of the university staff to realise these efforts. These barriers are in the form of socio-cultural related factors such as economics and location, phonologically related factors, and the acceptance of technology such as e-learning platforms (Rogers, 2000).

### **3.6.7 Socio-economic and personological factors**

When it comes to delivering education through e-learning, a major barrier to integration is age. In Saudi Arabia, university faculty members over the age of 45 are generally unwilling to be part of T&D (Al-Fadhli, 2009). They were also unwilling to deliver lectures using T&D (Al-Sarrani, 2010). As a predetermining factor, age is a personological barrier that Saudi Arabia will not be able to overcome unless the overall age of faculty members is decreased, as younger faculty members display a more enthusiastic outlook to delivering education using an e-learning platform. One suggestion is that age itself may not be a predetermining factor, but university members above the age of 45 tend to be less exposed to technology and therefore have lower technical competencies and willingness to adopt e-training methods (Al-Fadhli, 2009). This is a better description of an age-related barrier as it suggests that exposure to technology is more of a determining factor than age itself.

Gender is another personological barrier to T&D, where research indicates that female faculty members are more receptive to training systems than their male counterparts (MOHE, 2014; (El-Rashidi, 2007). Gender, age, and technology jointly affect the success of e-learning methods in universities as well (O'Donnell, 1991). Significant contribution to the literature was made in this regard, by the work of Muilenburg and Berge (2005) which tested the capability of learning, the impact of the experience, the motivation to use, and the attitude to technology. In general, male faculty members with little to no experience in using e-learning management systems were also unwilling to learn and be trained on e-learning methods compared to female faculty members, owing largely to male faculty members not being able to appreciate the benefits that e-learning methods can bring to the classroom (Al-Senaidi et al., 2009).

The level of education and educational background of faculty members also play a part in their perception of whether they would be open to e-learning methods. Faculty members with a higher education degree, such as a master's or a doctoral degree, displayed a better appreciation for e-learning methods (Al-Fadhli, 2009). Arab countries in general display this particular factor of the level of education of faculty members as a barrier to e-learning adoption techniques (Al-Senaidi et al., 2009).

### **3.6.8 Gender inequality**

Looking into gender-related barriers, there is an issue in Saudi Arabia where women cannot advance in specific careers due to the country's social construct. Several research findings suggest that women in workplaces worldwide face specific issues due to institutional factors,

economic factors, and social factors (Acker, 2009; Karam & Afioni, 2014; Metcalf, 2008). This stems from an observation that patriarchal cultures define the perimeter of women's work roles as men are most commonly found in positions of dominance and power (Broadbridge, 2008). According to Afioni, (2014) women are assumed to want to take specific roles in society stemming from their social activities which do not reflect women's abilities to be in positions of power and management and other leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007). General bias against women in the workplace also results in women not being able to access necessary T&D and networking opportunities, and not finding mentors to help them climb the hierarchy ladder (Al Ariss et al., 2014). In the Saudi Arabian context, several government initiatives have been made to promote gender equality, but still, there remain barriers in the face of progress. This comes from the institutions themselves, where the biggest hindrance is the patriarchal ideology existing inside the workplace that prefers male to female leaders (Sidani et al., 2015). The leadership of women working in higher education sectors, especially universities, was a subject researched by Abalkhail (2017). The research results suggest that women in universities get promoted less than men due to men receiving more training programmes which could give them more advantages in the workplace. Also, training programmes do not recognise the segregation and the patriarchal nature that exist in workplaces, and the idea of guardianship that men bear often means women are not allowed to participate in training programmes that take place out of the workplace, which could be a real challenge for them (Agnia, 1996).

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

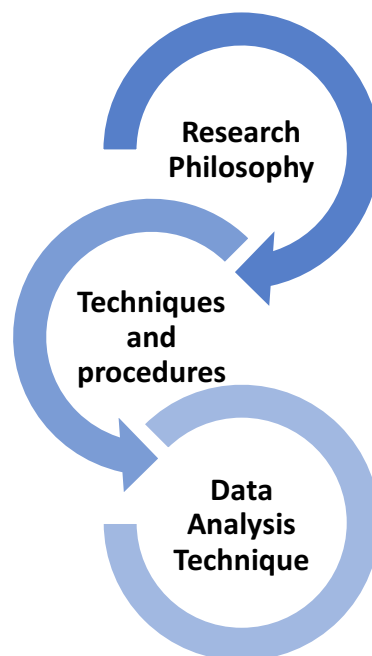
The chapter has set out the geography, demography and economic situation of Saudi Arabia, along with its governance structure and primary cultural foundations. In setting this out, the chapter has shown the determination of the country to make the most of its economic wealth and favourable location for trade to drive expansion within all sectors including higher education, with the particular ambition to see a well-educated local workforce able to sustain economic growth and offer a quality of education that places the kingdom as an internationally recognised centre of learning. What emerges from this direction is the tension between the need for T&D as an integral part of achieving the broader aims, alongside a level of resistance to the concept itself. Thus, the ground is laid in which the present case study takes place, and it is to the specific methodology adopted for the research that Chapter 4 turns.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### 4.1 Introduction

After highlighting the study context and training and development (T&D) in institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia, this chapter shifts to a discussion of the research methodology adopted for this thesis. The chapter is organised into three main sections, starting with an in-depth discussion of the research philosophy and approach, before moving to description of the techniques and procedures carried out to collect the study data. Finally, the chapter presents the data analysis techniques employed in this research. This is illustrated in Figure 14.



*Figure 14: Design of the chapter*

#### 4.2 Research Philosophy

This section presents the research model employed in this study, providing detail regarding the issues connected to the research strategy, philosophy and approach, data collection, and analysis. To begin this examination, a general overview of the research model used is depicted in Figure 15 (below).

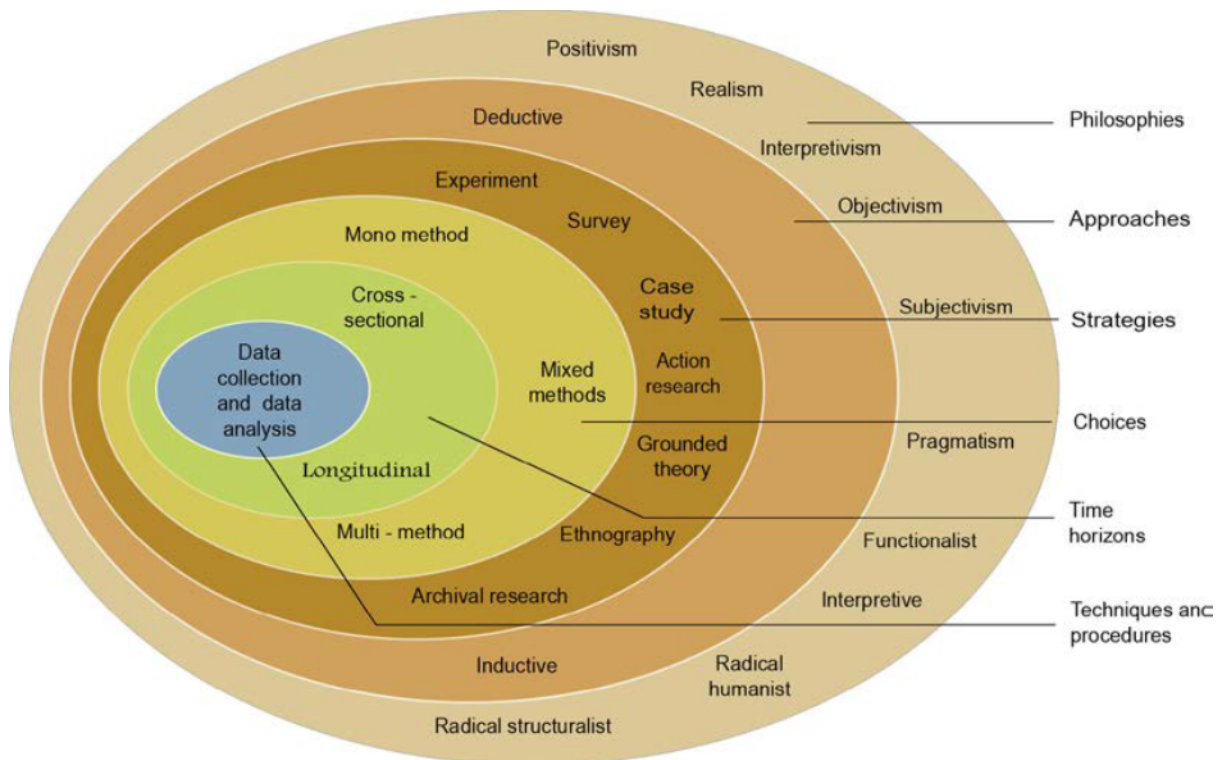


Figure 15: The 'research onion' model (Saunders et al., 2007)

Figure 15 shows that the study's research design encompasses a number of elements, including reflections connected to the research philosophy, the manner in which the study was approached, the strategy embraced, and the methods used when collecting data. These concerns and their relevance to the present study are discussed in detail in the next section.

The term 'philosophy' represents a variety of ideas, views, and ways of thinking. All of a person's conduct is influenced by their philosophy (Ruona, 2009), and so research must deal with matters related to the field of study by adopting a research philosophy which determines beliefs and assumptions about the character of knowledge and how it is developed. The research philosophy thus adopted then determines the most appropriate approach (Saunders et al., 2012). In light of the above, this section therefore describes the philosophical standpoint of this research, which has an effect on the methods chosen as the means of meeting its objectives. Once philosophical factors connected to the various approaches have been determined, an informed decision can be made with regard to data collection and analysis.

The following sub-sections present a brief discussion of the main categories into which research philosophy can be classified.

#### 4.2.1 Epistemological position

Epistemology concerns the manner by which learning and understanding the world is accomplished. It relates to matters of “how can we learn about reality and what forms the basis of our knowledge” (Ritchie et al., 2014). Thus, the concern of an epistemological assumption is to answer questions about what can be perceived as acceptable knowledge in a particular area of study. This view is acknowledged by Bryman and Bell (2011) who add that epistemology introduces the question of whether or not study of the social world should be carried out based on the same procedures, principles, and ethos used by those studying the natural sciences. Bryman and Bell also provide clarity regarding the importance of examining the connection between the researcher and the subject being researched, which is where positivist and interpretivist philosophies become relevant. The positivist works on the assumption that knowledge can only be obtained through objective and independent measurement and observation of reality, while the interpretivist deems that the distance between the researcher and the researched should be as large as possible. This polar distinction between the two stances is captured by Smith (1983), who argues that in quantitative (positivist) research, facts act to constrain our beliefs, while in interpretive research, beliefs determine what should count as facts.

The idea that direct observation is not the only way of understanding the world was famously supported by Immanuel Kant in 1781 in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant argued that perception does not relate only to the senses, but also to human interpretation of that which is gleaned by the senses. This is the basis on which one could argue that knowledge about the world is primarily based on ‘understanding,’ a consequence of not just having certain experiences but also from reflecting on what happens. Thus, knowledge extends beyond basic empirical inquiry.

An epistemology, denoting the theory of knowledge, primarily brings to the fore a perception and a rationale for what can be seen as knowledge and a standard for differentiating between belief and knowledge (Blaikie, 1993). Epistemology has been characterised as denoting the most effective way of questioning the world. Along these lines, the epistemological position of interpretivism is described as a way through which those who participate in experiences understand those experiences. This stands in opposition to the scientific model aligned with quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In support of the interpretivist stance, Bryman (2015, p. 26) affirms the conclusions of Max Weber (1864–1920), who referred to the positivist approach as a philosophy based on “empathic understanding” not based on meaningless

external forces but rather on the interpretative understanding of social action. For Ritchie et al. (2014), this concept is critical because it helps comprehension of the connections between the social, cultural, and historical facets of social life while also making it possible to focus on the context in which actions occur. This study adopts an interpretive approach as a way of identifying and investigating the challenges faced by T&D in public institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia. This philosophy is intended to assist a focus on these challenges from three angles: the analysis of T&D needs, T&D implementation, and T&D evaluation from the perspectives of senior managers and academic staff. It is helpful at this point to look more closely at the interpretative approach, and how it interacts with subjectivism and constructivism.

#### **4.2.2 Interpretivism**

The interpretivist epistemological position proposes that social reality is subjective; a consequence of how the researcher perceives a problem. Thus, it is vital that the researcher becomes a part of the subject's existence so as to comprehend the social world from their perspective, allowing them to interact with that which is researched, as it is impossible to detach what exists in the social world from what occurs in the researcher's mind (Saunders et al., 2007)

The history of interpretivism can be traced to the 1960s, where the philosophy developed as an alternative to the positivist canon which had long been the mainstay of research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The change was inspired by a growing consciousness of the need to respect the differences between human beings and natural objects (in the scientific sense), which required that social scientists comprehend the subjective meaning of social actions. This point of view is acknowledged by many (Bryman and Bell, 2011), who disagree with the application of the scientific model in the study of the social world because there are fundamental differences between the subject matter of the social sciences and that of the natural sciences. It has been argued that when studying the social world, a different logic is required, one which needs to mirror the distinctiveness of the human as opposed to the natural order. Therefore, the interpretivist approach is suitable for management and business research, particularly in the field of human resources management (HRM), as business situations tend to be unique and complex.

Regarding methodology, positivists tend to rely on laboratory experiments and large-scale surveys (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Bhattecherjee, 2012), while interpretivists favour



methods like case studies and exploring lived experiences that make it possible to link the facets of people's lives while also seeing the setting in which specific actions occur from the perspectives of the participants (Ritchie et al., 2014). Thus, the interpretivist methodology is based on phenomenographic research (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Bhattecherjee, 2012).

The interpretivist approach has been selected for this study due to its emphasis on social construction (Van Manen, 1990; Saunders et al., 2007) and because it allows for interaction with individuals experiencing the challenges explored in this study. This can help make sense of the experiences of the individuals and explore the contextual factors and meanings which impact their interpretations (Geertz, 1973). This choice is reinforced by Blaikie (1993) who states that such an approach results in knowledge that emanates from the common experiences and meanings the researcher gains from being part of the social world, where meaning can be understood as it is socially constructed. These meanings can then be reconstructed using scientific language and taken as re-descriptions of everyday accounts at one level while, on another, they can be used to develop theories. Figure 16 shows the key differences between interpretivism and constructionism as perceived by a number of authors in the field.



Figure 16: Key differences between interpretivism and constructionism (Ritchie et al., 2014)

### **4.2.3 Ontological orientation**

Whereas epistemology is concerned with what constitutes acceptable knowledge in an area of study, the concern of ontology is the nature of reality, relating to the study of processes, objects, events, properties, and connections in all areas of reality. With regard to ontology, positivists proceed from the assumption that social reality is external to the researcher and therefore objective. This suggests that there is only one, true reality (Saunders et al., 2007). In contrast, interpretivists view social realities as subjective on the basis that they are socially constructed and posit that there are numerous realities wherein each individual interprets the world in their own way (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The two aspects of ontology most prevalent in management and business research are subjectivism and objectivism (Saunders et al., 2007).

### **4.2.4 Subjectivist approach**

From the subjectivist perspective, perceptions and the actions they inspire in social actors are the basis on which social phenomena are constructed and continue via interactions within society. Understanding of reality can therefore be obtained through the study of the details of a situation (Saunders et al., 2012). Every social actor approaches a situation with different interpretations, and this influences the way they act and how they interact with others in society. In this context, the researcher plays the role of attempting to comprehend the subjective reality of the individuals who are the subjects of a study so as to meaningfully understand their intentions, actions and how these arise. The present study adopts this view, and this is reflected in the questions and objectives of the thesis. The semi-structured interview process allows the social actors (staff members and managers) to express their interpretation of the situation in which they exist. This is in keeping with the interpretivist philosophy, which proposes that, as social reality is socially constructed, it is necessary to examine the subjective meanings behind the actions of social actors so as to understand them (Saunders et al., 2009).

### **4.2.5 Critical realism**

Bryman and Bell (2011) define critical realism as a policy which acknowledges the natural order of reality and the discourses and events of the social world, based on the assumption that humans can only comprehend and change this social world if they identify the structures that generate such discourses and events. Saunders et al. (2007) note that the perspective of the critical realist is that humans do not experience phenomena in the world directly, but rather the images and sensations of these phenomena.

A particular concern in management and business research is the fact of the social world inhabited by humans. Bhaskar (1989) argues that from the perspective of the researcher, understanding what happens in this social world is only possible if the researcher begins by understanding the social structures which impact the subject under study. This implies that individuals can only see one section of a much larger picture. The realist proposes that individuals' knowledge of reality is a consequence of conditioning, so it cannot be understood outside social actors taking part in the process of deriving knowledge (Saunders et al., 2007). Saunders et al. (2007) further posit that the critical realist understands that a multi-level study (e.g., organisation, group, individual) is important, as each level could potentially provide a different understanding of the subject being studied. This difference results from the presence of a substantial variety of structures, processes, and procedures, and the interaction between them. This is the basis on which Saunders et al. (2007) argue that from the critical realist's point of view, the social world is in a constant state of change, consistent with the purpose of management and business research, which often has the aim of understanding the reasons for certain phenomena as a predecessor for recommending change.

Saunders et al. (2012) also propose that critical realism operates from the assumption that since the researcher, as well as the research subjects, experiences the sensations of the world, critical realism helps the researcher experience their own feelings about the subjects and gain awareness of their own mental processes. Therefore, critical realism is appropriate for studies aiming for deep comprehension of the reasons things operate as they do, which is often the basis of management and business studies (Saunders et al., 2007). Therefore, in the present study, the critical realist approach is employed to attain comprehension of T&D in institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia. Having outlined the key philosophical frameworks to the understanding of knowledge, and the inter-related approaches, the following section considers the two main methodological approaches to the research process itself.

### **4.3 Research approach**

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1994), as cited in Saunders et al. (2012), there are three key reasons for carefully selecting a research approach. The first is that an appropriate approach assists the researcher in making better-informed choices regarding the research design, which should not just be seen as a data collection and analysis method. They add that the approach chosen represents a piece of the overall configuration of the research, incorporating details regarding the kind of evidence gathered for the study, where it will be found, and how it is to be interpreted so that more concrete answers to the research questions can be found. The second

reason is that the research approach facilitates selection of research methodologies and strategies appropriate to the study, and the third is that when a researcher has knowledge of research traditions, they can tailor the research design to respond to the limitations.

The main approach favoured by scholars studying the natural sciences is the deductive approach, so this is what is generally considered the foundation of scientific research (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009). The deductive approach is based on the assumption of the existence of laws which permit the anticipation of phenomena, making it possible to control them. A researcher following the deductive approach is expected to develop a theoretical construct that can be tested using empirical observation (Gill & Johnson, 2002). This often begins with abstract conceptualisation, followed by efforts to test this conceptualisation by applying the theory with the aim of developing a new observation or experience. The deductive approach is therefore a process which moves from the general to the specific (Gill & Johnson, 2002), a process illustrated in Figure 17. The opposite of the deductive approach is the inductive approach, described by Gill and Johnson (2002) as a process whereby the researcher moves from observing the empirical world to constructing an explanation and theories about what is observed. In the same view, Collis and Hussey (2003) state that inductive research involves the development of theory from observing empirical reality. Therefore, general extrapolations are induced from specific instances, where the process starts with individual observations and moves in the direction of laws and general patterns, therefore moving from the specific to the general, shown in Figure 17. The researcher starts with specific observations and measures, and eventually begins to detect patterns and regularities, which allow tentative hypotheses to be formulated which can be investigated. Finally, general conclusions or theories can be developed (Trochim and Donnelly, 2016).

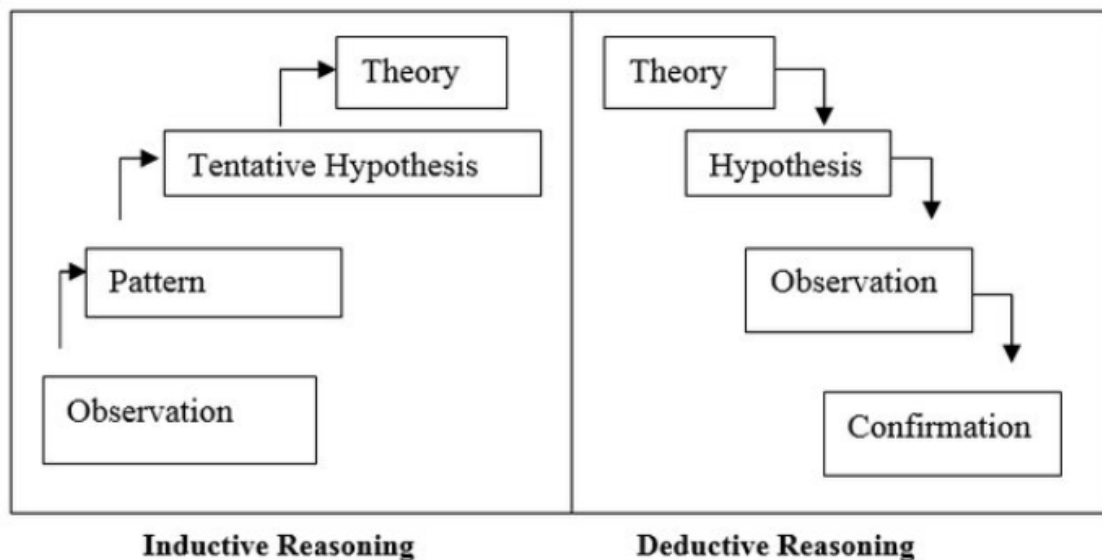


Figure 17: Deductive and inductive reasoning approaches (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

Qualitative research perceives the relationship between theory and research in an inductive way. The rationale for selecting the inductive approach in social science is founded on two related assumptions: the first is that it is futile to attempt to explain social phenomena not based on experience and observation, and the second, described by Glasser and Strauss (1967), is that when theory is developed through organised empirical study, it has a better possibility of fitting the data, and a correspondingly greater likelihood to be useful and acceptable to managers and practitioners (Gill & Johnson, 2002).

As the aim of the present research is to examine the challenges experienced within T&D programmes as they are selected, implemented, and evaluated in public sector universities in Saudi Arabia from the point of view of those responsible for their delivery, the inductive and qualitative approaches were selected to achieve the study objectives. Saunders et al. (2014) propose that the inductive approach involves the construction of knowledge from base observations of the world. This view is shared by Blaikie (2007), who suggests that inductive research can produce data and results which allow conclusions to be drawn. From Creswell's (2009) point of view, the researcher makes use of inductive logic, studies a subject within its setting, and employs an emerging design. This manner of thinking works with specific details before generalising, describing the study's setting in detail, and uses experience as the basis for continuously revising questions. This development of questions was reflected in the present study where the respondents had to answer a set of questions from both the interview guide

and an additional set. Table 14 shows Saunders et al.'s (2007) illustration of the major differences between the deductive and inductive approaches.

*Table 14: Table differences between inductive and deductive approaches (Saunders et al., 2007)*

<b>Deductive Approach</b>	<b>Inductive Approach</b>
Scientific principles	Gaining an understanding of the meaning humans attach to events
Moving from theory to data	A close understanding of the research context
The need to explain the causal relationship between variables	The collection of qualitative data
The collection of quantitative data	A flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as research progresses
The application of controls to ensure validity of data	Acknowledge that the researcher is part of the research process
The operationalisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition	Limited concern with the need to generalise

Having established the main research approach as inductive, the following section turns to the more specific aspects of the research strategy selected flowing from and relating to this approach.

#### **4.4 Research strategy**

A research strategy is necessary to achieve the objectives through consideration of the availability of resources and time as well as limitations in terms of access to respondents. The research strategy should be flexible enough to, where necessary, cater for the changing character of social actors and adaptations related to the findings and experience (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2013) the strategy of inquiry is a package of assumptions, skills, and practices that the researcher embraces as they advance from their paradigm to the empirical realm. Denzin and Lincoln also note that strategy triggers interpretation models while connecting the researcher to precise techniques for collecting and analysing empirical materials. Therefore, it can be stated that the research strategy involves

implementation, and places paradigms within precise empirical locations or specific methodological practices, as exemplified by case studies. The case study is embraced by Bryman (2015) as the standard orientation adopted in social research, as this is the most appropriate if the research aims to explain a phenomenon within its real-life setting (Robson, 2002). This is the basis on which the qualitative case study research method is the selected strategy for the present research, which aims to gain further understanding of the T&D challenges as they occur within their particularised setting of higher education institutes. Saunders et al. (2007) state that a basic case study involves analysing a single case in-depth. The word 'case' often associates the case study with a location such as an organisation or community, with the emphasis often entailing a detailed examination of the setting (Bryman, 2016). As mentioned, the present study is located in the specific setting of Saudi Arabia, which, as a country, has been examined in detail in Chapter 3 above.

#### **4.4.1 Case study method**

The case study is a suitable strategy for a study that calls for exploration of a phenomenon in its natural setting, using various sources of evidence. It involves investigation into an empirical phenomenon where the boundaries and the phenomenon itself are not obvious (Yin, 1994). Robson (2002) notes that the case study approach is appropriate for generating deep knowledge from a selected small quantity of connected cases, making it possible for an in-depth investigation of an activity, or event, or one or more people to be conducted with the aim of understanding the elements at play within distinct settings. The case study is also defined by Creswell (2009) as the investigation of a case or a bounded system (defined as a system which has place and time limitations) over the prescribed period through the collection of in-depth data from various context-rich sources.

Morris and Wood (1991) likewise maintain that the processes of a case study permit a deep understanding of the research context and is applicable to the study of an organisation and its processes. A case study should not be perceived as a data collection method but rather an all-inclusive research approach (Agranoff & Radin, 1991), while Yin (1994) states that it is a research strategy useful in numerous contexts, including community strategy and organisational policy studies.

The case study method has been chosen in the present study for a number of reasons. Case studies are advantageous in studies where research questions include the *how*, *what*, and *why* of management practices (Yin, 1994), as is the case in this present research in exploring T&D

challenges in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. The case study also allows the investigation to retain the meaningful and holistic criteria inherent in real-life phenomena like managerial and organisational processes, individual life cycles, maturation of industries, and international relations. The present study involves semi-structured interviews with senior managers and academic staff to identify and investigate the challenges experienced by T&D in public higher education universities in Saudi Arabia from the angles already mentioned: needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation. This is in line with the literature, which establishes that a case study moves beyond an explanation of outcomes and attempts to state the reasons behind them. This approach can therefore turn inquiry into tangible positions, which is considered a suitable characteristic for this study, in line with many others in business and management research who have similarly adopted this approach (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Yin (2003) says that case studies are the ideal solution in instances where the researcher does not have the capacity to control events, because they make it possible to explore multivariate, rich phenomena (Eisenhardt, 2007). The case study method is supported by Eisenhardt et al. (2007) and Barrat et al. (2011), who note that it is useful in studying practices because it is holistic and more rounded than other designs. Moreover, the design primarily aims to deliver in-depth explanation of a single case, and so is most relevant where the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of context and processes (Bryman & Bell, 2011) as in the present study.

Even though both the quantitative and qualitative research designs can be linked to a case study method, it often favours a qualitative methodology. Specific methods suitable for case studies include participant observations and semi-structured interviews, examples of techniques that make it possible to examine a case in detail. This is another reason the case study is a popular method in management and business studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). As qualitative research by means of the case study is the selected research methodology of the current study, it is important at this juncture to examine further the main characteristics and value of qualitative research, before bringing together the choices made with regard to the methodological framework for this particular research.

#### **4.5 Research design choice**

The qualitative research design is founded on the assumption that the account of events and reality professed by participants represent personal views based on validation, understanding, and credibility (Angen, 2000), although some qualitative studies emphasise reliability,



objectivity, and generalisability (Pallant, 2007). The epistemological position of the researcher impacts how the findings are communicated with the audience (Mantzoukas, 2004).

#### 4.5.1 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research presents an array of distinctive concerns regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Saunders et al., 2012). As a research methodology, qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2013) as practical information presented as words, texts, or images. Therefore, a researcher who embraces the qualitative approach needs to be able to understand words and what they mean in the same manner as such words are understood in the context in which they are used. This implies that the qualitative approach is concerned with meaning and the way a phenomenon is understood, as opposed to explaining and predicting it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Bryman & Bell, 2007). To highlight the particular characteristics of qualitative methodology, Table 15 contrasts this approach with the key aspects of the quantitative method.

Table 15: Differences between quantitative and qualitative research designs (Collis & Hussey, 2009)

Quantitative	Qualitative
Uses large samples	Uses small samples
Artificial setting or location	Natural setting or location
Concerned with hypothesis testing	Concerned with generating theories
Produces precise, objective, quantitative data	Produces rich, subjective, qualitative data
Produces results with high reliability but low validity	Produces results with low reliability but high validity
Allows results to be generalised from the sample to the population	Allows findings to be generalised from one setting to another similar setting

Qualitative research primarily attempts to understand the socially constructed world, affording methods through which meaning can be accessed, participant trust can be developed, and participation involvement encouraged, which result in the deepest understanding possible (Bryman et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2012). As qualitative research is concerned with the personal world, based on the aim of providing insight into social, emotional, and experiential

phenomena, the methodology's design should include individuals' opinions, gathered especially from small groups (Bryman et al., 2011; Saunders et al., 2012). This is carried out in the present study through the data gathering instrument of semi-structured interviews, which are beneficial for collection/visualisation procedures (and the processes of analysis). It is the research method that makes it possible to establish a theoretical framework which shows meaning from the participants' point of view and demonstrates how they are connected (through coding). Data collection is not standardised in semi-structured interviews, making it possible for procedures and questions to be adapted to the requirements of the research as the interview develops in a natural and interactive way. The participants also have the opportunity to speak for themselves, either through their actions or verbally.

The focus of the present study is on the reflections, perceptions, and opinions of the participants, which forms the basis of justification for a qualitative methodology: it can help improve comprehension of the detailed operationalisation and conceptualisation of T&D, the challenges faced by institutions of learning in the higher education sector, and the factors impacting the organisation as it attempts to meet T&D needs by making time and resources available. The use of the case study approach permits the research to examine the relationships of the employees within the organisation, which brings together different professionals, in this case senior managers and academic staff, as they work together to achieve common goals.

The qualitative methodology allows the research to access the multi-level opinions of the employees to attain an in-depth understanding of phenomena in practice within multiple settings. The focus of the qualitative methodology on the development of social meanings and the causal factors of perceptions and behaviours renders it suitable for the aim of this research, namely, to gain a deep understanding of the perspectives of employees with regard to T&D challenges.

Following a meticulous evaluation of the ontology, axiology, methodology, and epistemology proposed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the interpretivist philosophy was selected for the present study. This is a choice informed by the uniqueness and complexity of HRM research and the objectives that the study seeks to address. The need to draw conclusions from data supporting robust analysis and placing importance on the open-ended discovery of the lived experiences of participants in relation to the main challenges around T&D, influenced the selection of the exploratory qualitative research approach. This approach was also considered

the most suitable due to the scarcity of management and HRM studies in the Arabian Gulf Region (Moideenkutty et al., 2011).

It has been noted that the aim of an investigation is to bring ontological truth to the fore. This can be read to mean that the core of reality is not universally shared but rather based on the practical experiences of people as they interact with ideas. With regard to the background of the research, the information gained from the present study is epistemologically pertinent. Interpretivism is appropriate for this study as it is most consistent with a qualitative research design. From an axiological perspective, the study commenced by defining a problem, followed by providing solutions that could drive practice in future, a process in keeping with the tenets of interpretivism. The research is external to the process of the study because all participants were provided with adequate information in order to give informed consent.

Choosing interpretivism as the research philosophy resulted in the selection of the inductive approach. As mentioned, the research approach is essential for making decisions based on appropriate information regarding the research method to be employed, reflecting on suitable research strategies and choices, and employing an appropriate research design to deal with specific limitations (Easterby-Smith, 1994).

Research in emerging economies has shown the significance of the interpretivist paradigm with regard to comprehending complex phenomena like HRM systems within organisations (Fengqiao & Lin, 2010). In areas with limited empirical and theoretical literature, the case study method and the inductive approach are mutually complementary (McLaren, 2010). Considering the reality in Saudi Arabia, where the situation is complex, and where there are very few prior studies dealing with the challenges faced by higher education institutions regarding T&D, the present study adopts an inductive approach, which influenced the choice of the case study technique.

#### **4.6 Time horizon**

The significant impact of the time frame of research on the research findings, integrity, and reliability means that consideration of this is vital. Research can either be longitudinal or cross-sectional, depending on the objectives and the time available to the researcher (Creswell, 2009). Because academic studies often need to be carried out in contexts where time and other resources are limited, they tend to be cross-sectional, as is the case with this study exploring the challenges and tensions linked with T&D practices and processes in institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia

## **4.7 Techniques and procedures**

Once the research approach and strategy were decided, the actual techniques and procedures of conducting the case study needed to be determined. The next sections outline the actual conduct of the research, engaging with the relevant material to support those techniques as they are described.

### **4.7.1 Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews of between 90 and 140 minutes were used with 85 participants to collect the primary data in this study. In order to understand the meaning of participants' statements about different phenomena that could represent challenges faced by T&D, an interpretive epistemology was adopted. Secondary data to gain adequate information and data about the universities selected was collected through the reports and circulars available. This information included the location, the date of establishment, explanation of the roles of the deanship of faculty and personnel affairs and other units of the chosen universities and was obtained from the annual reports and websites of the universities.

### **4.7.2 Data collection process**

When using interviews or self-administered questionnaires in qualitative research, Saunders et al. (2009) emphasise that it is usual to supply participants with a cover letter which provides an explanation of the purpose of the study. Dillman (2011) notes that the details contained in the cover letter have a strong influence on the response rate. This view is also acknowledged by Saunders et al. (2007), who add that the cover letter, as the initial item seen by respondents, provides them with the chance to make an informed decision regarding their participation in the study. In organisations, the details contained in the cover letter can be used to determine whether access to members of the organisation can be granted (Saunders et al., 2009) and play an important part in convincing participants of the benefits that may come from their involvement. To ensure credibility, it is often advised that cover letters should include a university letterhead (Peterson, 1975): this is also associated with faster responses to requests to participate in a study.

Saunders et al. (2009) state that in semi-structured interviews, a list of questions must first be created in line with the themes that need to be covered, even though these may differ from one interview to the next. The character of the interview questions should depend on the context of the organisation and the objectives and questions guiding the study. In the same vein, King (2004) sets out the ideas behind qualitative research interviews and explains that in-depth and

semi-structured interviews should be employed when the aim is to collect data that brings answers to the fore, leading to comprehension of *what*, *how* and *why*. Such interviews give the researcher a chance to inquire about the subject they are investigating while also allowing the interviewees to provide greater detail in their answers (Saunders et al., 2007).

Sekaran (2003) proposes that in the process of the interview, it is vital for the researcher to desist from asking questions that may be condescending or demeaning to the participants. Saunders et al. (2007) add that the interviewer should conduct themselves in a highly controlled manner, ensuring that in their questioning they do not exceed acceptable and appropriate standards. It is on this basis that participants who agree to contribute in a study reserve their right to independence, meaning that they are free to refuse to answer any of the questions. The questions in the interviews in this study were all in line with the study objectives, and each participant was explicitly informed of their right to decline to answer specific questions or withdraw from the interview at any time.

#### **4.7.3 Development of the interview guide**

The interviews were designed in three major parts:

- In the first part of the interview questions focused on understanding the situations and background of T&D in the Saudi higher education sector. For example:
  - How do T&D programmes work in Saudi public universities?
  - Who is responsible for determining training needs and how does the university implement T&D?
  - How do universities evaluate the benefits of T&D programmes?

This was designed to help the researcher start the discussion with participants to deeply investigate their experience regarding the T&D delivery process, which relates to research question one.

- The second part was designed to identify the key challenges facing T&D (needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation) in public universities from the perspectives of senior managers and academic staff. The main aim of this section was to determine how T&D can contribute to overall performance in the higher education sector, and the extent to which the challenges faced might affect the staff and universities. Some of the questions were specifically focused toward the senior managers to explore how universities could overcome their challenges. This helped increase understanding of actual practices and the role of the HR department in Saudi public universities.

- The final part involved preparing the interview protocol before the interview for each respondent. This included all of the questions and themes that would be explored. The design of the protocol provided some flexibility, allowing reordering of the questions depending on the flow of the interview. In some interviews, there was a need to pose additional questions so as to expand developing themes. This is an approach supported by Eisenhardt (2007), who argues that where a novel opportunity to collect data based on a new or unanticipated way of thinking emerges during the study, it may be prudent for the researcher to include the new data if there is a possibility that such changes may provide better grounding theory or deliver further theoretical insight. Each study participant was provided with a clear guide to the questions, and as the interviews proceeded, respondents' answers were recorded, and notes were taken in order to avoid any later distortion of the answers provided in the interview. All participants signed a consent form before being allowed to take part in interviews, and all were asked for permission for an audio recording and notes to be taken of the session. The researcher thanked every participant at the end of the interview and emphasised that the data collected would preserve their confidentiality, with no names published. Finally, each interviewee was provided with the researcher's contact details to give them the opportunity to express any insights, ask questions, or request further information at a later date.

#### **4.7.4 Pilot Study**

Before employing the interview instruments in this study, they were carefully piloted. The first task was to analyse the question guide, as this provided some of the content for the interviews. This is crucial to refine the questions to prevent problems arising in the actual interviews. Piloting the research instruments gives the opportunity to test the validity and reliability of the data that will be gathered using the instrument (Saunders et al., 2012). As part of the pilot study, the researcher shared the question guide with colleagues and professionals in the Saudi Public Higher Education Institution of Learning so as to benefit from the experience of supervisors in the department who provided constructive feedback on the suitability of the questions. Based on this feedback, a number of changes were made. Regarding this step, Foddy (1994) notes that reliability and validity should be perceived based on the extent to which the questions and answers make sense, specifically emphasising the importance of ensuring that the respondents understand the questions in the way that the researcher wants them to be understood. For the present study, this process made it possible to establish content validity.

The pilot study included 11 respondents. Determining the number of participants to include in the pilot study was inspired by Foddy (1994), who points out that a pilot study should have a minimum of 10 respondents. In selecting the participants, it was vital that they had a similar profile to the participants of the main study. When asked in which language they felt comfortable answering the pilot interview questions, all participants stated that either English or Arabic would be acceptable. This was also considered in the main study, in which participants were asked at the beginning of the interview to state which language they preferred.

Contrary to expectations, the participants in the pilot interviews provided extremely rich data. After transcribing the data of the main interviews, it became clear that some of the pilot interview participants provided important information that was not mentioned by the participants in the main interviews. This is the basis on which the researcher decided to include the data from the pilot interview in the analysis of results. This was simple to do because the individuals taking part in the pilot study had similar characteristics to those who took part in the main study.

The pilot study interviews took between 80 and 140 minutes to complete, and participants were thanked upon completion. The questions were then reviewed based on the insights obtained from the pilot study. This was followed by the final stage, referred to as administering the questionnaire. Saunders et al. (2009) say that this at this important stage, and when administering the questions, it is critical to abide by the institution's code of ethics. In order to conduct this research, therefore, ethical approval was required.

#### **4.7.5 Ethics and research governance**

Saunders et al. (2016) define research ethics as the standards of behaviour that regulate the research process so that the rights of participants are respected (see Table 16). Bryman (2015) identifies four areas that a researcher must consider: participant safety, honesty, confidentiality, and informed consent. The current study was granted ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee in the School of Management, Swansea University and by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, which was required to access the four public universities participating in the study (see Appendix 3).

This study also received ethical approval from the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London permitting the researcher to travel to Saudi Arabia from the United Kingdom to conduct the study. As this study took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, this was an important requirement, also emphasised by the hosting organisation (the Ministry of Education). Finally, all of the

participants were provided with communication indicating their rights to privacy and confidentiality, and informed that the study had received ethical approval from all relevant authorities.

Table 16: Ethical principles (Saunders et al., 2012, p236)

Ethical Principle	Ethical Rationale for a development of the principle
Integrity and objectivity of the researcher	The quality of research depends in part on the integrity and objectivity of the researcher. This means acting openly, being truthful and promoting accuracy. Conversely it also means avoiding deception, dishonesty, misrepresentation (of data and findings etc.), partiality, reckless commitments or disingenuous promises. Where appropriate, any conflict of interest or commercial associations should be declared.
Respect for others	A researcher's position is based on the development of trust and respect. The conduct of research entails social responsibility and obligations to those who participate in or are affected by it. The rights of all persons should be recognised, and their dignity respected.
Privacy of those taking part	Any harm to participants must be avoided. Harm may occur through risks to emotional wellbeing, mental or physical health, or social or group cohesion. It may take a number of forms including embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain or conflict. It may be caused by using a research method in an intrusive or zealous way that involves mental or social pressure causing anxiety or stress. It may also be caused by violating assurances about confidentiality and anonymity, or through harassment or discrimination
Voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw	The right not to participate in a research project is unchallengeable. This is accompanied by the right not to be harassed to participate. It is also unacceptable to attempt to extend the scope of participation beyond that freely given. Those taking part continue to exercise that right to determine how they will participate in the data collection process, including rights no to answer any question, or set of questions; not to provide any data requested; to modify the nature of their consent; to withdraw from participation; and possibly to withdraw data they have provided.
Informed consent of those taking part	The principle of informed consent involves researchers providing sufficient information and assurances about taking part to allow individuals to understand the implications of participation and to reach a fully informed, considered and freely given decision about whether or not to do so, without the exercise of any pressure or coercion. This leads to the right of those taking part to expect the researcher to abide by the extent of consent given and not to find that the researcher wishes to prolong the duration of an interview or observation, or to widen the scope of the research without first seeking and obtaining permission, or to commit any subsequent breach of the consent given and not to find that the researcher wishes to prolong the duration of an interview or observation, or to widen the scope of the research without first seeking and obtaining

#### 4.7.6 Informed consent

Each participant was sent an invitation email containing details about the purpose and aims of the study (see Appendix 1). They were asked to indicate if they were willing to participate in the interviews and if so, to suggest a time and location convenient for them. However, as a result of Covid-19, there was a delay in responses, leading the researcher to call some of the directors to seek their assistance in acquiring the responses. Conducting this research during



the pandemic also meant that all government public health guidelines had to be followed, including maintaining a two-metre distance between the interviewer and the participants, and ensuring that face masks were worn by both the interviewer and the participants. To reduce the need for face-to-face interaction, introductions, preliminary details about the purpose of the research, asking participants if they agreed to take part, and arranging a time and location for the interview all took place by telephone.

## 4.8 Main study fieldwork

### 4.8.1 Public universities in this study

To meet the objectives of research and answer the research question, one of the most important elements to consider is sampling. As the present study seeks to generate statistics, it is vital that the sample size is large enough to make this possible while ensuring that it remains manageable. Patton (2008) and Gerrish (2006) have all stated that in qualitative research, sample size is not a major concern as the focus is on the richness of the cases used in collecting the data. This is a view supported by Morse (2016), who maintains that no matter the size of a sample, determining the most suitable individuals who will form it is a critical early consideration: the process of selection should be done carefully and based on specific qualities. For this study, the sample involved employees of four Saudi Arabian public universities.

There are two main reasons why the specific universities in this study were selected. The first is that these universities are considered to be prominent, emerging institutions (Table 17), which makes the issue of T&D highly relevant in terms of the aims of the institutions to improve their reputations and global rankings.

The second reason is that all of the selected universities had individuals willing to take part in the study.

*Table 17: Universities participating in this study*

University	Establishment Date
University A	1998
University B	2014
University C	2006
University D	2006

The section below highlights some significant details regarding these universities.

- **University A**

Saudi Arabia's higher education sector is the fastest developing in the Middle East, drawing international students. By maximising the use of resources, a Saudi public university can provide an appealing academic atmosphere incorporating teaching, learning, scientific research, and community involvement (NaifJabli & Demir, 2018). University A is a high-ranking public university in the Aseer region in southwest Saudi Arabia, established in 1998 as the result of a merger between two universities. The Aseer area spreads across 80,000 square kilometres and is home to over 1.6 million inhabitants throughout seventy-eight governorates and centres (Asiri, 2012). In 1998, HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman approved the Southern Region's Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University and King Saud University to unite into one organisation (NaifJabli & Demir, 2018).

This university's vision, as part of the wider Saudi 2030 Vision, is to be among the top 200 institutions in the world by 2030 (Gazette, 2016). According to Bin Abdulrahman (2008), this university provides services to around 70,000 learners across 20 sites, with extra campuses currently under construction. Officially, it has the best commercially available e-infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, comparing favourably with some US institutions. The university began with four colleges: sharia and religious basics, Arabic language, social administrative sciences, and an education college. It offers a variety of disciplines, including engineering and computer science, to around 70,000 students and is ranked fourth in the country in terms of performance.

- **University B**

This university is one of the emerging public universities in Saudi Arabia, founded in 2014. It is located in the south-west of the country in a city with a population of 205,346 and nearby 240 villages (Qasem & Zayid, 2019). According to details published by the university, it employs 1006 academic staff across 5 different campuses. The university accepts over 19,000 students every year, and is considered one of Saudi Arabia's premier educational institutions, consistently ranking among the country's top five locations in which to study (El-Ashkar et al., 2021).

- **University C**

This emerging university was founded in 2006 on the eastern fringes of the city of Najran, which has a population of 505,000 (Al-Smadi & Qblan, 2015). The university provides services to between 15,000 and 20,000 students every year (Al-Smadi & Qblan, 2015). With an area of 18 million square meters, it has the largest university campus in the country. The university has two campuses, one for men and one for women, currently comprising 15 colleges for men and 10 for women, with a total capacity of 45,000 students. The university also incorporates a medical city, a research centre, sports and entertainment arenas, and housing for faculty, staff, and students (Al-Smadi & Qblan, 2015).

- **University D**

This emerging university, founded in 2014, is the only one in its province, located in the city of Jizan. The main campus is near the Red Sea, with satellite campuses at Sabya, Farasan, Al-Daer, and Abu Arish (Moukali & Saeed, 2017). The university is best known for its medical and dental schools, as well as its business school and humanities departments, with a total of 23 faculties. This university consistently ranks among the country's top 20. With around 44,000 concurrent students, it is also one of the largest public universities in Saudi Arabia (Arshad et al., 2018).

#### **4.8.2 Sampling in this study**

Eighty-five Saudi and non-Saudi citizens with differing levels of experience in HRM in a university context were selected to participate in this study using the snowball sampling method (breakdown shown in Table 18). Creswell (2009) describes purposive sampling as a process in which the researcher uses discretion to select suitable participants for the study. Senior managers constitute a segment of the staff in public higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Thirty-five senior managers from different administrations and deanships were interviewed (Figure 18, below). Interviewing participants holding different positions allows the cross-checking of information (Read, 2018). The academic staff targeted in this study work in public higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia in a variety of colleges and from varying backgrounds (Figure 19, below). Gender, nationality, academic rank, and years of experience were noted for each participant. Thirty-three (64%) were male, 18 (35%) were female, 29 (56%) were of Saudi nationality, and 22 (43%) were of non-Saudi nationality. 26 (50%) were assistant professors, and 11 (21%) were lecturers.

Table 18: Breakdown of participants by university and gender

Participants	Gender	University	University	University	University	Total
		A	B	C	D	
Senior Managers	Male	4	6	5	4	19
	Female	3	4	3	6	16
Academic staff	Male	8	7	6	8	29
	Female	5	5	4	7	21
<b>Total</b>		20	22	18	25	<b>85</b>

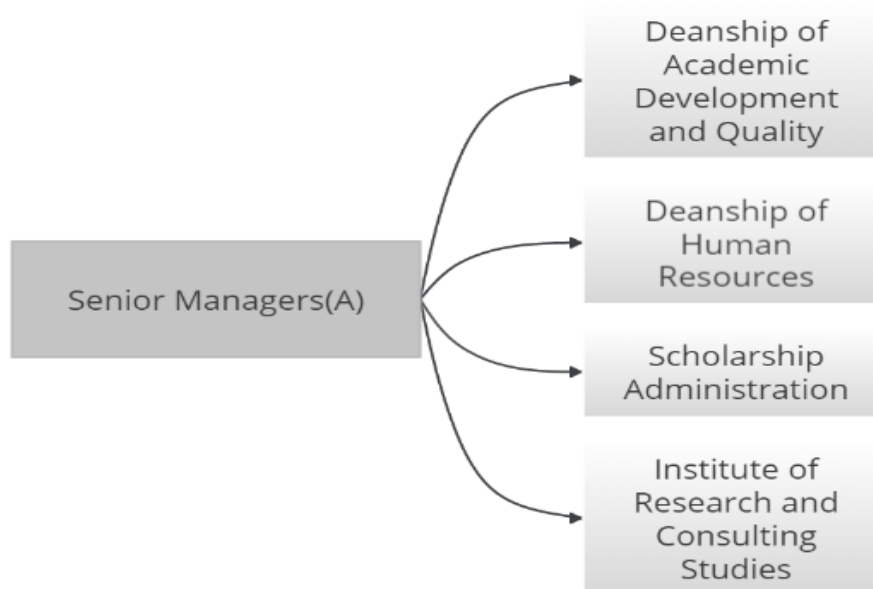


Figure 18: Breakdown of senior managers in this study

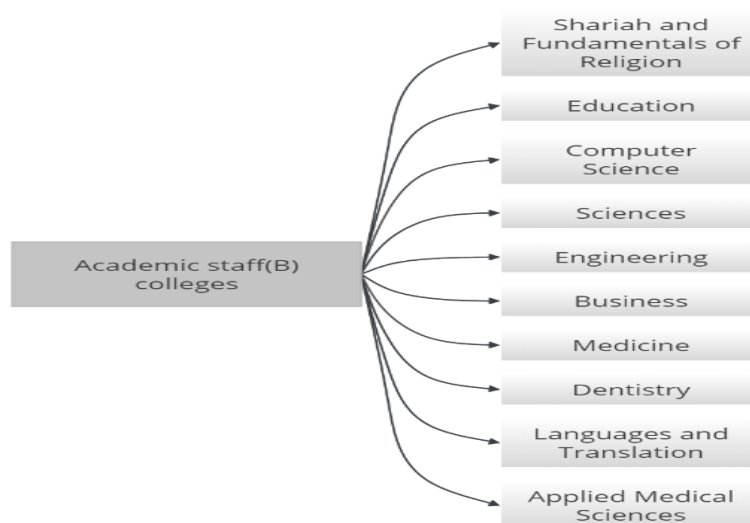


Figure 19: Breakdown of academic staff in this study

#### 4.9 Data Management

Bell (2018) advises that issues involving confidentiality and anonymity must take into account legal issues and ethical concerns. For example, when data is gathered for social research, it is crucial that such data cannot be linked to the individuals who provided it. Crow and Wiles (2008) suggest using pseudonyms as a primary method of preserving the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the organisation itself.

In observing the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act 1998 and Swansea University policy, the data collected for this study was handled, stored, and analysed in a way that preserved its confidentiality throughout the study. This involved ensuring that all identifiable information was anonymised using distinct alphanumeric identifiers before analysis began. All details that could be connected to the participants, such as addresses and departments, did not appear in the data analysis sheets. The only individuals with access to the anonymised data were the researcher and academic supervisor, and all data collected was used for the purposes of this study only.

The researcher took responsibility for the proper storage and handling of all collected data and the outcomes of the research. The data collected and produced during this study was securely kept in electronic and paper formats. When conducting the interviews, a digital audio recorder was used before the data was transcribed and translated by the researcher. Following this, the

data was saved in a password-protected computer at Swansea University. In this case, the only two people with the password were the researcher and academic supervisor.

#### **4.9.1 Trustworthiness of data**

In a study, the quality of the data can be improved by using triangulation (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Denzin (2013) proposes four strategies for triangulation: theories, methods, multiple sources of data, and investigators. For Lincoln (1986), data triangulation involves several sources of data used as a way of verifying evidence. In the present study, the researcher employed three methods for collecting data to develop the data triangulation process: lecturers, assistant professors, and top HR managers. This ensures that the data collected is a reflection of the views of these three distinct groups of people who are replicated in each case study, and that the qualitative research represents an adequately detailed depiction of the situation being explored so as to improve confidence in the conclusions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Obtaining consistent information from different sources of data also provides a sound and coherent justification for the data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Triangulation benefits a study in which more than one method is employed to solve a problem (Denzin, 2013). The present study follows this by employing both in-depth interviews and document analysis.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the idea of trustworthiness by “member checking” and highlight the significant role played by the setting in which the empirical work takes place. Before conducting the interviews in this study, the HR departments of each of the four universities where the interviews were to be carried out were visited. These visits took place before the lockdowns due to the Covid-19 situation were introduced by the government in Saudi Arabia. The aim was to develop a relationship with the participants so as to increase the response rate, to re-emphasise the purpose of the research, and provide assurance to the participants that their confidentiality would be respected. It was hoped that this process would increase the chance that the participants would freely express their views and provide more genuine answers. Visits were also planned to conduct member checking with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) during the stage of transcribing the data, whereby further clarity could be gained about specific points so as to ensure exact interpretation of the concepts/words used by the participants. However, this was not possible as a result of the restrictions brought about by Covid-19.

Using online Zoom meetings, the researcher was able to sense-check the Arabic version of the interview with two HR directors and one member of academic staff. From this, proposals were made with regard to the arrangement and clarity of the translated questions, and insights were given about how to implement the initiatives for improvement. These reflection notations and entries were recorded and used to improve the discussion during the process of conducting the semi-structured interviews with members of the board.

#### **4.9.2 Instruments and procedures for data collection**

The idea of data collection methods denotes the techniques used for gathering the data used to answer the research questions and meet the research aims. Palinkas (2015) suggests that this could be a single method or a combination of several. As a qualitative study, this research collected data from various sources, one of which was the use of the case study (Yin, 2017). (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) identifies six data sources: documents, physical artefacts, archival records, participant observation, interviews, and direct observation. The present study used document analysis and in-depth interviews to gain the full and rich range of data that would help meet its objectives. The data was collected incrementally, with the initial step involving an attempt to understand the universities involved in the study. This entailed sending a formal letter to each, with an explanation of the study's aims and objectives. In the same letter, organisational concerns were addressed with regard to the universities' anonymity and confidentiality. For the final step, follow-up reminders were sent via email and phone calls to ensure sufficient access.

Considering that the official language in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions is Arabic, the interviews with the participants were carried out in Arabic, before being transcribed and translated into English. The translations were then reviewed by an independent reviewer to ensure accuracy (Brislin, 1980). To ensure consistency in interpretation between the interviewer and the interviews, the researcher put in place what Sandberg (2005) calls the "community of interpretation" by ensuring that all the participants understood the purpose of the study before the interviews started. Eighty-five interviews, lasting between 65 and 70 minutes were audio recorded. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and public health measures in Saudi Arabia most of the interviews were conducted using Skype and Zoom meetings. There is a growing literature supporting the use and effectiveness of video conference technologies like Skype, Zoom, and Apple FaceTime in this kind of research (Lichtenwald & Tang, 2020), so there is no anticipated effect on the results from this.

Figure 20 illustrates the interview procedure for this study.

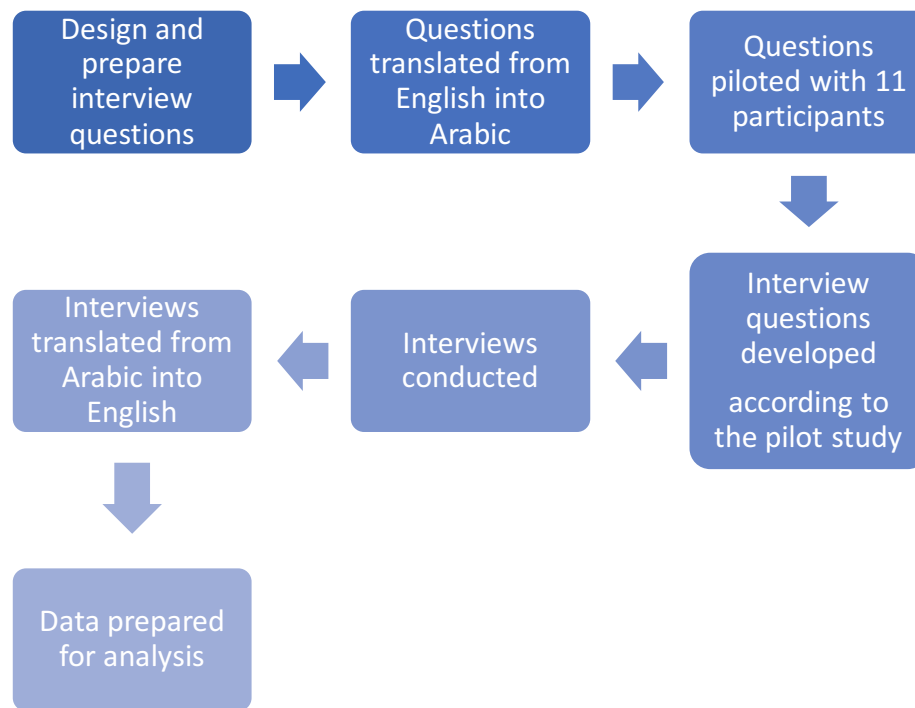


Figure 20: Interview procedure for this study

#### 4.9.3 Document analysis

Myers (2013) advises that in a study employing qualitative research methods, the use of documentary evidence as secondary data collection is an effective way of supporting other data collection techniques. Bryman (2015) notes that researchers conducting a case study of organisations can use documents available in the public domain to gain a greater understanding of the case situation. For the present study, electronic media sources, prior literature, and reports from credible private organisations were used for this purpose. This secondary data made it possible to triangulate the results of the study using different sources to improve its credibility (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019), and to gain relevant information about the universities selected. The government regulatory requirements for universities in Saudi Arabia were obtained from HRM research publications.

#### 4.10 Data Analysis Technique

Numerous techniques can be used when analysing qualitative data, including phonological analysis (Smith & Shunebourne, 2012), thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017) (see Table 19). Thematic analysis is considered to afford broad, useful results, as it involves mediating the analysis of different kinds of



qualitative data. Bryman (2015) and Saunders et al. (2016) view thematic analysis as generic, while Braun and Clarke (2006) say that it is a foundational approach that assists in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns, which implies themes inherent in qualitative data.

Table 19: Comparison of qualitative analysis techniques

Techniques	Structured thematic analysis	Template analysis	Matrix analysis	Framework analysis
Authors	Braun and Clarke (2006)	King (2004)	Miles and Huberman (1994)	Spencer and Ritchie (2002)
<b>Processes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Familiarising yourself.</li> <li>2. Generating initial codes.</li> <li>3. Searching for themes.</li> <li>4. Reviewing themes.</li> <li>5. Defining and naming.</li> <li>6. Producing the report.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Familiarisation with data.</li> <li>2. Preliminary data coding (setting a priori codes).</li> <li>3. Clustering of themes.</li> <li>4. Developing initial coding template.</li> <li>5. Applying initial template to data and make necessary modifications.</li> <li>6. Completing and applying the final template to the whole data set.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data reduction.</li> <li>2. Data display.</li> <li>3. Conclusion drawing and verification.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data familiarisation.</li> <li>2. Identification of thematic structure.</li> <li>3. Indexing (coding)</li> <li>4. Charting (summarising)</li> <li>5. Mapping and interpretation.</li> </ol>
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility of analysis processes.</li> <li>- Adaptability to different epistemologies.</li> <li>- Widely used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility of analysis processes.</li> <li>- Adaptability to different epistemologies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility of analysis processes.</li> <li>- Adaptability to different epistemologies.</li> <li>- Can be used as complementary to other techniques to consolidate trustworthiness of findings.</li> <li>- Widely used within different sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility of analysis processes.</li> <li>- Adaptability to different epistemologies.</li> <li>- Widely used in healthcare and public and social policy.</li> <li>- Easy for novice researchers.</li> <li>- Retrieval of analysed data.</li> <li>- Clear coding process (descriptive codes, interpretive codes, overarching theme)</li> <li>- Transparent analysis process.</li> </ul>
<b>Limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of unified academic views to claim, define and shape its specific path of analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dearth of literature that supports its use compared to other analytic approaches.</li> <li>- Limited application.</li> <li>- Less secure for novice researchers.</li> <li>- Less emphasis on sequential transition of coding (from descriptive code to interpretive code to overarching theme).</li> <li>- Lack of visual display of textual data.</li> <li>- Used mainly in psychology research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus mainly on data display techniques.</li> <li>- Can be used as a commentary on other techniques.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time consuming analysis.</li> </ul>

The present study employed framework analysis to analyse the collected data, a method which has become popular within the public sector (Dixon-Woods, 2011). The primary role of the framework analysis technique is to allow in-depth comprehension of the diversity of social and public organisations. This matches it closely with this study's purpose, which is to explore T&D challenges in Saudi Arabian public universities. The framework analysis technique is widely used to analyse semi-structured interviews and other kinds of textual data (Gale et al., 2013) as it is flexible and can be applied to studies with varying epistemological assumptions (Dixon-Woods, 2011). It is also applicable to inductive, deductive, and integrated approaches to qualitative data analysis (Gale et al., 2013).

In practice, framework analysis uses five successive phases of data analysis: data familiarisation, identification of thematic structure, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation (Dixon-Woods, 2011). The fifth of these, mapping and interpretation, represents a central element of this method, as it is where meaningful interpretation and displays of textual data can be found. This phase delivers broader comprehension and a clear depiction of qualitative data in connection with the definition of the concept, the characteristics of the

phenomenon being studied, grouping the various cases, identifying connections, explaining attitudes and behaviours, and creating strategies for change (Spencer & Ritchie, 2002).

Apart from the advantage of its illustrative character, framework analysis has other strengths that have made it a popular method in the public sector. It is an organised method of explaining and indexing textual data that makes available properly documented and retrievable steps for analysis, boosting the transparency of the entire process of data analysis. It is the view of Smith and Firth (2011) that the researcher's ability to sustain a transparent connection between the original textual data and the themes deduced from it could play a positive role in the improvement of the validity and rigorousness of the process of analysis.

Framework analysis is flexible with regard to cross-sectional research because it can be adapted to various kinds of studies, and it makes it possible to change strategies across the process of analysis (Spencer & Ritchie, 2002). The technique also allows the setting of a list of coding categories (themes) from the beginning of the analysis, amalgamating with other themes as they emerge (Dixon-Woods, 2011). When taken together, these characteristics indicate the advantages of the method with regard to boosting the validity of the textual data, which has long been perceived to be a significant challenge in qualitative research. The next section provides further detail about how framework analysis was carried out in the present study.

#### 4.10.1 Application of analysis technique

All interviews were transcribed verbatim in Arabic and translated into English. In order to organise the data, unique alphanumeric identifiers were given to participants: for instance, the letter "A" denoted the interviewee's position as a senior manager and the digit attached referenced the sequential order, while "B" denoted an academic staff member (Table 20).

*Table 20: Participant coding list*

Participant(B)	New code name	Participant(A)	New code name
Participant 01	Participant B001	Participant 02	Participant A001
Participant 04	Participant B002	Participant 03	Participant A002
Participant 05	Participant B003	Participant 07	Participant A003
Participant 06	Participant B004	Participant 20	Participant A004
Participant 08	Participant B005	Participant 21	Participant A005
Participant 09	Participant B006	Participant 22	Participant A006
Participant 10	Participant B007	Participant 23	Participant A007
Participant 11	Participant B008	Participant 26	Participant A008
Participant 12	Participant B009	Participant 27	Participant A009

Participant 13	Participant B010	Participant 28	Participant A010
Participant 14	Participant B011	Participant 37	Participant A011
Participant 15	Participant B012	Participant 38	Participant A012
Participant 16	Participant B013	Participant 41	Participant A013
Participant 17	Participant B014	Participant 82	Participant A014

### **Stage One: Data familiarisation**

This stage requires becoming familiar with the data by reading the interview transcripts several times and listening to the audio recordings. While doing this, reminders, notes, and annotations were used to provide further illustration during the process of coding. This process allows the researcher to become conscious of the emerging themes and record them accordingly. In this study, this stage provided useful information that assisted in the analysis in later stages.

### **Stage Two: Identification of the thematic structure**

In this phase, a working analytic framework was established (Gale et al., 2013) containing the preliminary themes. The framework was used to support the coding process in the next stage. To establish the framework, the main information synthesised from the data familiarisation stage was used, coupled with reading the initial transcripts. Taking into account the comments recorded during the data familiarisation phase, the transcripts were read line by line. Spencer et al. (2014) comment that “having a hierarchical arrangement of themes and sub-themes means that the researcher can ‘hold’ the overall structure in their head, rather than becoming lost in a proliferation of more specific labels.” Saldana (2009) also adds that researchers often end up with between five and seven main themes. Furthermore, Spencer et al. (2014) suggest that, at the constructing of an initial thematic framework stage of the analysis, themes should be descriptive rather than abstract and stay grounded in the data. On the basis of the concepts emerging from the data, the coding process was done inductively. Using the test of relevance, the codes were categorised into themes and subthemes, which constituted the working analytical framework. The rest of the transcripts were indexed using this framework as a heuristic implement. It is important to note that this framework was altered several times as codes and themes developed through the analysis process.

### **Stage Three: Indexing (coding)**

Once the working analytical framework was developed, the codes, themes and subthemes it contained became the guide for coding all of the transcripts. The indexing was done in a Word document by creating a table with five columns, one to display the transcript and the other three

listing the similarities, differences and outliers, which rendered the coding process faster and made it possible to continuously modify the working framework based on developing codes from the transcripts that followed. Up to the last transcript, the framework was continually altered. Thus, the indexing phase resulted in the development of the complete analytical framework, representing the final categories of themes and subthemes that assisted in plotting the data into a separate matrix.

#### **Stage Four: Charting (summarising)**

The matrix developed in the charting stage involved plotting the data based on pertinent themes and subthemes. This matrix assisted in reducing the large amounts of data and grouping them into formats that made it easier to determine whether there were themes that needed subdivision to avoid any recurrent distinctions in the data, or any subthemes that needed merging. This was helpful for the presentation of findings in the interpretation phase because they were too refined.

#### **Stage Five: Mapping and interpretation**

The mapping and interpretation phase focused on the descriptive accounts related to the manner in which the coded data represents a meaningful explanation of the objectives of the research, encompassing a narrative account of the major findings of the qualitative analysis. Chapters Five and Six deliver further presentation and discussion of the qualitative findings.

### **4.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodology used for this research investigating the challenges faced by T&D in public institutions of higher education in Saudi Arabia. The chosen methodology is qualitative in nature, with a case study method used to answer the *how* and *what* questions inherent to the subject. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with 85 participants. The data was analysed using framework analysis. All ethical and data management concerns are fully accounted for in this study, with an emphasis on confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The next chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) present the analysis and findings of the case study itself. Chapter 5 has as its focus, research questions 1 and 2, seeking to understand and examine how the empirical data informs and addresses the central issues concerning T&D needs analysis, implementation and evaluation, as well as illuminating the impact any challenges identified have on the delivery of T&D within the university settings. Chapter 6 then brings the discussion focus to the findings of research question 3 against the

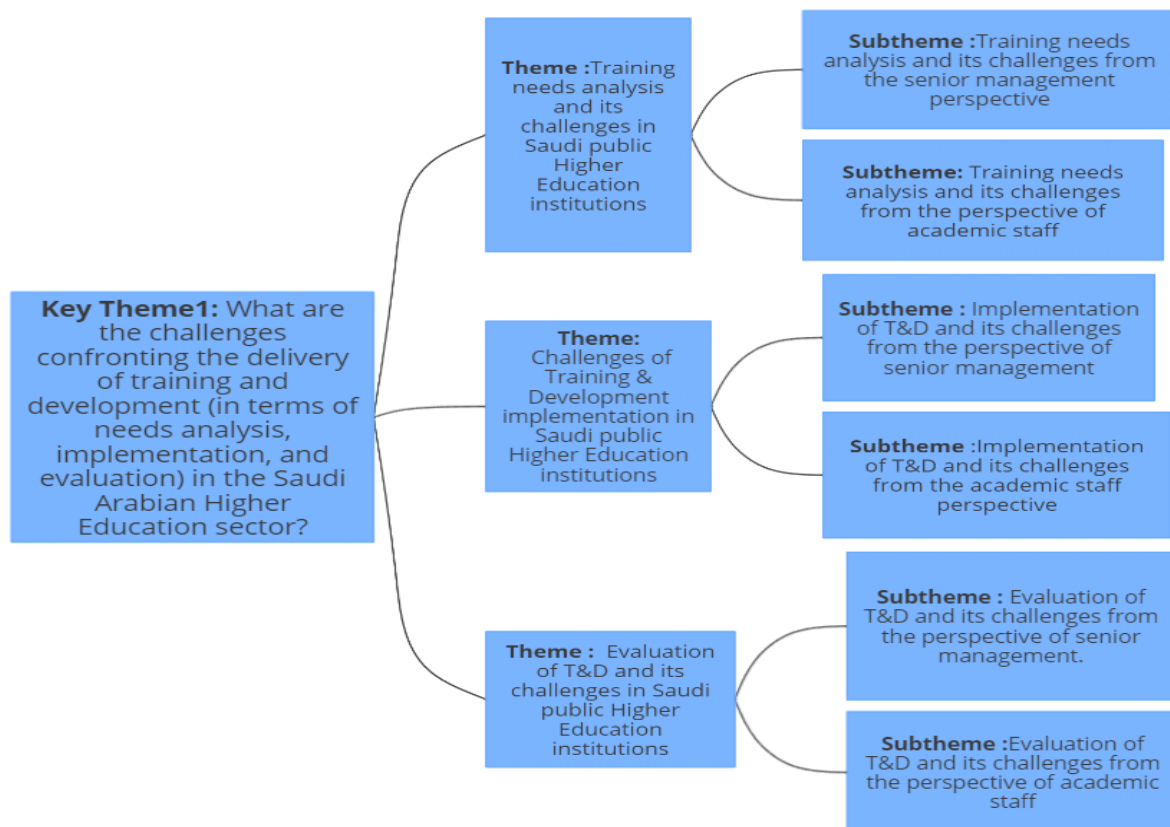
theoretical framework of this study, before Chapter 7 presents possible ways that the challenges identified might be addressed or overcome.

## Chapter 5

### Findings and Data Analysis

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the case study research designed to answer the first two branches of the research questions. The first question relates to the challenges facing training and development (T&D) in Saudi Arabian public universities that encompasses the areas of TNA, implementation, and evaluation. The second relates to the effect of these challenges with regard to T&D delivery in Saudi higher education. As discussed in Chapter 4, the study sample of 85 participants comprised senior managers and academic staff in four different public Higher Education institutions in Saudi Arabia. A thematic data analysis technique was employed to interpret the results of the qualitative part of this research and the findings with respect to the first two research questions are presented in terms of the key themes identified from that analysis, taking into account the two particular perspectives of senior management, and academic staff. Figure 21 sets out way the themes emerged from the coding, and each is further expounded in the following sections. The chapter ends with a summary of the main findings that emerged from the case study.



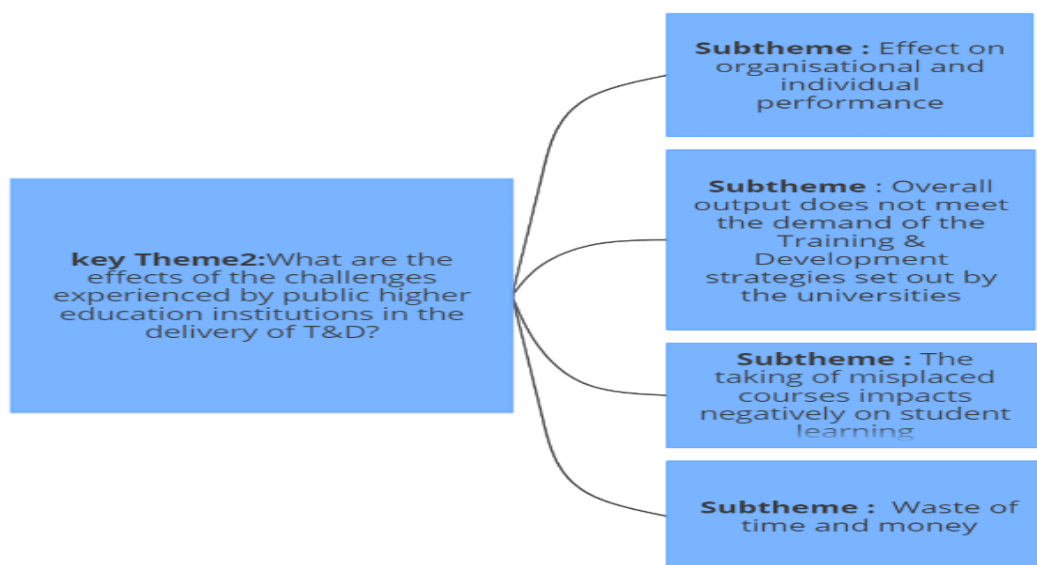


Figure 21: Overview of themes design and flow of the thesis report

## 5.2 Key Theme: What are the challenges confronting the delivery of training and development (in terms of needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation) in the Saudi Arabian Higher Education sector?

This section focuses on the findings from the first research question addressed to the academic institutions. For ease of examination, the three constituent areas within the question of needs analysis, implementation and evaluation, will be taken separately and in turn. Thus, the first subsection focuses on the area of training needs analysis and its delivery from the perspectives of both senior management and academic staff.

### 5.3 Training needs analysis and its challenges in Saudi public Higher Education institutions

#### 5.3.1 Training needs analysis and its challenges from the senior management perspective

##### 5.3.1.1 *Lack of appropriate communication between HR departments and colleges*

The perspectives of senior management form a key element of this research into the challenges encountered when determining T&D needs within Saudi public universities. Several themes and sub-themes emerged from the results of asking the senior university managers how they determine faculty members' training needs. The study revealed that a key challenge in determining faculty members' training needs is lack of suitable communication and coordination. Specific barriers were described as existing between colleges and the deanship which designed the course, and as resulting from university policy. Several participants

reported no communication of any kind with the HR department at any stage of a training programme due to the lack of a policy which encourages and organises communication. That has been reported by most of the participants, including Participant A003:

*There is a lack of communication methods between the HR department and the faculty members or staff in the college, which drive the university to select the staff for T&D randomly*

Participant A058, another senior manager, noted:

*I think the absence of communication between the training administration and other administrators could be a big challenge facing the T&D delivery system.*

The study revealed that there are some reasons behind the lack of communication between faculty members and the HR department, an HR director with 13 years of experience stated the overlap between colleges in terms of T&D needs makes this process difficult and generates unnecessary delays, a view supported by HR manager A008:

*We in the HR division cannot manage a large number of employees, especially in the university, because every college has different training needs; for example, the academic staff in the medicine department need different T&D programmes from the school's management staff. Can you see how this makes it challenging to build training programmes for every college?*

Several senior managers noted a lack of cooperation and willingness to participate in determining training needs as another challenge that they face as decision-makers. Participant A013, a senior director, said:

*The targeted faculty members are not convinced of the importance of determining training needs, so we cannot get accurate data from them, making this a real challenge for the HR department. So, for us, it is hard to create T&D programmes without exact data.*

Several senior managers complained about university policy, which does not oblige a faculty member to participate in a process of assessing training needs, making it challenging to manage staff and accurately determine their T&D needs. Participant A013 went on to say:

*There is no policy that would oblige a faculty member to participate in the training process, making it difficult to control them. For example, last year, we sent about*



*100 surveys to the management staff to determine training needs, especially in research methods. We received only eight surveys back to the department. That means there is no cooperation between the employees of the training department and the workers of other departments, which affects us in making decisions.*

Even though many deanships and units design and execute Human Resource Management (HRM) functions, they often fail to coordinate with each other. Consequently, a diverse array of HRM procedures and practices become established between departments, resulting in distress for the staff who work across departments with different procedures as this directly harms the idea of procedural justice and fairness. For example, even though the immediate supervisor of academic employees is usually responsible for assessing their performance and determining their training needs, the deanship overseeing T&D may ignore the input of school and department heads when determining and selecting T&D candidates. This implies that the training programmes identified by the deanship are unlikely to cohere with the actual training needs of the staff. Participant A008 noted:

*Even though the university conducts training and development, the training is not based on a strategic plan. This means that the universities' training programmes are not based on actual need. They are done in a manner that is disorganised.*

Therefore, it can be argued that training programmes are not based on a proper evaluation of staff training needs, which are often determined by looking at employees' performance. The details of this performance should be contained in performance evaluation reports.

### **5.3.2 Training needs analysis and its challenges from the perspective of academic staff**

Whilst lack of communication emerged as the most significant theme for senior managers, analysis of the responses from academic staff revealed that the highest recurring issue was that of competency. The other key point to emerge concerned the way staff were assessed and selected for training and development.

#### **5.3.2.1 Lack of competency to determine needs**

Several participants highlighted the importance of the perception that those responsible for determining T&D needs in the university are not competent, as they do not correctly identify training needs. Most participants were of the opinion that the people who determine T&D needs in Saudi public universities lack the experience to effectively do their jobs. Participant B017

summed this up:

*The people responsible for training are not specialists and do not have sufficient experience to determine the training needs or manage the training process, which leads to poor T&D outcomes in Saudi universities.*

Some of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the level of experience of HR staff and doubted their ability to effectively select staff for T&D programmes. Another significant challenge noted was the duplication of T&D management roles resulting from the overlap when determining T&D needs and supervision between several deans within the university and the Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs. Participant B012 said:

*In my view and after 15 years of experience in the university, the challenges we face to determine the T&D needs of staff can be appropriately ascertained. This is due to the lack of professional people with experience in the HR department to determine T&D needs. They cannot develop training programmes that can be adopted to increase the skills of faculty members while at the same time linking the programme with university goals. However, what I see is just the same training every year and mere repetition. There seems to be a lack of concern and responsibility in the HR division to develop modern techniques to determine training programmes for academic staff.*

Some participants perceived that, due to issues within the HR system, employees' requirements are not always taken into account when determining T&D needs. The restricted role of HR departments was mentioned, along with the fact that they are often overlooked by other departments. This implies a lack of recognition and credibility in HR departments. Participant B077 reported:

*The training programmes are not designed according to the needs of the trainees. There is a gap between the design of the training and what we need as faculty members. The universities also depend on commercial entities to design training programmes, which often make training packages suitable for all parties and do not consider the needs related to specific beneficiaries.*

### **5.3.2.2 Biases in the selection processes of academic staff for T&D**

A sense of discontent was evident from some participants with regard to perceived bias in the selection of candidates for T&D programmes, with some claiming that training needs are

determined based on personal relationships. Participant B78, for example, said:

*Channelled and interpersonal relationships are the challenges that the administration faces in determining the need for training. Also, we can see the same person attending T&D programmes many times. The people who have a good relationship with the HR managers get a chance to apply for many development programmes, so this makes me unhappy, to be honest.*

Participant B008 echoed this:

*Participation in training courses is limited to individuals whom the administration has previously nominated. This nomination is often based on personal relationships and not on actual need. For example, we can see the same group of academic staff selected for T&D courses every year. Some of them have attended the same programmes twice, which, to be honest, affects our career growth and the overall atmosphere in the department.*

The participants also expressed the view that Saudi nationals are preferentially offered T&D opportunities over foreign nationals. Although training programmes are designed to support employees without considering their nationality, the participants consistently see employees born outside Saudi Arabia being offered only in-house (internal) training, while external T&D opportunities seem reserved for employees that hold Saudi citizenship. Although non-Saudi employees believe that T&D programmes can help them improve their teaching and research skills, they generally do not seem to be able to access these programmes. Article 27 of the Charter for Employment of Foreign-Born Workers stipulates that “the University President may, on the recommendation of the Departmental Faculty Board and then the College Faculty Board, allow a faculty member to attend a conference or symposium, without the university bearing any expense” (Statute Governing the Employment of Non-Saudis at Universities 1996, p. 8). Notwithstanding the reality that this law is not discriminatory on its own, it has provided deans with an excuse to engage in a form of discrimination against foreign-born employees when it comes to allocating T&D. This is a view acknowledged by Participant B030, a non-Saudi employee, who said:

*It appears the university policy does not provide us non-Saudi citizens the opportunity to participate in development programmes because the focus tends to be more on Saudi faculty than non-Saudi faculty with regard to training and development. Because of this, we can feel that there is a gap between us. I hope that*

*the university will allow us to attend training and development programmes in the same way it does for citizens of Saudi Arabia.*

It is clear that even though both Saudi and non-Saudi employees feel that they need access to T&D opportunities, foreign-born workers are not provided with the same opportunities as those born in Saudi Arabia, being confined largely to internal training. Many of the participants felt this leads to differentiation and inequality between Saudi citizens and workers from other countries despite the fact that employment contracts require all staff members to contribute to the advancement of teaching and research and support the institutions that employ them to become world-renowned places of learning. Foreign-born participant B012 stated:

*The targeted participants of training courses are the Saudi faculty members instead of the non-Saudis; therefore, need is determined based on specific faculty members' situation. This makes us disappointed as non-Saudi staff and affects our performance. Also, there is no support for non-Saudi faculty members to attend and participate in conferences. The motivation that makes me publish research work is to get a promotion to associate professor.*

Notably, a sense of discontent emerged from the majority of female faculty members with regard to gender bias in T&D candidate selection. Participant B071 complained that HR provides males with more opportunities to attend long-term programmes than females:

*There is a lack of interest in developing female faculty members; the focus is on male faculty members. In other words, there is a definite bias in favour of the male group. For example, we as female staff often apply for development programmes called "Manager of the Future". This course takes place in America for around one year. We find that only male colleagues get this course rather than us. I do not know the reason for that.*

The relevant available documents maintain that there is no gender bias in the way T&D is provided to academic staff in public universities by the Saudi government. However, the facts also show that the number of Saudi females in elite leadership positions in Higher Education is far lower than the number of males. Another female participant (B061) noted:

*As women in this university, we face gender bias from Human Resources Development (HRD), but women leaders in Saudi Higher Education are still under-*

*represented because HR believes women cannot be managers. To be honest, I do not know why they think like that.*

### **5.3.3 Summary of the research findings in relation to the Training Needs Analysis challenges in Saudi public Higher Education institutions.**

In summary, the findings from the interviews regarding TNA highlight a number of critical challenges that have not perhaps received as much attention as they should within the T&D field within the Saudi/Middle East context. First, it becomes clear directly from the experiences of those involved within the institutions that public universities in Saudi Arabia do not use a straightforward method to determine T&D needs due to the duplication of T&D management roles resulting from department and supervision overlaps between the several deans within the university and the Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs. A gap has also been identified between the HR department and academic staff in the methods for assessing T&D needs, as well as a lack of communication and coordination between the Deanship of Faculty and Deanship of Personnel Affairs on the development and implementation of training programmes. Additionally, there emerges a lack of confidence from academic staff in the competence of HR to develop and organise training programmes. Finally, two levels of discrimination when allocating T&D opportunities were identified by the participants: the first based on whether a staff member is foreign-born or a Saudi citizen, and the second based on gender. Both foreign-born employees and female employees state that they are denied access to T&D opportunities.

### **5.4 Challenges of Training & Development implementation in Saudi public Higher Education institutions**

This study has explored several questions and sub-questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges which arise during the implementation of training programmes by examining the methods undertaken in this process in the selected universities. Some of the themes or points that emerged from the interviews were applicable across all forms of training, but some were more particularly associated with the specific way T&D programmes were implemented or offered.

#### **5.4.1 Implementation of T&D and its challenges from the perspective of senior management**

##### ***5.4.1.1 Lack of interest among faculty members to attend T&D programmes mainly because they are not demand focused.***

Several senior directors reported a lack of seriousness in training programme candidates during off-campus training, claiming that some staff consider it a chance for relaxation or recreation. The first of the given reasons for this is the absence of follow-up by employers and supervisors. The second is that some participants lack confidence in the training programmes because they are not free to select those which best meet their training needs. Participant A037 said:

*Some faculty members consider participation in off-campus programmes as an opportunity for recreation and relaxation. This affects the effectiveness of training programmes, and it is a challenge for external, internal, or on-campus implementation of training courses.*

Participant A033 added:

*Training programmes conducted off-campus are considered by participants as luxury tourism or holidays. They are also aware that there will be no follow-up by the employers and the supervisors, so the programmes are not taken seriously, and this affects the results and the purpose and objectives of the training courses. What is supposed to be a training course appears to be a holiday for most faculty members. The staff members are more interested in the financial incentives than the programme itself.*

Some managers pointed out that this has a negative impact on on-campus training as it does not have the same financial incentives as off-campus training, so the academic staff tend to show little interest in it. For example, participant A014 noted:

*Members of staff do not have the will and morale to participate in implementing these programmes or attending the programmes on-campus. The lack of interest among faculty members in achieving the programmes' goals is very evident. In view of the inability of the university to accurately determine training needs, there is a lack of interest among faculty members to attend any T&D implementation on-campus because they believe these programmes will not advance their careers.*

Participant A029 similarly stated:

*The faculty members do not have a real desire to participate in these courses due to the absence of any financial incentive. This makes participation in on-campus training programmes irrelevant to them as they do not see any personal gain if they attend these training programmes.*

Additionally, several senior directors concluded that some members of academic staff believe they do not require development programmes on campus because they were educated in developed countries where they achieved higher degrees, leading to the belief that on-campus T&D in Saudi Arabia would not help them achieve their ambitions. This was noted by Participant A016:

*Most of the faculty members believe that obtaining higher university degrees excuses them from participating in training courses provided by the university. They think that because they graduated from top universities overseas, I mean in developed countries, T&D on-campus or in Saudi Arabia in general is useless.*

#### **5.4.1.2 Lack of financial support provided by the university**

Regarding the implementation of off-campus training, most senior directors confirmed that the university's lack of financial support represents a serious challenge. One HR director (A010) with 13 years of experience at one of the universities commented:

*As for off-campus training, the lack of financial support for the implementation of training programmes is considered a significant challenge faced by this type of training course because we cannot send many faculty members outside the university based on the proposed budget for each year; as you know, that will cost the university more money. In fact, in the last three years, we have seen a lack of government support for this kind of training method.*

Participant A036 shared this view:

*Concerning the challenges faced by implementing training courses outside the campus, we have already mentioned the high cost that the university bears to implement off-campus training programmes, which results in the small number of off-campus programmes available for faculty members to participate in.*

In addition, the managers reported that programmes designed on-campus bear a high cost, representing another challenge faced by universities' HR departments. The result of this is that the universities do not update or redefine their training, or adopt new training models, as there

is a belief that the high costs do not justify the ends, which in this case are quality training programmes for university faculty. Participant A008, a senior manager, said:

*The high cost of designing training courses on campus by centres or private professional companies is the major challenge in designing training. This is because they ask for huge sums of money for designing and conducting T&D for every college in the university. We in the HR department cannot provide this money and cover every college training need with our budget.*

Participant A001, an HR director, noted another challenge by referring to the lack of training facilities available to the university:

*The lack of training facilities such as rooms or auditoriums limit us in designing and delivering T&D programmes on-campus. For example, we do not have workshop rooms for every college, which has affected the training design.*

Related to this, university policies and practices were identified as a challenge to the design of on-campus T&D. Some senior managers commented on insufficient time to design training courses to match the faculty members' needs and deliver them on-campus. Participant A006, a senior manager, stated:

*The time available to design on-campus programmes is not enough because the top managers need to complete all T&D programmes at the end of each semester. So that means all T&D programmes should be completed in about four months. This policy affects the quality of our programmes, and as you can see, we do not have time to design T&D programmes because the university administration only thinks about the number of training programmes, not the quality, and closes the finishing statement at the end of the fiscal year. That has affected the quality of the training programmes, as just rushing through to meet the semester deadlines results in mediocre training programmes which do not meet the objective of developing advanced programmes for faculty members.*

Senior manager A032 expressed a similar view:

There is a lack of sufficient time to design and deliver training programmes on-campus and this has affected us in the college because HR needs to finish the training programmes in a short time. This affects the faculty members in their lecture schedule, which, in my view, is a



lack of adequate consideration for the design and implementation of training and development programmes in the university in general.

#### **5.4.2 Implementation of T&D and its challenges from the academic staff perspective**

##### **5.4.2.1 Lack of time**

The vast majority of the respondents stated that the heavy teaching workload prevents them from participating in T&D in the university due to a lack of time. Participant B008 explained:

*The challenge faced when attending on-campus or off-campus training is the lack of time. This causes faculty members to feel reluctant to participate in training courses. Academic staff are already struggling to find sufficient time to handle their enormous workloads and meet their very tight deadlines, so they are reluctant to attend training courses during the teaching period.*

Participant B020 supported this view:

*The most prominent challenge in implementing on-campus training is the additional burden placed on the faculty members as the training courses' implementation occurs after the end of the official working hours. This forces the faculty members to stay at work until late in the evening. The additional teaching and administrative load prevent faculty members from participating in training courses. Also, the implementation of programmes after working hours prevents female staff from participating as the timing conflicts with their other domestic roles.*

This raised a point of further gender bias: several female staff members face challenges in attending T&D off-campus because family circumstances can be linked to a lack of time, especially among married women with children. Participant B008 stated:

*Female faculty members are limited in terms of travel due to family circumstances. This makes attending training outside the university arduous and could be one of the reasons why most of us abstain from off-campus training even though some of us are*

##### **5.4.2.2 Lack of on-campus facilities**

The majority of academic staff participants complained about the poor T&D facilities and training environment in Saudi public universities. When visiting these universities' training

centres, it is clear that there is insufficient equipment for training, and what does exist is old and inefficient. Most of the academic staff agreed with this, such as Participant B043:

*The university fails to provide a suitable training environment in the workplace which would effectively deliver the content of training programmes successfully. Also, there is poor selection of training materials, where training materials are copied from books or internet sources without any attempt to provide new content.*

Participant B066 supported this:

*In many situations, the university contracts with incompetent trainers who are incapable of successfully delivering content in training programmes. Also, shortcomings in the available facilities, such as halls equipped with assistive technology, have a negative impact on T&D in the university.*

#### **5.4.2.3 Limited off-campus T&D for non-Saudi employees**

Reflecting on the bias in the selection of staff members for training, it is important to note that although most academic staff in Saudi Arabia (63% of professors, for example) are foreign-born, they are given limited access to T&D opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2019). Participant B031 indicated that since he started working for the university, he had only received one opportunity to participate in a training programme, and it was one organised within the university:

*While I appreciate the training and development programmes held by this university, I still believe that there is a need for more training courses aligned with the needs of faculty members. In my case, since I started working for this university, I have only attended a single training course, and it was held within the university.*

By contrast, Saudi nationals are often given the opportunity to attend international seminars and conferences, as pointed out by participant B029:

*People who attend training programmes are selected based on personal relationships and not on experience or competence in training or training needs. This especially affects those of us who are non-Saudi citizens. When non-Saudis do not get opportunities to attend training and development programmes off-campus, their performance may be negatively affected.*

The expectations of Saudi nationals and foreign-born workers are the same. However, based on the participants' views, career and T&D opportunities are limited for those who do not hold Saudi citizenship, who are mostly restricted to internal training. This is the basis on which some participants believe that the system results in discrimination and inequality, where Saudi citizens are seen as receiving preferential treatment at the expense of their counterparts from other countries. This is not an effective way to produce excellence, as the success of an academic institution depends on the ability of its entire workforce to perform to a high standard regardless of where they are from.

### **5.4.3 Summary of the findings in relation to challenges of Training & Development implementation in Saudi public Higher Education institutions**

In sum, the findings of this section highlight some significant challenges to the implementation of T&D that centre around the issues of motivation, quality and access. It is the perception of management that most academic staff believe any T&D programmes implemented on-campus are of low quality and, as they lack financial rewards, there is little interest in participation. There is also the perception that some participants use off-campus programmes as an opportunity for recreation and relaxation rather than a chance to develop their skills because there is no follow-up by employers or supervisors into the result and purpose of the training. Many senior managers noted that the lack of financial support provided by the university is a reason for the poor quality of T&D programmes, and that universities tend to focus on the quantity of T&D over quality. Academic staff cite a lack of time as a main reason for not attending training programmes, as they struggle to combine a heavy teaching workload with training courses, and this is even more pronounced for female staff with domestic commitments. Finally, non-Saudi employees are offered limited opportunities to attend off-campus T&D programmes, a form of discrimination which creates resentment.

## **5.5 Evaluation of T&D and its challenges in Saudi public Higher Education institutions**

### **5.5.1 Evaluation of T&D and its challenges from the perspective of senior management.**

#### ***5.5.1.1 Lack of performance management***

The senior managers were asked about the methods used to assess T&D outcomes for academic staff who attend T&D programmes. Some replied that the HR department uses questionnaires for this but added that the survey generally amounts to little more than a summary of the faculty members who attended the courses, including details about time, location, and duration, with

extremely limited emphasis on the net benefits of the methods used to develop the faculty staff in terms of upskilling or learning new skills to advance their careers. This is combined with a general lack of performance management systems, an observation shared by several senior managers. Using no particular method used to assess training programmes means their value cannot be gained. Participant A010 noted:

*The reality is that there are no effective techniques for evaluating the usefulness of training that faculty members attend. For me, this is a huge challenge that has faced us in the HR department in Saudi Arabian public universities. I believe that this can be credited to the fact that there is no clarity when it comes to the methods used in managing performance.*

An assistant HR director (A011) added:

*The challenges that administrators face in assessing the extent of the benefits could be summarised by referring to the absence of performance evaluation of faculty members through a job description card. Consequently, the strengths and weaknesses of these staff are absent. Also, the training courses mainly focus on quantity rather than quality in the outcome of the training i.e., how many people have passed the training rather than the types of abilities obtained from the training courses.*

## **5.5.2 Evaluation of T&D and its challenges from the perspective of academic staff**

### **5.5.2.1 Role ambiguity in HRM practices**

Duplication in managing and evaluating T&D outcomes emerged as a significant challenge in Saudi Higher Education institutions, along with a lack of confidence in decision-makers, as most respondents perceived little expertise in the assessment of T&D outcomes. Participant B008 observed:

*There is an absence of qualified people to assess the benefits and there is also no consistent method of evaluating training effectiveness and usefulness. From my perspective, the job descriptions are not clear, which affects measurement of faculty staff's performance and ability to compare their performance after they finish T&D programmes. This is due to the university's HR practices' weaknesses, which in turn affect the overall success or effectiveness of the training programmes and is nothing but sheer wastage of the university's resources.*

Regarding the evaluation of T&D programmes, the main challenge discovered was the lack of a credible method for the assessment of T&D outcomes. For example, several participants pointed out that the training department has no reasonable way to assess training programmes, making this the main flaw. Participant A064 said:

*The major challenge encountered by the administration in evaluating the extent of benefits from the training programme is the absence of methods used to measure the training courses' results. From my personal experience, I have been to many T&D off-campus programmes: no one knows if I went to these programmes or not. Some faculty members like it because they are using these programmes to travel and have some free time, to be honest with you. It is a sort of vacation while still attending a so-called training course at the university's expense (time and money).*

Participant A025 supported this view:

*There is no seriousness among faculty members in answering the questionnaire distributed to them to assess the training programme.*

The majority of the respondents pointed to the lack of communication between the HR department and the heads of departments and deans of colleges, thus creating a challenge evaluating the faculty members after attending the T&D programmes. The college dean said:

*Departments and deans of colleges do not contribute to the training programme's design. Therefore, they do not know the content of the training programme, and what makes the assessment of the training programme difficult is that we do not know the aims and objectives of these programmes. I think that happens because HR has failed to build the training programmes in the right way. (A45)*

### **5.5.3 Summary of the findings in relation to challenges of Training & Development evaluation in Saudi public Higher Education institutions**

The findings from research question one highlight two main challenges. First, there are no clear and consistent methods used to manage the faculty's performance, making it difficult to assess T&D outcomes. Second, a significant challenge is presented by duplication of tasks related to managing and evaluating T&D.

## 5.6 Key Theme: What are the effects of the challenges experienced by public higher education institutions in the delivery of T&D?

To gain deeper understanding and address the second research question that flows from the above regarding the impact that these challenges have on the delivery of T&D within these institutions, a series of follow-up questions were asked. All participants agreed that challenges in T&D impact on the effectiveness of T&D programmes, and some highlighted specific points of importance, discussed in the following sections (Figure 22).

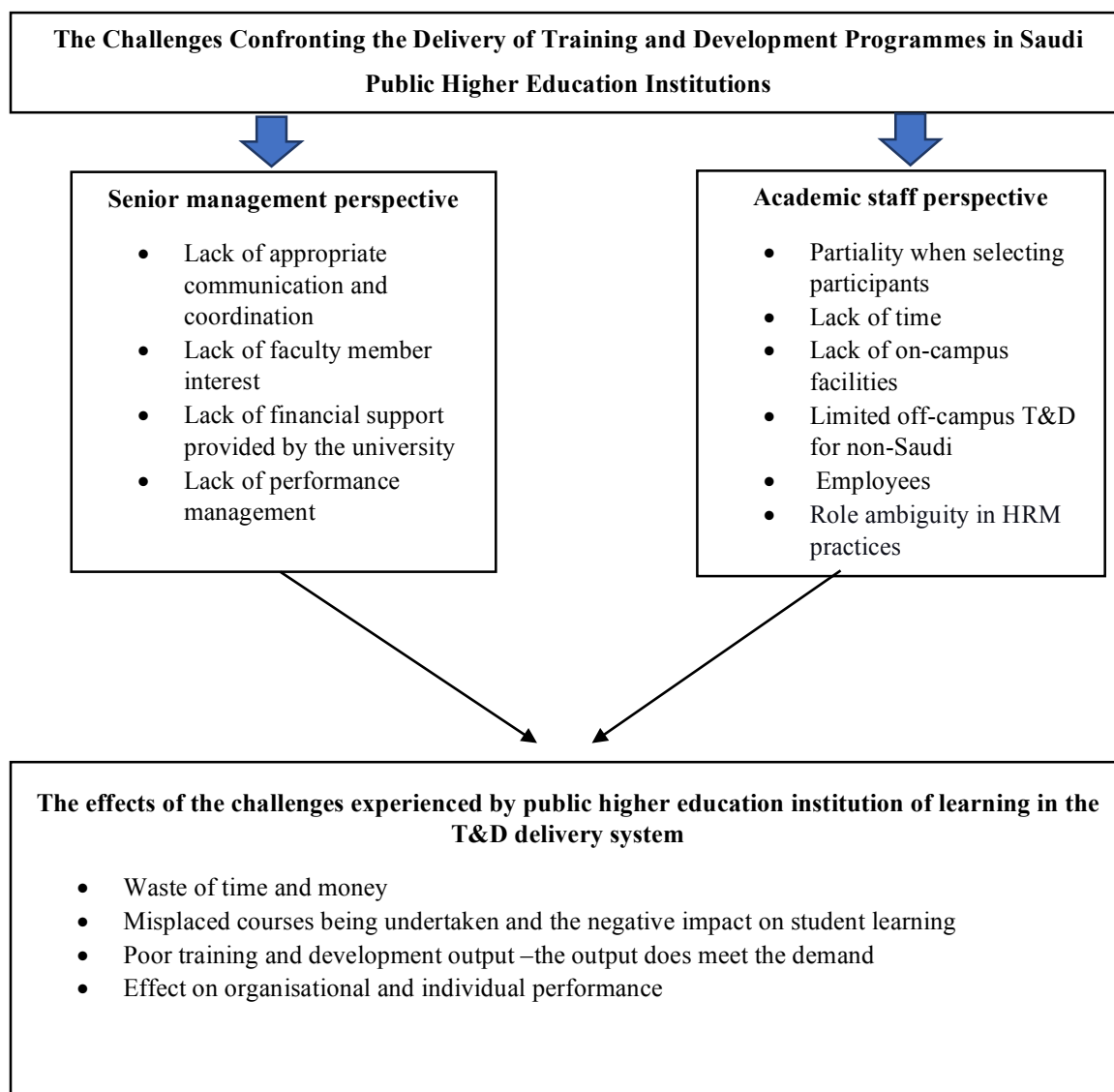


Figure 22: Effects of the identified T&D delivery challenges

### 5.6.1 Waste of time and money

The majority of respondents stated that a significant effect of the T&D challenges is that they represent a considerable waste of limited funds, as they come with multiple expenses and few

noticeable benefits. It was noted that money is spent on programmes that do not benefit faculty members, which also impacts the efficiency of T&D courses in the universities and their colleges. Some participants perceived that the money spent on training courses is a meaningless waste because it adds no value to their skill sets. Staff also pointed out that the specialised centres which assist in designing the various training courses are concerned only with profit rather than with the usefulness of the programmes. Participant A008, an HR manager, said:

*Of course, these challenges that we face in determining training needs lead to spending money and the wastage of faculty members' time without any benefit due to the difficulty in identifying the actual needs. As you know, if we train the wrong person or send them to the wrong training programme, it will cost us a lot of money and, as I said, without any benefit for the faculty members. These training programmes will only prove to be rewarding for the department staff if we can identify the precise training needs for the right people to make these programmes a successful and fruitful experience for the faculty members, which will justify the expenditure of the invaluable resources of the Saudi universities on these training courses.*

Participant B005 supported this view:

*The challenges in T&D adversely impact the efficiency of training and development delivery. This directly impacts the managerial performance of the institution to make use of allocated time and financial resources toward improving the quantity and quality of education provided by the institution. Not identifying academic staff who need training or who will be retained in the institution results in a waste of a lot of money and time due to training the wrong person. Only overcoming the challenge of identifying the right person to train would help optimise the use of resources in a more productive and valuable way in Saudi universities.*

Participant A069 indicated:

*Delivery of training and development for any institute is like a strategic opportunity which could enable the fulfilment of the resource gap by enhancing the existing quality standards. The challenges in T&D of determining the actual needs of staff result in the wastage of a lot of money and decreasing competitive advantage in the education industry. Failure to train employees effectively also negatively impacts academic staff as they feel no need to undergo the same training or change*

*repeatedly. To prevent this misuse of resources, I think the money should be put into other methods of creating superior knowledge in the institute.*

### **5.6.2 The taking of misplaced courses impacts negatively on student learning**

A majority of the participants believe that challenges in assessing training needs negatively affect faculty members' time, with several specifically describing them as wasting time. Several academic staff and senior managers stated that attending training courses they did not need has led them to miss their classes in the past, which were taken over by staff with insufficient knowledge of the subject, and this has a negative effect on the quality of student learning, thereby impacting the students' future. With regard to this, Participant B006 asserted:

*These challenges affect the overall effectiveness of training, as attending training without determining actuals need leads to a waste of time. When unqualified people determine training needs, the university's invaluable resources like money, time, and others are wasted because they do not have enough knowledge to correctly identify what sort of training is needed for which faculty member, which could negatively affect student performance.*

It was also noted by participant B027 that:

*Implementing training programmes with an inappropriate method leads to waste of time without achieving the desired benefits from the courses because improper implementation of training courses results in the faculty member missing lectures or exams etc., which is a waste of time without any benefits, and which affects the students as well because they are not getting the necessary lessons to be prepared for the exams on time. So, other teachers with limited knowledge or expertise in that particular subject take over and end up teaching these students, which will negatively affect them. It can destroy their confidence regarding the concerned subject and the upcoming exams, which will have an adverse effect in the years to come. Something has to be done about this as we cannot afford to ruin the lives of the university students who are the future of Saudi Arabia.*

Participants also indicated a lack of flexibility and innovativeness in instruction and training. Formal T&D delivery has far-reaching goals of enhancing the student learning experience, so in its absence, the attitude of learning among students and the ability of the academic staff to build a positive attitude among them are compromised. Resource-based view theory postulates



that internal resources influence the development and performance of the organisation as a whole as well as the individuals in it (Ho and Peng, 2016), so with increasing challenges in T&D delivery, educational institutions face limitations in resolving competitive conflicts. They also deny students a certain standard of learning and create a turbulent environment of uncertainty. In this respect, Participant A073 said:

*I think problems in the delivery of T&D inhibit student learning in the institution. They are denied opportunities to learn from teachers who have advanced training and adequate preparation to develop a learning environment. There is no instructive innovation in the institution and students find it difficult to learn in this environment. This adversely impacts graduation rates and even the chance of increasing admissions in the following academic year.*

Participant B059 added:

*Challenges in T&D delivery in the institution adversely impact student learning by bringing down the quantity and quality of the understudies. There is no guidance to students through the instructive plan. This happens because a lack of T&D limits the capability of academic staff to use innovative teaching methodology. Having a lack of engagement of students in studies or less connection between academic staff and students degrades the student learning experience.*

The evidence points to the idea that the challenges facing the T&D process lead to reluctance among faculty members to participate in T&D. Several of the academic staff believe the training programmes were not designed in accordance with their needs. Participant B010 expressed particular displeasure:

*In short it can be said that we have reluctance and loss of morale. The T&D programmes are largely designed by the higher authorities who firstly don't provide adequate programmes and those that do exist are designed without even consulting the academic staff and students about their needs, thus, we feel disconnected from the institutions. This non-involvement in academic activities creates a sense of reluctance among us and even sometimes we lose morale when providing quality-based teaching to students.*

Low or negative morale among staff members can present challenges for all employees and students. Apart from resulting in an unhappy workplace, it increases turnover and reduces productivity. This was stated by participant B032:

*The challenges in training and delivery lead to low morale as the employees are often not convinced with the training goals stated by top management and even having similar workshops many times creates reluctance among academic staff. There also exists a breakdown in communication channels and the staff feel that the higher management is not clear about the task they perform. This is easily witnessed in the reduction in the productivity of the employees. Having authority gaps and a lack of informal and formal communication platforms prevent the authorities interacting. Staff also sometimes feel that management is avoiding their needs, which results in a loss of interest and morale for teaching. Eventually, quality of education and the performance of staff is affected.*

Many academic staff noted the challenges described above led to demoralisation. Participant B001, for example, noted:

*Offering the same courses repeatedly leads to faculty members' reluctance to attend training courses and leaves a negative psychological impact on faculty members because they do not acquire new skills. This negatively affects the university's productivity and the efficiency of training and development at the university.*

### **5.6.3 Overall output does not meet the demand of the Training & Development strategies set out by the universities**

Participants from both groups agreed that T&D challenges reduce the overall quality of T&D, as trainees do not develop their skills properly. Some participants also pointed out a link between poor T&D and university performance. For example, Participant B081 said:

*As challenges in T&D lead to poor training and development outcomes, it brings along the negative impact of lack of job satisfaction among employees. They do not understand the culture of the organisation and impair its success in the long run. With poor training and development outcomes, human resources are not as productive as we would like them to be in order to help create sustainable competitive advantage in the market.*

Some participants also highlighted certain factors which affect the quality of public universities' training in Saudi Arabia, such as programmes designed by unqualified people, lack of financial support, and few qualified trainers. These all result in poor-quality T&D programmes, as noted by Participant B011:

*In my view, the lack of qualified trainers and lack of financial support to attract qualified training programme designers leads to an improper training programme. Therefore, the efficiency of training and development in the university is negatively affected and these challenges lead to poor training and development output as even after repeated similar sessions there is no significant improvement in skills. Also, I don't see how this training helps me to develop future requirements. All of this makes me feel less satisfied with my job. There is no reliability of training or any way in which it contributes to my career growth. The same training is provided again and again as no feedback or assessment of the weaknesses of training programmes is done. This means the training development output cannot be determined as the ultimate goal of enhancing an employee's skill set is met with inadequate usage of human and technical resources.*

Participant A005 criticised those delivering the training:

*Trainers follow a narration and indoctrination system to explain the programme's content, which hinders trainees' acquisition of desired skills from the programme. Also, the external centres contracted by the university are commercial and look mainly for profit, and this leads them to design poor-quality programmes.*

Another respondent, A013, remarked:

*Undoubtedly, the challenges that have been discussed affect the output of the training courses generally because we do not evaluate the outcomes of training programmes so that we can address the weaknesses in the future and know the strengths and try to reinforce them in order to reach the ultimate goal of the courses in meeting university goals.*

The results of this study show that universities' goals are frequently unmet due to challenges with T&D. Many of the participants believe that these challenges have a negative effect on the desired goals and university policies, as expressed by Participant B015:

*The challenges in T&D impact the overall goal attainment of the organisation, which adversely impacts organisational effectiveness. Although training programmes are mainly designed to attract more students to enrol and keep a check on the morale of academic staff, not much effort is directed toward keeping a check on the quality of training. Thus, training programmes are often not aligned with the needs of academic staff, resulting in their failure to develop competencies and meet university goals. The challenges in T&D lead to limitations in the effectiveness and improvement of skills in employees, prohibiting the attainment of the organisation's goal.*

Participant B009 agreed:

*There is a causative relationship between training and development and employee effectiveness in the organisation. Technical errors or administrative problems impact employees' initiative towards comprehensive development with the challenge in T&D implementation as the calculation of individual contribution to the performance of the organisation becomes difficult. It impacts the attitude and work-related manner of the employees. With this, the university fails to meet future targets and goals.*

#### **5.6.4 Effect on organisational and individual performance**

Another effect of challenges in the T&D delivery system in Saudi Higher Education institutions is that they prevent improvement in the theoretical, human, and managerial competencies of the academic staff. In line with expectancy theory, school administrators and other stakeholders expect an enhancement in the skills, knowledge, work efficiency, behaviour, and mindset of teaching staff, so a reduction in the level of satisfaction of administrators leads to a waste of resources and obsolescence of skills that can bring transformational reform in terms of institutional strength and academic staff performance. On this theme, participant A083 expressed exasperation:

*Of course, the organisation's workflow is becoming highly affected. We are not able to provide effective training to our employees due to lack of proper infrastructure, management decisions, time availability, and so on. But it is undeniable that the education system is affected, and the employees are not able to meet the needs of the organisation. Over the last two years, we have faced so many*

*difficulties in running our education system through online classes that it has affected individual performances a lot.*

Participant B040 shared a similar opinion:

*I think that T&D has an increasingly significant role to play in organisational and individual performance to help both attain excellence. The challenge faced by the academic staff is the high level of expectations, which impacts individual performance as we are required to maintain order and discipline in the classes. All this needs to be done while adopting the rules of the school, performing tasks related to school management, parents, and students. If the challenges in T&D are not met there will be limitations in the creation of a lifelong learning environment. The challenges also impact individual performance as T&D is an integral part of the human resource policy in the Higher Education institutions and any challenges faced in the process lead to a decrease in the impact of continuous learning and preparing the resources for improved performance among the staff. Due to the challenges in T&D, the integration and delivery of the programmes are affected, and employees are not able to generate a creative thinking environment and foster innovativeness. This impacts their performance and that of the organisation.*

The effects of the T&D delivery challenges in Saudi public Higher Education institutions impact the performance of both the organisation and the individuals in it. A continuous, successfully implemented T&D process would keep employees up to date, but where this does not exist, individual employees do not see any enhancement of their skill sets in the delivery of their work, hampering the overall productivity of the organisation. Based on expectancy theory, the inability of staff to deliver quality education results in a reduction in satisfaction among students and reduces productivity. T&D delivery challenges also inhibit the growth of theoretical, human, and managerial competencies in the academic staff and adversely influence the satisfaction of administrators and other stakeholders.

## **5.7 Chapter Summary**

This study has produced seven findings, in response to the first two research questions, summarised below.

### **1. Limited communication between Human Resource departments and colleges**

The study revealed that the duplication in managing and evaluating T&D outcomes emerged as a significant challenge in Saudi Higher Education institutions, along with a lack of

confidence in decision-makers, as most respondents perceived little expertise in the assessment of T&D outcomes. Saudi public universities lack a straightforward method to evaluate staff performance before and after attending T&D programmes to measure any added value. The study revealed that lack of coordination between the HR department and academic staff and other units or deanships is a persistent obstacle in the T&D process of Saudi Higher Education institutions. Also, this study has shown that the HR department employs only a one-way communication strategy, shown in Figure 23.

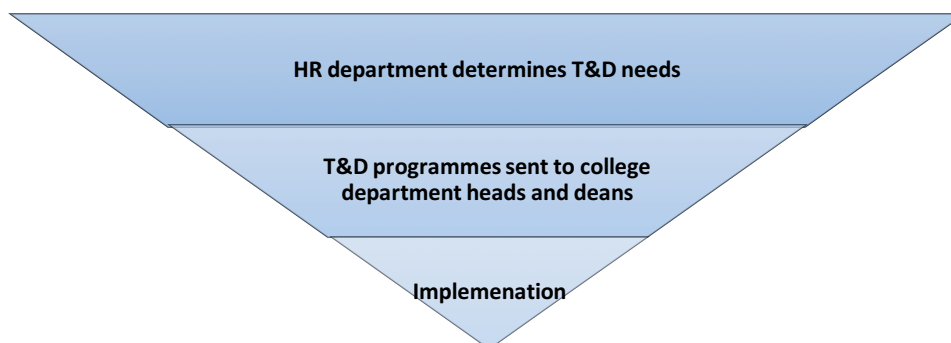


Figure 23: Communication flow from HR departments to colleges

## **2. Biases in the selection processes of academic staff for Training & Development**

The study revealed preferential treatment for Saudi nationals over foreign-born workers in the distribution of T&D opportunities. Although programmes are generally designed to support employees regardless of nationality, foreign-born workers only have equal access to in-house training, while external opportunities are restricted to Saudi nationals. Also, the present study reveals that female employees in the four universities surveyed face gender bias, especially regarding selection for long-term development programmes.

## **3. Lack of interest among faculty members to attend Training & Development programmes as they are not demand-focused**

The study has shown that the challenges in the T&D process led to faculty members' disinterest in training programmes and a lack of conviction in their goals as they are not able to contribute by defining their needs. Therefore, the output of the training programmes is weak.

## **4. University policy practices skew to quantity rather than quality and are repetitive in nature**

University policy affects the HR department when designing T&D. Most participants reported that Saudi public universities focus on quantity rather than quality in training, and this poses a significant challenge to T&D delivery.

#### **5. Overall output does not meet the demands of the Training & Development strategies set out by the universities**

The results of this study show that the goals of universities are frequently unmet due to challenges with T&D. Also, the study revealed that these challenges have a negative effect on the desired goals and on university policies.

#### **6. The taking of misplaced courses negatively impacts student learning**

The study revealed that the identified challenges impact student performance because if academic staff attend unnecessary or inappropriate training courses, they miss their classes without adding value to their own or their students' learning.

#### **7. Training & Development challenges inevitably have an effect on organisational and individual performance in the long term**

The findings revealed that managers and staff currently were unable to identify any tangible benefits to T&D in terms of enhancing their career and professional development, or how the goals of the institution were being satisfactorily advanced.

The thesis set out four research questions and in light of the findings from the qualitative research as presented above, the discussion of the following chapters aims to address the final two areas of inquiry, namely are Saudi public higher education universities succeeding or failing to capture the value of T&D? And what can be done to overcome the T&D challenges and hence reduce the obstacles to T&D in Saudi public higher education?

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion**

This chapter discusses the findings of the present study in the context of the literature in the field supported by a theoretical framework that enables a degree of triangulation so the research topic can be more clearly understood. The intention is to address the third main research question: Are Saudi public higher education universities succeeding or failing to capture the value of T&D? The chapter employs Human Resource Management (HRM) theories, including motivation theories and resource-based view theory, as lenses through which to view the results in order to achieve a meaningful understanding of them, and to engage specifically with the question expressed above. The discussion takes as its basis the seven findings set out in Chapter Five, examining each of the challenges as they relate to the areas of Training Needs Analysis (TNA), the implementation of T&D, the evaluation process, and the effects of the challenges.

#### **6.1 Limited communication between Human Resource departments and colleges**

The problem of duplication in the management and implementation of T&D in Saudi public universities can be explained by the overlapping supervision of HR functions between the Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs and other deanships. This is acknowledged by the participants who stated that T&D was disjointed and characterised by a lack of coordination between units and departments. They added that different units and departments determine and implement T&D programmes, often without coordinating with the Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs, which is a department responsible for bringing together various units to coordinate the management of HRM issues (Figure 24, below). According to Rizzo et al. (1970), management of key HRM practices and processes by a single unit sets a clear direction to support organisational goals.



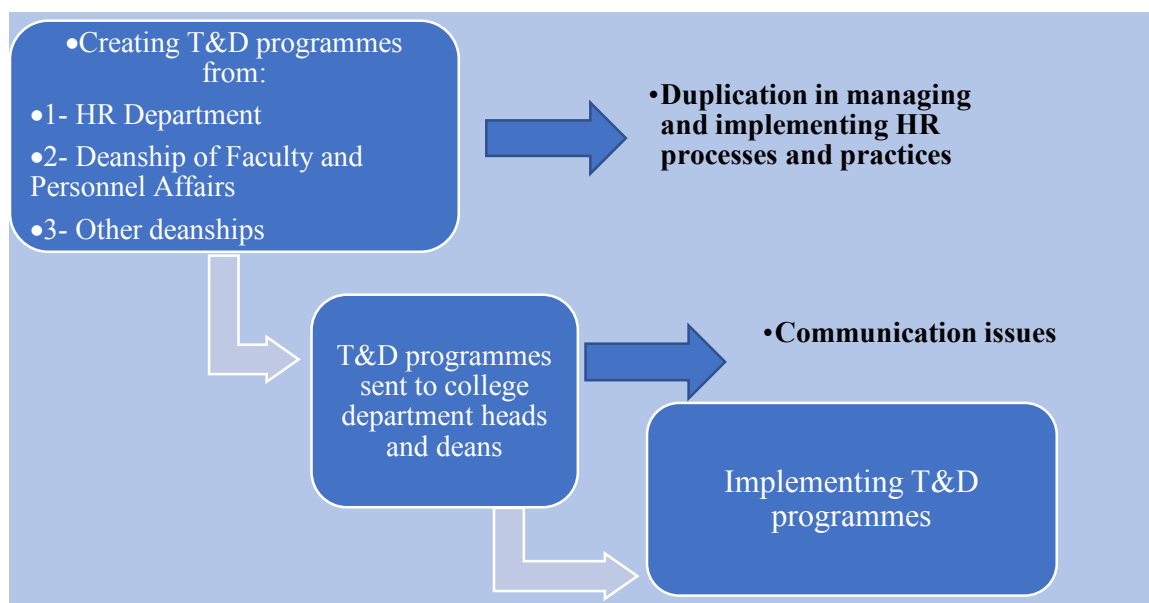


Figure 24: Communication strategy in Saudi public universities between HR departments and colleges

The unity of command principle is an essential concept that can assist Saudi universities in achieving their goals and avoiding incompatible expectations (Anand et al., 2007). However, this study has shown the lack of clear goals in training programmes due to management and implementation duplication, which undermines the contemporary strategic HRM notion of performing activities beyond administrative tasks to develop innovative HRM practices in support of the organisation's strategic goals (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015). This issue might prevent Saudi higher education institutions from achieving value from their T&D programmes, negatively affecting the skills of academic staff, which leads to a loss of long-term competitive advantage since it is widely held that human capital skills are critical for this (Desa and Asaari, 2020). A university must be able to understand the characteristics of their human resources and formulate T&D goals consistent with the university's goals. As the results of this study show, the selected Saudi universities are failing to create and improve competitive advantage through human resources as there is no clear vision in their T&D programmes. In fact, without an effective method to ascertain training needs in Saudi public universities, there can be no clear programme goals. Most senior managers stated that, in the absence of TNA, the HR department simply selects academic staff at random as candidates for training courses, with informal selection policies often based on employment date rather than actual training need. In addition, the universities offer the same training plan every year. For example, from the analysis of the documents, it was found that in 2019 these universities repeated the 2018 T&D plan, showing only slight changes in times and locations. This indicates that these universities offer T&D in

a purely routine manner, with no clear objectives and strategic plan for programmes. A review of the literature reveals that this is not restricted to higher education, as the majority of public organisations in the Arab world do not conduct regular TNA and lack reinforcement of training, which results in low training success rates (Atiyah, 1993; Al-Ali, 1999; Altarawneh, 2005). This is acknowledged by Shibani (2016), who concluded that TNA systems are practically non-existent in the Arab world, and where they do exist, they are implemented piecemeal rather than as an organised long-term policy that addresses the needs of individuals. There is no comprehensive framework for the various TNA process phases, so public universities in Saudi Arabia are failing to derive value from their T&D programmes. Clark et al. (1993) and Armstrong (2003) have pointed to the importance of effective planning, proposing that a failure to formulate clear training objectives condemns T&D programmes to failure.

University policy may play a role in this problem as policymakers are reported to be more concerned with the quantity of T&D programmes than their quality. While the universities set it as their purpose to offer a large number of T&D programmes every year, there is no precise formula that identifies their benefits. This is clear from the responses of many senior managers interviewed for this study, including Participant A006, who said:

*The university administration only thinks about the number of training programmes, not the quality, and closed the finishing statement at the end of the fiscal year.*

It can be concluded that university policies, coupled with management and implementation duplication, impact the universities' ability to gain value from T&D. This negatively impacts their ability to create a world-class academic staff who effectively support teaching and research, as training plays a crucial role in introducing desirable changes in attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Rahman, 2020).

In order to see more effective T&D within Saudi universities it would be beneficial for the universities to more seriously consider the importance of an effective and coordinated HR department that is at the heart of the organisation, tasked with designing and implementing T&D programmes that align with the strategic goals of the institution and are sustainable.

One of the major factors identified in this study is that in the selected Saudi higher education institutions, HRM tends to use one-way communication flows from the HR department to the academic staff, so there is no information flow back to the HR department, which would include staff feedback and information about T&D needs. From the data obtained through this

study it is clear that the design and planning of training is currently the responsibility of upper management, with staff having no influence in planning the training as they are merely candidates for courses and selected without reference to their needs.

The gap identified between the departments creating T&D programmes and the academic staff entails the HR failing to heed staff issues and T&D needs, which reduces staff motivation. This is supported by Kumari (2012), who concluded that when an organisation focuses on the needs of its employees, listens to their challenges and what they may be unhappy about, the employees will be more satisfied as a result of seeing that their voices are important and the organisation cares about their needs. In such an environment, employees are more likely to work hard to increase their performance and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the objectives and goals of the organisation, as they feel appreciated and valued by the organisation. As levels of satisfaction increase among employees, so does their performance. Communication also plays a fundamental role in motivation. For instance, Megawati (2020) found that communication helps employees comprehend information and establish security in their work. Internal communication impacts motivation as it permits interaction between leaders and followers, and employees and their colleagues, while enhancing communication with customers, thus helping the organisation achieve its goals.

The current T&D strategy as pursued by the selected universities in this study damages the motivation of academic staff. The current research has found that a number of senior managers complained about faculty members' lack of interest and a loss of credibility and recognition. When asked, academic staff stated that the T&D programmes offered do not meet their goals, and they are not part of the university's goals. They additionally believe that there is no reward from management regarding their work and developing their skills and knowledge in the workplace, and they receive little appreciation for their work. This significantly reduces the motivation of academic staff, as evidenced by the senior managers complaining about a lack of cooperation between the employees in departments responsible for T&D and academic staff. One senior director (A013) said:

*Last year, we sent about 100 surveys to the management staff to determine training needs, especially in research methods. Nevertheless, we received only eight surveys in the department. That means there is no cooperation between the employees of the training department and the workers of other departments, which affects us in making decisions.*

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory proposes that if valence, instrumentality, and expectancy are high, motivation will also be high. If one of these elements is absent, motivation will be zero. For example, regardless of the extent to which an employee believes their effort will lead to reward, if the expected reward valence is zero, motivation will also be zero. An individual's motivation to do something therefore relies on the value of effort multiplied by the individual's belief that the effort will have a positive impact on their achievement of goals.

The most common theory for measuring motivation at work is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which postulates that there are certain job factors that lead to satisfaction, and others which promote dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987; Mehrad, 2020). The two categories referred to in the theory are motivational factors and hygiene factors. Motivational factors include the work itself, achievement, recognition, advancement, personal growth, and responsibility, while hygiene factors include working conditions, interpersonal relationships, salary, supervision, administration, and company policy (Herzberg, 1987). Ambiguity in internal communication is one element which has a negative impact on the motivation of academic staff to take part in T&D programmes, reducing the prospect that the university will achieve its objectives. According to Yee (2018), understanding job satisfaction and motivation among academic staff is crucial for a university because it leads to increased performance, which subsequently promotes achievement of the university's goals and students' success. Similarly, Omar (2021) found that job motivation among academic staff determines their satisfaction, performance, their students' achievement, and consequently, improves the quality of the university. A high level of performance from academic staff raises the performance of the university and produces excellent quality graduates with maximised job prospects. In addition, as the university produces higher-quality graduates, its reputation increases, resulting in better rankings since teaching performance is an important element in evaluating a university's ranking (Hong et al., 2013). All of the factors considered above point to the benefits of establishing two-way communication between academic employees and the HR department in Saudi public universities. Doing this will help build and nurture relationships, encouraging academic staff to actively engage with the organisation (Cho, 2014), while increasing their satisfaction *and* motivation. Several studies have shown this, such as Rego (2021), who concluded that clear communication in the workplace can bring considerable benefits to the organisation. Employees who believe they are an important part of the organisation feel more satisfied with their jobs, tend to demonstrate their gratitude through loyalty to their employer, and show improved resilience, performance, cooperation, creativity, and willingness to take direction

from the leadership. However, Rego's (2021) study showed that many T&D programmes are developed in line with the desires and beliefs of their creators as opposed to the real needs of employees. This echoes the findings of Ludwikowska (2018), who concluded that training programmes reflect personal preferences rather than identified needs and added that TNA is often based on trial-and-error and conducted in an unfair manner.

The results of this study show that many senior managers believe determining training needs would be prohibitively expensive for the university, and there is not sufficient financial support to carry out TNA processes. This is consistent with the findings of Nankervis et al. (2002) that, due to a widespread belief that it is resource-intensive, the majority of organisations in the Arab world implement no TNA of any kind, and those which do carry it out incorrectly or piecemeal. Most of the senior managers admitted that they failed to determine training needs, citing a number of reasons as to why, as Figure 25 sets out.

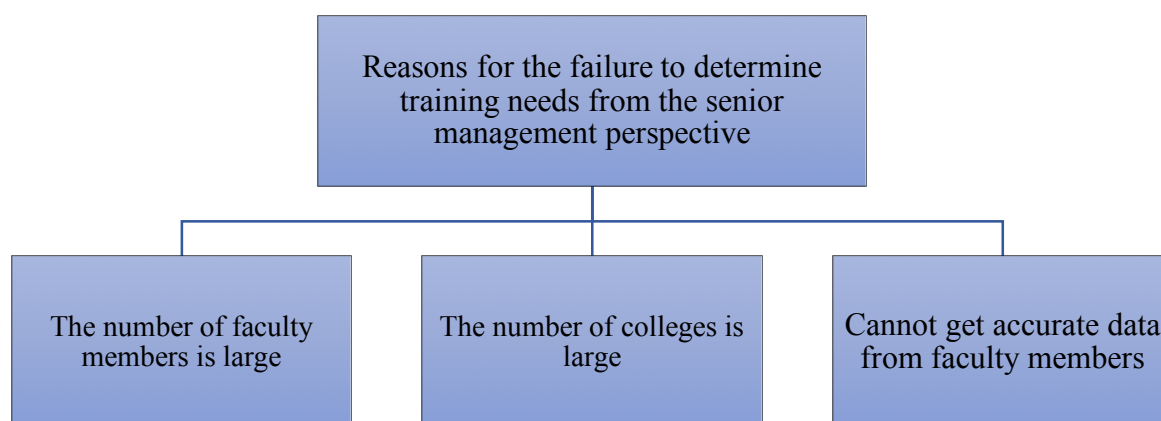


Figure 25: Reasons for the failure to determine training needs from senior managers' perspective

The reasons shown in Figure 25 indicate the weakness of HRM in Saudi higher education institutions and provides evidence that those responsible for determining training needs in these institutions are not specialists, lacking the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out TNA processes. The majority of academic staff in the present study agreed with this view. For example, participant B017 stated:

*The people working in the administration who are responsible for training are not specialised and do not have sufficient experience to determine the faculty's actual needs.*

This echoes Agnaia (1996), who concluded that managers responsible for assessing training needs in many cases lack the necessary skills and knowledge to accomplish these tasks. This

has been more recently determined by Abdullah (2009), who found that a lack of TNA results from a dearth of expertise. As the academic staff do not expect effective T&D programmes from the HR department, their motivation to attend any they are offered is low. This finding is supported by expectancy theory, which suggests that employees are motivated if they believe a particular performance level will result from attaining the outcome they desire, so, if valence, instrumentality, and expectancy are high, motivation will also be high (Vroom, 1964). As described, a lack of motivation among academic staff affects the teaching quality offered. Viseu (2016) notes that motivation of academic staff plays a crucial role in achieving desirable outcomes in students' learning and in terms of the quality of the institution, and that inappropriate T&D serves only to waste universities' money and academic staff's time. The participants in this study from both the management and academic sides raised this point with regard to the waste of time and money represented by T&D processes which lack TNA and therefore provide no benefit. This reduces the ability of the university to achieve its goals and attain value from T&D programmes. Higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia therefore require a well-designed and managed HRM setting that facilitates adequate opportunities for improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve research output and impact.

## **6.2 Partiality when selecting academic staff for Training & Development**

The majority of respondents in this study confirmed that there are no formal processes or systems for selecting T&D candidates, with selection often based on the coordinators' previous experience. This is particularly the case with regard to repeated programmes, based on suggestions from certain directors, including those of training centres, which in most cases stem from personal considerations or a colleague's recommendation. A senior manager interviewed for this study indicated that in Saudi Arabia, T&D selection in public universities is based on personal recommendations and knowing particular colleagues and directors, and even on connections with relatives and friends. This is supported by a UN report (1994) and the findings of Terterove (2002), which propose that economic and social factors can create barriers to training. Agnaia (1997) also suggested that social factors create barriers to training programmes in parts of the Arab world and negatively impact the effectiveness of training. There are several challenges related to this and to trainee selection as identified in this study.

This research found that discrimination exists against foreign-born workers regarding how T&D opportunities are administered, as Saudi nationals are treated more favourably than foreign nationals. The concept of justice is interpreted as a positive link between an individual's contribution and the returns they earn; individuals perceive inequality when they are negatively

evaluated in exchange for their contributions (Sprecher, 2018). The findings indicate procedural differences in the compilation and approval of staff requests for T&D support, management control in selecting foreign-born employees for T&D programmes, and selective or restricted access to such programmes for foreign-born employees compared to their Saudi counterparts. The nature of job contracts between Saudi and foreign-born staff explicitly shows institutionalised inequality patterns between the two cohorts: while Saudi academic staff enjoy job security via tenure or permanent contracts, foreign-born staff are offered temporary contracts with renewal opportunities based upon discretionary performance standards (Alkhazim, 2003). According to regulations for non-Saudi recruitment in universities, Article 4 Prerequisites of Recruitment states that non-Saudis can apply for jobs when no qualified Saudi citizen is available, implying that if the university employs a foreign worker and then goes on to find a qualified Saudi, they will dispense with the foreign worker.

There is also evidence that Saudi universities preferentially focus on the academic career development of their Saudi staff by promoting and offering additional T&D opportunities to Saudi citizens, especially for programmes abroad. While this may be based on the notion that investment in the national workforce builds human capital for the region (Ryan, 2016), such perceived inequality reduces the productivity of foreign-born workers in terms of their research output and willingness to share knowledge or collaborate with Saudi nationals to pursue research (Brewer et al., 1990; Ramlall, 2004). This is because a perception of unequal treatment undermines employee motivation, as motivation is stimulated by the underlying logic that there should be a fair system for managing employee input-output ratios (Tsui et al., 2018). Saudi universities claim that T&D programmes, particularly those taking place abroad, should be provided to Saudi academic staff because foreign-born employees are on a renewable contract which can be terminated at any time. This is supported by the Saudi government's decision in 2007, as part of the Vision 2030, to switch the country's economic strategy from a strictly oil-producing export country to a knowledge-based economy, including the 'Saudisation' of public organisations (Asel, 2020). However, these policies reduce the ability of universities to develop sufficient human capital, given that the majority of Saudi academics are foreign-born.

The most powerful benefits of effective T&D lie in enhancing the capacity for Saudi universities to gain global recognition by increasing the abilities of individual academic staff, regardless of nationality. Foreign-born workers who feel unequally treated will have reduced organisational commitment and contribute to adverse outcomes such as low productivity and motivation (Uen et al., 2016; Tsui et al., 2018). Organisational psychology research has shown

that perceptions of managerial discrimination and a lack of procedural and administrative justice are related to stress, which leads to psychological pressure, decreased organisational commitment, and reduced job performance (Ybema et al., 2016). Despite this, the results of this study across all four universities show that, according to the respondents, T&D opportunities are preferentially given to Saudi nationals, indicating widespread discriminatory practices. This explicitly undermines the knowledge-sharing capabilities of foreign-born workers and has long-term implications for constructing the institutional and human capacity of Saudi universities. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) argued that knowledge-sharing, creation, and integration among key staff is an essential component of a knowledge-flow mechanism. HRM activities are a necessary prerequisite for promoting knowledge-sharing in organisations (Galizia & Bruder, 2016), and include T&D, work culture, work implementation, and quality evaluation (Donnelly, 2019). The perceived inequality noted in Saudi universities adds to the psychological burden on foreign-born workers, which compromises their desire to change and improve, thereby hindering the government's commitment to building globally recognised academic establishments and improving the country's human capabilities (Sprecher, 2018).

Equality theory holds that tension results from people feeling subject to discriminatory practices. This tension causes individuals to address the inequality by reducing or increasing their input or output in comparison with others in the group. A worker who perceives inequality may also change their referent by leaving that particular environment (Adams, 1963), which suggests that foreign-born workers in Saudi universities may increase employee turnover. Despite the government's 'Saudisation' plans, the number of foreign-born workers in Saudi higher education has increased 4% since 2000 (Al-Asfour & Khan, 2014), with 42% of the sector's workforce being foreign-born in 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). Foreign-born workers therefore represent a considerable proportion of Saudi higher education, so high turnover and low motivation with this group can only have negative impacts. Recruiting international employees has significant advantages, such as the availability of expertise to enhance university performance, filling skills gaps, growing diversity in the university, networking opportunities, and strengthening the skills and capabilities of local staff through information sharing (Galizia & Bruder, 2016).

The present study reveals that female employees in the four universities surveyed face gender bias, especially regarding selection for long-term development programmes. This may represent a way of indirectly preventing female staff achieving senior leadership positions. As recently as 2019, Alghofaily found that women in the Saudi higher education sector lacked



leadership training, which the present study highlights as a critical challenge faced by women in this field. Alghofaily's study demonstrated that Saudi managers tend not to select women for training, especially leadership training, as a result of the cultural belief that men are the natural guardians of women and should be the bearers of responsibility. In a study focused on women's leadership in Saudi higher education, Abalkhail (2017) showed that women receive fewer promotions than men despite the fact they work longer hours and could therefore claim to be more experienced. It was found that even women with the necessary qualifications and experience for a senior role were not offered the promotions they might expect.

In terms of training, the findings of this study show that female staff members frequently face challenges in attending off-campus T&D due to family commitments which place a burden on their time, and this is especially acute for married women with children. It is these domestic responsibilities incumbent upon women which could represent a reason for the failure of managers to select them for long-term development: the manager may not want to increase the pressure on the female employee to balance domestic duties and work responsibilities, which could lead to role conflict and guilt. Research by Almansour and Kempner (2016) supports this, as they found that women are required to overcome a variety of challenges and need a high level of resilience if they seek to attain leadership roles. An example of one of these challenges specific to the Saudi context is the need to observe cultural and familial restrictions when travelling to conferences. Al-Asfour et al. (2014) highlighted the barriers that women desiring leadership positions need to overcome, including restrictions in their freedom to travel, poor consideration for work-life balance, limited opportunities for growth, and gender stereotyping. This is also acknowledged by Alobaid (2021), who conducted a study in Saudi Arabia exploring the factors which negatively affect the participation of women in the workforce, including policies, limited training opportunities, stereotyping, discrimination, employer bias, and parental issues. Therefore, gender inequality represents a significant challenge for the equal and effective delivery of T&D in Saudi higher education.

The patriarchal nature of Saudi culture and the Saudi workforce, as well as a highly segregated set of rules around how men and women are expected to conduct themselves in the workplace, has created this high level of gender bias, which does not necessarily work in favour of men but certainly works against women with regard to T&D. Some of the barriers identified are addressed in the 2030 Vision, but implicit and broad action is needed to produce desirable results. For example, providing women with a genuine role in the policymaking process would assist the development of effective national policies toward the empowerment of women. The

Saudi government should ensure that leadership training is made available to women, and that they have decision-making powers, which would improve their status and confidence. Additionally, implementing role models as part of effective leadership development programmes would help eliminate the barriers faced by women in the workplace.

The present study recommends the TNA approach shown in Figure 26, involving detailed analysis at the organisation, individual and task levels to determine the competency gaps and thus identify the appropriate T&D courses for which all academic staff should be eligible for selection. This approach would better support public universities in Saudi Arabia in their efforts to achieve value from T&D.

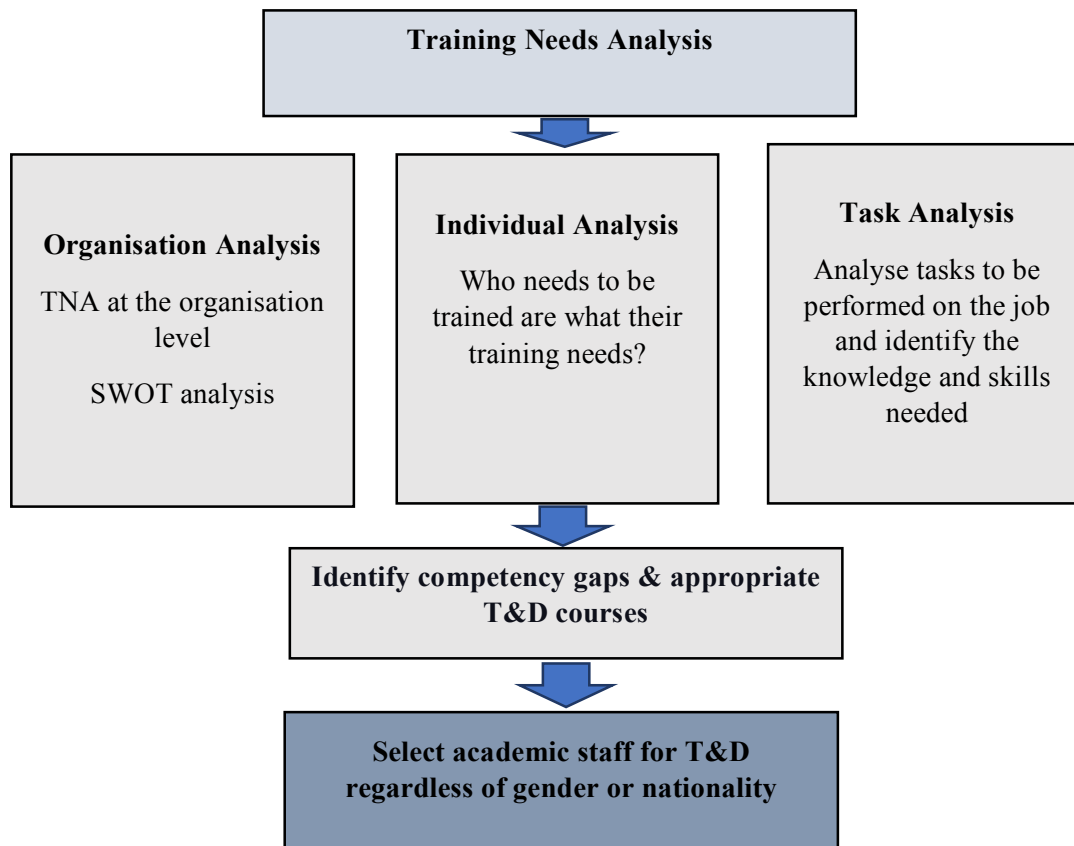


Figure 26: Recommended TNA approach

### **6.3 Lack of interest among faculty members to attend Training & Development programmes**

This study shows that the Saudi higher education sector, specifically publicly funded universities, employ on-the-job (on-campus) and off-the-job (off-campus) T&D implementation methods, both of which present challenges from the perspective of senior managers and academic staff. Most of the academic staff participants expressed a lack of interest in attending on-the-job training, as they believe the quality is poor and the programmes do not meet their needs. This lack of confidence among academic staff in the training programmes designed and implemented on-campus may result from the fact that academic staff do not participate in the design of these programmes and have no opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, leaving them exposed to inappropriate T&D decisions made on their behalf by supervisors. This agrees with the findings of Batton and Gold (1999), who proposed that an organisation which fails to involve employees in self-development decision-making will discourage employees from participating in the programmes. Chen et al. (2006) also supported this, finding that the content of an effective training programme should meet the requirements of the job and employ training methods identified by those being trained. They also conclude that motivation depends on the degree to which those undergoing training believe that it will benefit their career and ability to work.

The majority of senior managers who participated in this study stated that most academic staff have little motivation to attend on-the-job T&D programmes and prefer off-campus T&D methods. This could be explained by the rewards policies found in Saudi public universities which incentivise off-campus T&D through free travel and financial benefits. Additionally, while attending training off-campus, academic staff are not required to produce scholarly work or research, nor are they required to teach. By contrast, on-campus training comes with no such benefits, and as academic staff are still required to carry out their duties, on-campus T&D reduces their holiday or free time. Academic staff already face considerable time burdens due to their teaching workload, so attending on-campus training is rarely a priority. This finding is supported by Tenant et al. (2002), who found that most trainees struggle with time, especially with daily training sessions.

Most of the academic staff interviewed for this study expressed very little desire to participate in on-campus training courses due to the absence of financial incentives. This renders on-campus training irrelevant for them as they see no personal gain in attending. From the viewpoint of expectancy theory, rewards have a positive impact on an employee's motivation

and performance, with Vroom (1964) emphasising that individuals' perceptions in relation to obtaining rewards at work impact on their training efforts. Holton and Baldwin (2003) more recently concluded that expectations from training are influenced by a distinct connection between outcomes and rewards, and that when employees anticipate that training will result in increased rewards, they tend to demonstrate better performance.

The senior managers described a lack of financial support for T&D from the university, which when combined with the high cost of programmes designed on-campus, represents another challenge. This is a challenge found generally across the Arab world, with Al-Sayyed (2014) noting that HR development in Arab countries receives limited financial support, which reduces the ability of these countries to develop human capital through T&D. Low levels of financial support lead to another problem identified in this study: the dearth of training facilities such as conference rooms or auditoriums, which limits the design and delivery of on-campus T&D programmes. The majority of academic staff interviewed were disappointed with the on-campus training design and environment, including classrooms, accommodation, equipment, and physical facilities. This helps explain the low levels of interest of academic staff in participating in training within the university. Research shows that learning is significantly influenced by the environment in which it is carried out: Facticeau et al. (1995), for example, proposed that an effective training environment has a positive influence on employee motivation. It also improves their satisfaction, as shown in studies by Kirkpatrick (1996) and Hung (2010), which concluded that learning is improved by trainees' positive reactions. Bates and Holton (2007) similarly found that factors such as the attributes of the trainer, the training design, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, the training environment, training transfer, social support, and trainee readiness influence trainees' views about the programme. Mathieu et al. (1992) and Tracey et al. (2001) suggested the trainee's motivation impacts how prepared they are to engage with the T&D programme, and this was also found by Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999), who stated that when a trainee believes that the training is of no value to their job, they devote less effort and time to acquiring the knowledge and skills required.

Willing and motivated trainees are critical for the organisation to achieve training objectives and gain a competitive advantage. However, most of the academic staff in this study who complained about the training environment, had previously studied abroad or attended T&D programmes in developed countries such as the UK and USA. The contrast between the excellent training environments provided in these countries compared with those provided at their place of work when they return home could cause them to become demotivated and

potentially leave the job. This is supported by studies which show that 79% of public employees in Saudi Arabia who attend training in developed countries expressed a willingness to extend their stay abroad (Hilal, 2015). This may be because most public organisations in Arab countries lack modern and well-equipped T&D facilities (Sweis, 2019), causing employees to lose interest in on-campus training. However, employees must practise the skills they learn in on-campus training programmes if value is to be gained from them. Charney and Conway (2005) recommended that the training environment should be similar to the workplace in order to help participants practise what they learn to gain the maximum benefit.

A further challenge in relation to on-campus training highlighted by academic staff in this research was that the programmes are often repeated year-on-year. This leads to the perception that training is simply a 'cut-and-paste job', with the only noticeable changes being in the names of trainers, the venues, or the dates. The first reason that this is the case is linked to the fact that there are few, if any, systematic policies and training procedures when governing and organising the T&D process in the selected universities. For instance, the T&D coordinators interviewed in this study reported that they have no substantial role in designing on-campus training with regard to determining its objectives, techniques, or resources. Many of the senior managers believe that HR is beyond the scope of their responsibilities because they are not equipped with the knowledge and skills to handle it. This is all exacerbated by the fact that public universities in Saudi Arabia do not have job descriptions or training paths for HR roles, against the suggestion of Herschbach (1997), who noted that training HR managers is essential to effective delivery of T&D programmes. Abou-Arquob (2008) similarly stated that training administrators need to be well-trained themselves, so they understand the fundamentals of the T&D process and thereby help the organisation achieve value from T&D programmes.

#### **6.4 University policy practices represent a challenge in Training & Development**

Even though organisations are aware of the benefits of training, many often fail to consider the importance of evaluating its outcomes. Kearns and Miller (1996) argued that training evaluation can result in commitment and engagement at all levels, while Brinkerhoff (1988) found that effective evaluation is a source of evidence for the benefits of the training to the organisation and individuals. Evaluation can indicate how much those who took part in the training enjoyed the process, the progress made in gaining new knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and measure how well new knowledge is transferred to the workplace.

The academic staff participants in this study stated that successful evaluation does not take place after training at their universities. They attributed this failure to poor HR practices, absence of qualified professionals able to carry out systematic evaluation, and a general lack of interest in the process of T&D evaluation. These findings are in line with previous studies which endorse the conception of the interplay of several factors including insufficient resources, materials, qualified professionals and management interest, poor HR policies, and inadequacy of the evaluation system (Al- Athari & Zairi, 2002). Mohammed Saad and Mat (2013) maintain that the barriers associated with evaluating T&D effectiveness lie within the functioning of the HR department. Taken together, the results of the present research align with those of previous studies aiming to identify the challenges that must be understood to overcome hurdles in the T&D evaluation process and revealed that there are not enough experts in the assessment of T&D outcomes in public universities in Saudi Arabia. This echoes the findings of Hung (2010) and Shen and Tang (2018), who discovered that a shortage of resources and personnel proficiency reduces the effectiveness of T&D evaluation.

All of the senior manager participants in this study agreed that there is no performance measurement for academic staff in Saudi public universities, making it impossible to examine the impact of programmes on staff performance. This may be another result of the endemic role ambiguity in Saudi Higher Education institutions highlighted earlier. Ulrich and Dulebohn (2015) note that HRM departments in Saudi higher education have generally been overlooked and left to perform only administrative duties, leaving them with little legitimacy and recognition to carry out their mandated responsibilities. This is a serious problem in view of the contemporary strategic HRM notion of conducting activities beyond the purely administrative in order to establish pioneering HRM practices that support the objectives of the organisation. This must be added to a lack of clarity surrounding the process of performance management systems and ambiguity in the expectations of academic performance in many Saudi universities (Al- Athari and Zairi, 2002).

Performance management systems are consistently thwarted when management employs discretionary use of subjective criteria, and employees may fail to seek feedback due to a fear of being victimised (Harbi et al., 2017). Although performance management should evaluate employee development and career needs, this systemic process remains underdeveloped due to inadequate HR practices (Decramer, 2012). In this study, a large number of participants agreed that a failure to evaluate T&D outcomes leads to a situation whereby employees fail to develop their competencies as the entire process is not managed effectively. As Armstrong (2001)

confirmed, this compromises the university's goals, as T&D and professional development play a vital role in the progress of organisations and universities toward goals which can be attained by facilitating skills development programmes for both students and employees, expert courses specific to job functions, and short courses (Pareek & Rao, 1992). Armstrong and Stephen (2014) pointed out that effective training is "specifically designed, planned and implemented to meet defined needs [...], provided by people who know how to train, and the impact of training is carefully evaluated". Regarding the results of the present study, it can be concluded that the dearth of T&D evaluation can be explained by a lack of interest among trainees in attaining its potential benefits. For instance, Participant A003 said that when participants attend training programmes off-campus, they perceive themselves to be on holiday. This attitude may be based on the reasoning that there is no follow-up by employers, and nobody takes the programmes seriously, which negatively affects their results. Without an evaluation process, there is no way of determining the impact of T&D programmes on employee performance, a fact established in research by Cohen (1990), Clark et al. (1993), Facticeau et al. (1995) and Chiaburu and Tekleab (2005), who assert that follow-up and evaluation by the supervisor play an important role in motivating employees. Tharenou (2001) additionally notes that trainees from companies whose evaluation systems are strict tend to arrive at training sessions with a stronger belief that the programmes are useful, which motivates them want to learn as much as possible during the sessions.

Tharenou's (2001) study showed that universities often use questionnaires at the end of T&D programmes as a way of evaluating their outcomes, and while these forms are used to measure the reactions of trainees, they generally overlook the learning, skills and abilities gained, or any improvement in attitudes and knowledge. This runs contrary to the conclusions of Tracey et al. (1995) and Kirkpatrick (2008), who recommended that training evaluation should measure outcomes and the trainees' ability to transfer what they have learned into their jobs. Evaluation questionnaires should include open-ended questions so as to gain richer, individualised feedback, while other methods of collecting information for evaluation include observations and interviews at predetermined intervals following the training. Without mechanisms like this, there can be no clarity on whether the value of T&D has been gained. Hameed and Whaeed (2011) supported this when they argued that T&D evaluation is vital to determine whether training has resulted in any changes in employee performance. Yamoah and Maiyo (2013) proposed that employees' performance should be reviewed against the goals of the training while also considering the strengths and weaknesses of the individual, both with regard to their

skills and personal characteristics. Hameed and Whaeed (2011) earlier noted that employee performance is a complex metric to measure; there should therefore be predetermined criteria within a standard established by top-level management (Sultana et al., 2012). Yamoah and Maiyo (2013) also recommended the setting of criteria by which performance can be measured in advance.

From this discussion, it can be posited that there is significant failure on the part of Saudi public universities to capture the full value of T&D through a lack of evaluation of the programmes that are provided. In order to remedy this, it is suggested that robust evaluation procedures are put in place to ensure the appropriateness of T&D programmes and establish their importance as an element contributing to the success of the university, and conversely, also to determine whether continued support for the department as it currently stands is warranted. This includes decisions around whether or not a specific training programme should continue to be supported or terminated (Kraiger, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006), or improved in some way (Wick et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Chaturvedi (2013) defined the process of decision-making as the use of given criteria to choose from two or more alternatives. Training evaluation can support decision-making regarding participation in HR development programmes (Topno, 2012), as it can ensure that the decision-making process in this area is effective (Stewart & Brown, 2011) and create credibility and a robust foundation for T&D decisions (Kearns & Miller, 1996). Evaluation can be used to identify areas of training interventions which can be updated or improved (Kirkpatrick, 1996), and the employees participating in HR development programmes or activities can review the material they learn and determine how they can incorporate it into their day-to-day work (Easterby-Smith, 1994).

Finally, Saudi Higher Education institutions should evaluate the performance of academic staff before and after they attend T&D programmes, as this helps with staff management and development by providing them with training opportunities to improve teaching and learning quality and increase research output and impact. As Dhawan (2020) has noted, professional T&D in higher education institutions enables better planning and strategic development for enhancing the skill set of students. Similarly, Bovill et al. (2016) point out that the continuously evolving educational standards and technologies require a similar evolution in the expertise of teaching staff for building a better relationship with students and readying them for the existing competitive environment. Thus, evaluation is key in providing effective and targeted training for the academic staff. To practically address Saudi public universities' failure to evaluate T&D effectiveness, this study offers the approach shown in Figure 27 (below). Recommendations in



terms of future practice are discussed in detail in Chapter 7 of this study, and there a particular evaluative framework is offered that might be adopted to practically address the failure of Saudi public universities to evaluate T&D effectiveness.

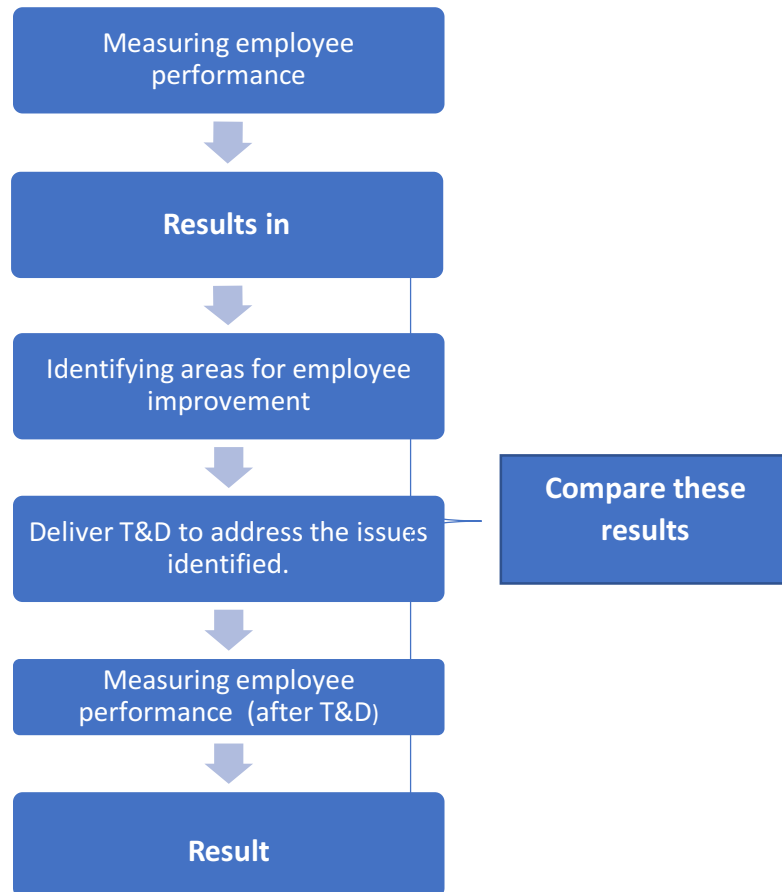


Figure 27: Proposed framework for T&D evaluation process

## **6.5 The effects of the challenges to Training & Development delivery in Saudi public higher education institutions**

What emerges from the material above is that despite institutions financially and professionally contributing towards training and the development of learning, a number of factors indicate that overall, there is significant failure on the part of Saudi public universities to capture the value of T&D. The challenges to the actual delivery of T&D, this study contends, subsequently lead to particular impacts within the institutions as illuminated by the qualitative research. This part of the chapter discusses these identified effects in light of the theoretical framework in order to further determine the significance of these challenges and establish how they might align with previous research.

Professional T&D in higher education institutions enables better planning and strategic development for enhancing the skill set of students (Dhawan, 2020). The continuously evolving educational standards and technologies require a similar evolution in the expertise of teaching staff for building a better relationship with students and readying them for the existing competitive business environment. For this, management must provide effective training for the teachers in using advanced technologies (Bovill et al., 2016). Though institutions are financially and professionally contributing towards the training and development of learning, the still existing challenges in this T&D process tend to hamper its functioning, resulting in degrading the effectiveness of the T&D delivery system (Othayman et al., 2020). As part of the seven key research findings, this study has identified three main effects of the challenges confronting the delivery of T&D in Saudi public universities, to which the discussion now turns.

### **6.5.1 Overall output does not meet the demands of the Training & Development strategies set out by the university**

The first impact of the challenges in T&D concerns the non-attainment of university goals by means of the process, whether that is in terms of the demands of the overall institution or in terms of meeting the demands of the staff themselves. Herein, participant B55 believes that *“often training programmes are not aligned with the needs of academic staff hence resulting in their failure to develop competencies and meet university goals”*. The resource-based view theory focuses on knowledge-based advantages for a firm where tactical and explicit proprietary knowledge is used to gain a competitive advantage in the market Sanchez, 2005; Alosaimi, 2016). Aina and Atan (2020) suggest that there is a clear causation relationship between training and development and employee effectiveness in the organisation. The

challenges in T&D thus impact the overall goal attainment of the organisation, which adversely impacts organisational effectiveness. Challenges to the effective delivery of T&D leads to a decrease in the productivity and viability of employees for the attainment of organisational goals (OECD, 2016). Where there are challenges to T&D in an educational setting and training does not significantly impact the teacher's state of mind, T&D thus fails the teacher's efforts towards enhanced productivity (Timperley et al., 2007), and the proportionate effort from utilising the training resource is not seen in the form of improvement in teaching capability pre-training and post-instruction. The impact might be summed up as including adverse effects on organisational effectiveness, on the improvement of skills in employees, on the attitude and work-related manner of the employees which prohibits the attainment of goals in the organisation. Participant A005 suggests that *“with the challenge in T&D implementation their calculation of individual contribution to the organisation's performance becomes difficult. It impacts the attitude and work-related manner of the employees. With this, the university fails to meet their future targets and goals.”*

According to the review of available literature, one of the primary demands of the T&D strategies is to increase staff satisfaction, where the T&D delivery system is not only related to improved results for the higher education institutes, but rather is a potent tool in shaping the attitude of teaching and academic staff. A failure in the proper delivery of T&D leads to a lack of discretionary behaviour among staff. This ultimately leads to a lack of job satisfaction among staff members (Davidescu et al., 2020). Participant A73 expresses something of this in saying, *“When staff do not receive adequate T&D, and the challenges are there in the form of investments, educational institutions fail to contribute towards the satisfaction of employees and staff.”* Based on the expectancy theory, through T&D employees expect to receive intrinsic job characteristics that are necessary for job completion and satisfaction. Similarly, by developing additional skills through T&D, they aim to learn new skills to provide a final degree of satisfaction to students as stakeholders in the institute (Unda and Ramos, 2016). With the correct type of T&D programme, staff members witness enhancement in their functional expertise, thus leading to better academic work. This allows them to learn new skills and improves satisfaction with the organisation and with their jobs (Alparslan, 2020). Participant B059 has provided a similar kind of opinion regarding this issue, stating, *“As you know, that training is designed to expand the skill and knowledge horizon of the academic staff. But challenges in the delivery of T&D among the staff harm the intellect of the employees and even create dissatisfaction among employees.”* Osamwonyi (2016) supports the perceptions of

participant B11 by asserting that T&D is a continuous and deliberate process of presenting academic staff with their individual needs. The existence of issues in the form of infrastructure or lack of funding for supporting training activities reduces the motivation level among employees. Due to this, there is an increase in the turnover of the academic staff, even resulting in the higher education institutes not being able to run their operation effectively (Tremblay et al., 2012; Alparslan, 2020). Thus, T&D acts as a motivational factor among employees and staff in the higher education institutes, where they seek to enhance their knowledge and expect to contribute more towards their job. Whereas, in the lack of T&D delivery, employees do not attain proficiency to provide the expected better results (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). As employees cannot meet their job satisfaction level, it leads to the delivery of low-quality work.

Properly understanding the needs and expectations of staff through appropriate T&D and its timely delivery helps maintain their service quality (Alhalboosi, 2018). Thus, management not being able to attain smooth delivery of training and development sessions due to the identified challenges consequently affects the entire operation flow and makes it challenging to retain employees and to sustain morale, particularly when employees are often not convinced by the training goals stated by top management or by the purpose of having similar workshops many times (Bhardwaj, 2019). Similarly, Participant A013 highlighted that *“staff sometimes feel that management is avoiding their needs which results in loss of their interest and morale of teaching. Eventually, quality of education and the performance of staff is affected.”* Similarly, participant B011 voiced the opinion that *“the non-involvement in academic activities creates a sense of reluctance among us and even sometimes we lose morale of providing quality-based teaching to students”*. Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014) note that where there is a breakdown in the communication channel, the employees feel that the higher management is not clear as to the task they perform. This is easily witnessed in the reduction in productivity of the employees. Having authority gaps and a lack of informal and formal communication platforms prevent the authorities from interacting. Along similar lines, Osamwonyi (2016) concluded that majorly T&D programmes are designed by the higher authorities who firstly do not provide adequate programmes and mainly design them without even consulting the academic staff and students about their needs, thus disconnection from the institutions results.

Where T&D delivery is compromised it can also be seen those adverse impacts, such as lack of clarity over learning goals and insufficiency in pedagogical preparation, are borne by academic staff and students (Meiers, 2010). The challenges lead to a loss in morale in academic staff, which in turn prohibits them to contribute towards students learning and promote

organisational growth (Timperley et al., 2007). Such demotivation among employees can mean they even resist positive changes in the institutes. Resource-based view theory focuses on the proper development and utilisation of the internal resources of the firms that can provide the organisation with resource-driven competencies. This competency can eventually lead to a competitive advantage for the organisations (Seriki, 2020). But with the existing challenges, there is underutilisation of resources and the presence of disadvantageous competitive position of the institute in the market. This further adds up to the lack of detachment among academic staff as limited facilities demotivate the staff.

Thus, lack of training results in creating a disconnection between the training and its implementation, a breakdown in the communication channel, and a reduction in productivity of the employees. Finally, the challenges in T&D where training is found not to be compatible with university demands, leads to the non-attainment of university goals in the process.

### **6.5.2 The non-alignment of courses taken impacts negatively on student learning outcomes**

Challenges in T&D delivery hamper the ability of academic staff to provide to student learning. This includes a lack of the flexibility and innovativeness developed through training. The formal arrangement of T&D delivery can therefore enhance the student learning experience (Tremblay et al., 2012). In the absence of this, students' attitude toward learning and the ability of academic staff to build a positive attitude among them are affected. Based on the resource-based view theory, attributes of internal resources influence the development and performance of the organisation as a whole and individuals within it (Ho & Peng, 2016), so with challenges in T&D delivery which prevent the passing on of the benefits of training to students, the institution faces limitations in resolving competitive conflicts, provides inadequate learning benefits to students and risks creating an environment of turbulent uncertainty.

In this respect, Participant A073 stated: *"I think the problems in the delivery of T&D inhibit student learning in the institution."* Timperley et al. (2007) found that challenges in the T&D system denies students the opportunity to learn from teachers who have advanced training and adequate preparation to develop a learning environment. The lack of instructive innovation in Saudi higher education means that students may find it difficult to learn in this environment, adversely impacting graduation rates and the number of applications in the following academic year (OECD, 2016).

Also, Participant B059 added, *“The challenges in the T&D delivery in the institutes adversely impact student learning by bringing down the quantity and quality of the understudies.”* Research by Inamorato et al. (2019) reflects this, finding that the non-availability of trained academic staff means there is no guidance available to students through the instructive plan. This happens because a lack of T&D limits the capability of academic staff to employ innovative teaching methods. A lack of student engagement or poor-quality connections between academic staff and students degrades the overall learning experience (Senthilkumar & Kannappa, 2017). As resource-based view theory suggests that the attributes of internal resources influence the development and performance of the internal factors of the institution, when challenges are present in the delivery of T&D, student learning is impacted due to a lack of flexibility and innovativeness, a gap between teachers and students damaging attitudes toward learning, an environment of uncertainty, missing value-adding classes, and attendance of inappropriate courses. The challenges adversely affect the advancement and adequate preparation of teachers to create an effective learning environment.

### **6.5.3 Training & Development challenges affect long-term organisational and individual performance**

Continuous T&D processes are necessary to keep employees up to date. The lack of successful integration of T&D programmes in Saudi Higher Education means that individual employees cannot deliver quality work and enhance students' skills (Aleixo et al., 2018). This reduces organisational productivity and individual academic staff performance. Expectancy theory posits that students are not passive subjects in educational institutions, but active stakeholders whose satisfaction level decides the service quality of the institution. Therefore, organisations need to meet the expectation level of these stakeholders to maintain the flow of work (McCaffery, 2018). Most of the participants in this study consider that the challenges in the T&D delivery system prohibits improvement in the theoretical, human, and managerial competencies of academic staff. This is in line with expectancy theory, which states that school administrators and other stakeholders expect enhancement in the skills, knowledge, work efficiency, behaviour, and mindset of academic staff (McCaffery, 2018).

Similarly, low levels of satisfaction among administrators, another key group of stakeholders, leads to wastage of resources and obsolescence of skills that could bring transformational reform in institutional strength and academic performance. In this context, Participant A0083 noted, *“Of course, the organisation's workflow is becoming highly affected. We are not able to provide effective training to our employees due to lack of proper infrastructure, management*

*decisions, time availability, and so on.*” In support of this, Usman (2016) found that the performance of a school and of its students depends on the availability of resources and their practical and adequate utilisation. The persistent gap between expected performance and the level of education attained that arises from political issues, misuse of school facilities, or poor management results in poor performance.

Participant B040 further added that *“the challenge faced by the academic staff is the high level of expectations: this impacts individual performance as we are required to maintain orderliness and ensuring command in the classes”*. Meiers (2010) echoed these perceptions, noting that all changes in the institution must be carried out in accordance with the rules of the school, including tasks related to school management, parents, and students. If the challenges in T&D are not mitigated, the creation of a lifelong learning environment is hindered and individual performance never improved (Nour, 2014). Challenges in T&D integration and delivery means academic staff cannot generate a creative thinking environment and foster innovativeness, degrading the institution’s performance and reducing the contribution potential of academic staff (Usman, 2016) If staff are unable to deliver to an expected level of quality, student satisfaction and productivity will be reduced. This dissatisfaction may also be seen among administrators and other stakeholders as growth of the theoretical, human, and managerial competencies of the academic staff is inhibited.

Delivery of T&D is considered a strategic opportunity that could fill a resource gap by enhancing existing quality standards (Armstrong, 2014). However, the identified challenges represent significant wastage of time and money as the funds allocated to provide T&D do not positively impact graduation rates (Dangara, 2016). Learning is not facilitated by spending money on T&D programmes that fail to account for efficiency, which could otherwise improve student success and therefore represent a positive return on investment. This is linked to resource-based view, which posits that time and money are valuable, non-substitutable resources which should be used to build new capabilities (Tse, 2007). Participant B005 pointed this out: *“The challenges in T&D impact the managerial performance of the institute to make use of allocated resources of time and money toward improving the quantity and quality of education provided by the institute”*. Similarly, Participant A069 indicated that *“the challenges in T&D in determining the actual needs of staff result in the wastage of a lot of money and decreases competitive advantage in the education industry”*. Asgar (2020) determined that failing to identify retention options and the training needs of academic staff results in a waste of time and money as the wrong people are likely to be trained. Therefore,

accurately identifying training needs helps optimise resource use in a productive and valuable way (Altarawneh & Ahmed Aseery, 2016). A report by Ferrari (2009) noted that failure to train employees in effect negatively impacts on academic staff as they feel there is no need to repeatedly undergo the same training. To prevent this misuse of resources, the money should be invested in other methods of creating superior knowledge in the institution (Popov, 2015).

Thus, challenges in the T&D lead to wastage of invaluable finances and time. As per the resource-based view theory, the wastage adversely impacts the efficiency of the institute and success among its students which otherwise could contribute to competitive advantage for the organisation. The staff are not able to benefit from the training to use their competencies to provide a competitive advantage to the institutes.

### **6.6 Gaining value from Training & Development applying resource-based view theory**

The VRIO system, created by Barney (2001), can address the question of whether or not value is added by an organisation's investment of resources in T&D, and determine if the organisation is structured to ensure efficient use of resources. If management is unable to understand the characteristics of its human resources, it cannot be assumed that the organisation has the ability to create or improve competitive advantage through them. Human resources defined by the VRIO system components, on the other hand, can be considered high-quality and provide a long-term competitive advantage.

From the discussion of the present study's findings in this chapter, the VRIO system has been applied to address the question: Has Saudi public Higher Education succeeded or failed in capturing the value of T&D? Figure 28 has been developed to answer this question.



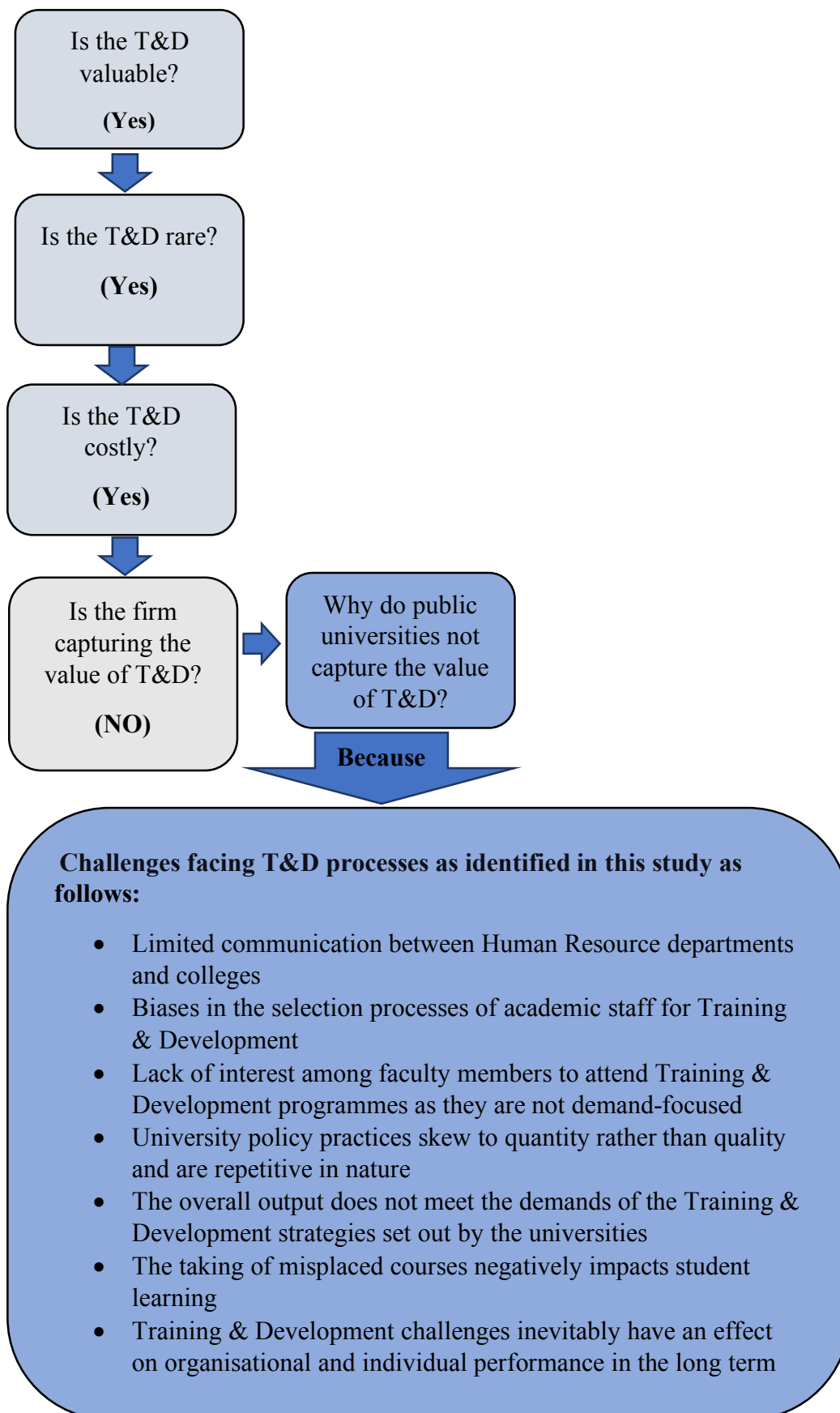


Figure 28: Why public universities fail to capture the value of T&D

The T&D challenges identified in this study mean Saudi public universities are losing competitive advantage as they are failing to capture the value of T&D programmes and lack skilled academic staff through neglect of their needs and inefficient and discriminatory practices. As it is now understood why the universities are not capturing the value of T&D, it must be considered how they could do this in order to develop sustained competitive advantage. This will form the subject of the next chapter of this study, which provides recommendations which should be implemented to allow the universities to gain the value of their human capital.

### **6.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has sought to elaborate on the key findings from the qualitative research set out in Chapter 5 by placing them in the context of the existing relevant literature and theories. The resulting discussion highlights the ways in which the identified challenges are significant in terms of their impact and the ability of Saudi public universities to capture the value of any T&D offered within them and contends that the overall picture that emerges is of major failings in T&D delivery.

At this juncture, it is worth setting out a summary of the situation identified by this research before Chapter 7 turns to the final research question of what can be done to overcome the T&D challenges and hence reduce the obstacles to T&D in Saudi public higher education. The current chapter has highlighted a lack of communication and coordination in ascertaining training needs in the selected universities. Senior managers view university policies as the main issue, as there is no systematic process for meaningful communication and no convenient way to contact HR. This communication gap also exists between the HR department and faculty members, as academic staff have no significant role in designing T&D programmes. Furthermore, the high costs of designing and implementing new training programmes discourage senior managers from taking on the responsibility to upskill faculty members. Senior managers also note a lack of time to plan and design up-to-date training programmes, and so prefer to run the same inferior and outdated programmes every year. The existing approach to designing training programmes does not consider the training needs of staff, resulting in ineffective training which does not advance faculty members' careers. Non-Saudi faculty members, meanwhile, feel discriminated against as they perceive Saudi citizens as being prioritised for T&D, and female staff feel that they are passed over for T&D opportunities purportedly due to their domestic responsibilities, but also in order to prevent them from reaching leadership positions.

Saudi public universities use both on- and off-campus training but lack suitable facilities on-campus. This reduces the effectiveness of the execution of the training process. Although several academic staff complained about the locations of off-campus training, even T&D conducted on-campus draws poor attendance due to low staff motivation and insufficient planning and designing. Additionally, only limited off-campus T&D is made available to non-Saudis. The absence of any follow-up by supervisors and the freedom to choose the type of training attended are further challenges that lead academic staff to view training as a holiday rather than a form of work. Saudi public universities have no system to evaluate the effectiveness of training programmes, nor reliable, scientific methods to establish faculty members' job performance before and after training programmes. This absence of T&D evaluation is a significant challenge as it defeats the purpose of conducting T&D programmes.

The identified T&D challenges also result in the wastage of valuable resources through inefficiency. Many of the participants observed that the money spent on training programmes is, in reality, wasted, as the training adds no value or credibility to the skill sets of the staff. Several of the academic staff who have attended training courses stated also that attending training caused them to miss classes, which had to be passed on to a less qualified or even unqualified substitute, affecting the quality of the lectures and impacting student learning. Moreover, it was noted that the administration's insufficient focus on evaluating the benefits of training programmes in terms of overall gain or added value is a serious concern as considerable funds are spent on training whether it is useful or not. A lack of interest in identifying faculty members' needs or development requirements from the university administration has caused many academic staff to develop low self-esteem and a loss of interest in improving or upskilling themselves, so their engagement in any assigned training will be low and therefore have little or no impact. All of the identified T&D challenges cause the universities to fail to meet their goals and objectives and prevent them from gaining any competitive advantage.

Once a clearer sense of the challenges has been determined, however, it should be possible to suggest ways forward that would facilitate the maximisation of T&D within Saudi public universities. This forms the heart of Chapter 7, along with assessing the contribution this research makes to furthering understanding of T&D delivery within the area of Saudi higher education.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Conclusion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This study aimed to investigate the various challenges faced by higher institutions of learning on the training and development (T&D) process in public higher institutions of learning in Saudi Arabia, and to analyse how these challenges affect the implementation and success of T&D programmes and the career development of faculty members. To meet the aim of the research and answer the research questions, three objectives were formulated as follows:

- (a) To identify the key challenges facing the T&D process in public higher institutions of learning in Saudi Arabia by critically reviewing the relevant literature so as to gain a greater understanding of the challenges, theories, practices, and factors which influence T&D effectiveness in public universities.
- (b) To fill the gap in the T&D literature, especially in developing countries and countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and investigate if Saudi public universities have succeeded or failed to adequately train and develop their employees to improve their work competency and meet operational requirements.
- (c) To provide recommendations and suggestions for maximising training effectiveness in practice and contribute to the existing literature.

This chapter first briefly looks at how these research questions have been addressed and the way in which the research objectives have been met during the course of the study. It then presents the contributions the study has sought to make towards literature in the field of T&D evaluation and implementation within a specific developing world context, before detailing a range of particular recommendations designed to facilitate Saudi Arabian public higher education institutions capture the value of T&D more fully and effectively. The chapter ends with remarks on the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

#### **7.2 Summary of main findings**

Table 21 (below) briefly summarises the major findings of this study in line with each research question.

Table 21: Summary of the findings of this research

Research question	Findings
<p>1. What are the challenges confronting the delivery of training and development (needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation) in the Saudi Arabian Higher Education sector?</p>	<p>This study shows that TNA is the most important stage of variables influencing the organisation's effectiveness in gaining value from T&amp;D programmes. However, public universities in the Saudi Arabian higher education sector tend not to use straightforward methods to determine training needs, so there are no clear programme goals. The reason for this is the challenge of duplicating roles in T&amp;D management in higher education institutions. It was noted that this results from overlap when determining T&amp;D needs and supervision between different colleges within the university and the Deanship of Faculty and Personnel Affairs. There is a gap between the HR department and academic staff in assessing T&amp;D needs, and a lack of communication and coordination between the Deanship of Faculty and the Deanship of Personnel Affairs on the development and implementation of training programmes. Although both Saudi and non-Saudi employees feel that they need access to T&amp;D opportunities, foreign-born workers are not provided with the same opportunities as those born in Saudi Arabia, with non-Saudis mostly confined to internal training. This is a situation that many of the participants felt leads to differentiation and inequality between Saudi citizens and employees from other countries. This is the case even though employment contracts require all staff members to contribute to the advancement of teaching and research and support the institutions that employ them to become world-renowned places of learning.</p>

	<p>The findings for this research question highlight critical challenges that may be novel in the field. Firstly, most academic staff believe any T&amp;D programmes implemented on-campus are low quality, lack financial incentives, and have a poor training environment, leading to lack of participation in on-the-job training. The results also reveal a lack of seriousness with regard to training programmes when training is outside the university. Some academic staff use off-campus programmes as an opportunity for recreation and relaxation rather than a chance to develop their skills. There is no follow-up by employers or supervisors, which affects the results and purpose of the training. Many senior managers noted that the lack of financial support provided by the university is a primary reason for the poor quality of T&amp;D programmes. These managers also reported that university policy focusing on quantity over quality in T&amp;D is a persistent problem. For academic staff, a lack of time to attend training programmes was cited as the main challenge, as they struggle to combine a heavy teaching workload with attending training programmes. Finally, non-Saudi employees have limited opportunities to attend off-campus T&amp;D programmes.</p>
<p>2. What are the effects of the challenges experienced by public higher education institutions in the delivery of T&amp;D?</p>	<p>All participants (senior directors and academic staff) agreed that challenges faced in T&amp;D impact the effectiveness of T&amp;D programmes. The findings of this study highlight some important points:</p> <p>The challenges in delivering T&amp;D in higher education institutions prohibit improvement in the theoretical, human, and managerial competencies of the academic staff. The results showed that these challenges negatively impact staff motivation and the confidence between top management and staff. This leads to reduced satisfaction among administrators, wasted resources and the obsolescence of skills that could bring transformational reform in terms of institutional strength and academic staff performance. The T&amp;D delivery challenges also lead to a loss of credibility and</p>

	<p>recognition of T&amp;D programmes, and cause teaching staff to feel a lack of incentive to learn in and apply their knowledge from T&amp;D programmes. This results in a loss of recognition from stakeholders and affects the provision of student learning due to insufficient flexibility and innovativeness which would otherwise be developed through training. Formal T&amp;D delivery arrangements have far-reaching goals of enhancing the student learning experience. In the absence of this, students' attitude toward learning and the ability of academic staff to build a positive attitude among them are negatively affected.</p> <p>As the results for this question show, these challenges contribute to poor training and development output among academic staff. This can prevent the university from achieving its future goals, as most participants believe that the training is not compatible with these goals. This may then lead to a decrease in productivity.</p>
3. Are Saudi public Higher Education universities succeeding or failing to capture the value of T&D?	With regard to the answer to the previous research question, it is clear that the institutions have failed to capture the value of T&D.
4. What can be done to overcome the T&D challenges and hence reduce the obstacles to T&D in Saudi public Higher Education?	A suggested model and solutions to reduce the obstacles facing T&D in public Saudi Higher Education is provided in this research, with the hope of supporting Saudi public universities in achieving the value of T&D.

### 7.3 Meeting the research aim and objectives

Table 22: Objectives of this research

Objective number	Description	Chapter/s
1	To critically review the relevant T&D literature and understand the challenges, theories and practices related to their delivery, as well as the factors which influence the effectiveness of T&D in public organisations.	Chapter 2 (Literature review)

2	To assess how the current situation with regard to T&D needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation in Arab countries might be determined.	Chapter 2 (Literature review) and Chapter 3 (Saudi context)
3	To analyse the data obtained from the case study in order to identify the key challenges facing T&D needs analysis, implementation, and evaluation in Saudi public universities.	Chapter 5 (Examination, Findings and Analysis)
4	To examine the effect of the identified challenges on the delivery of T&D programmes in the universities	Chapter 5 (Examination, Findings and Analysis)
5	In light of the research findings to provide recommendations and suggestions for maximising training effectiveness to enable universities to gain the value of T&D programmes, and to set out contribution of the thesis to existing theory and practice.	Chapter 6 (Conclusions)

## 7.4 Research contributions

### 7.4.1 Contribution to literature and knowledge

Based on the literature review and discussion on T&D in the present study, several gaps in current knowledge have been identified. A number of studies have addressed the positive relationship between organisational performance and HRM practices, while others have discussed the link between HRM practices and employee motivation and satisfaction. However, there are only a handful of empirical studies exploring the challenges confronting T&D delivery in the field of Human Resource Development (HRD) (Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 1995; Agnaia, 1996; Amos-Wilson, 1996; Gray et al., 1997; Bu Qefel, 1998; Elbadri, 2001; Wilkins, 2001; Poon, 2004; Abu,Doleh, 2004; Altarawneh, 2005; Jamil, 2006; Jamil & Som, 2007; Bowman and Wilson, 2008, Van Eerde et al., 2008; Abdullah, 2009; Sherazi, et al., 2011; Elfazani, 2011; Abdulrahim, 2011; Ferdous & Razzak, 2012; Rodič et al., 2012; Shah & Gopal, 2012; Ensour, 2013; Atoki, 2013; Radwan, 2014; Ghufli, 2014; Elferjani, 2015; Shibani, 2016; Alqahtani, 2020). It has also been clearly stated in the literature that the numerous issues in HR operations in developing nations require further research (Al-Hamadi & Budhwar, 2006; Moideenkutty, Al-Lamki & Murthy, 2011; Budhwar & Debrah, 2013, Elferjani, 2015, Alqahtani, 2020).



The dearth of research in the developing world has been explained by reference to differences in culture, context, and HRM systems between contexts (Cooke, 2018). Further empirical research is possible only when there is a solid foundation of theoretical and conceptual development in the current literature from those very contexts. This study attempts to make a contribution to the existing body of knowledge by [this is where you can place material that shows how you extend theoretical and conceptual understanding through your study and seeing how the theories already established translate into a particular Gulf countries context].

Importantly, Saudi society is a unique ground for research because employees operate in line with specific culture, norms, values, and religious beliefs. This implies that the identified challenges in the delivery of T&D could therefore be unique and previously undiscovered in the field, which provides further advantages in extending the literature and body of knowledge. As the culture of Saudi Arabia is greatly influenced by religion, religion holds extraordinary power in modelling the character of institutions at different levels, which may create specific or additional challenges for T&D. By taking as the centre of the qualitative research the perspective of academic staff themselves, the findings of this study reveal the actual T&D situation in the Saudi Arabian higher education sector, and has determined how institutions have significantly failed to capture the value of T&D. This failure prevents universities from achieving sustainable incentives, as developing human capital is a clear method of gaining competitive advantage. This study contributes to the contextual body of knowledge about the lack of HRD opportunities between Saudi nationals and foreign-born university academic staff, as well as noting a gender bias when managers select academic staff for T&D programmes in the Saudi Arabian higher education sector. Few HRD studies have explored the challenges facing foreign staff in the public sectors of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in general, particularly in Saudi Arabia (Harbi et al., 2017; Alqahtani and Ayentimi, 2020), but the present research highlights the challenges they face. As most GCC countries rely heavily on foreign-born workers, especially in higher education, the implications of these findings may extend to countries other than Saudi Arabia.

A further contribution of this study comes from the finding that university policy and the duplication of managing and implementing T&D damage universities' ability to capture the value of T&D and thereby reduce their chances of establishing a world-class staff to support research and teaching. These things also weaken the capability of universities to produce employees who can play a major role in ensuring a competitive edge. Furthermore, this study raises several issues and realities that should be considered in the delivery of effective T&D

programmes by indicating the factors which can improve T&D in Saudi Arabian higher education. Related to this, the study proposes a model and solutions to mitigate impediments to T&D in Saudi Arabia and other areas that share similar social and cultural contexts.

Overall, therefore, this research represents a valuable resource for practitioners and scholars interested in developing systems for effective T&D implementation, and an opportunity to build a substantial body of knowledge that could prove useful for decision-makers in the higher education sector in Saudi Arabia. The findings may help them comprehend the issues that impact the quality of T&D programmes in the Saudi higher education sector, and this may extend to the government level, which could advance the achievement of the objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030 through T&D. Finally, this study deals with the impact of the identified challenges in relation to employee performance, motivation, job satisfaction, and organisational strategy, providing further information which could improve and develop T&D processes in the Saudi higher education sector, particularly if these are further explored with a case study

#### **7.4.2 Contribution to Practice**

A key contribution of this study is that, to date, no research has been carried out in Saudi Arabia focusing on the challenges that influence T&D delivery from the perspective of academic staff themselves.

Importantly, Saudi society is a unique ground for research because employees operate in line with specific culture, norms, values, and religious beliefs. This implies that the identified challenges in the delivery of T&D could therefore be unique and previously undiscovered in the field, which provides further advantages. A summary of this study's contribution is as follows:

- Extends existing knowledge of T&D challenges in an organisational setting (higher education) from staff members' perspectives.
- Increases understanding by employing a perspective that cuts across cultures with a specific focus on Saudi Arabia. This is a key element as the culture of Saudi Arabia is greatly influenced by religion, so religion therefore holds extraordinary power in modelling the character of institutions at different levels, which may create challenges for T&D.

- The rapid growth of Saudi Arabia means further studies in this area are required, especially from an organisational standpoint. The present is one of the first to address gaps in the literature relating to this.
- The research context of public universities from the point of view of academics is valuable in helping decision-makers gain greater benefits from T&D.
- The results can be utilised by higher education policy makers to glean deeper understanding of the T&D challenges which must be tackled if the objectives of the national transformation plan known as Vision 2030 are to be met.

## **7.5 Recommendations to reduce Training & Development challenges in Saudi Public Higher Education**

The contribution by this study to practice comes in the form of offering a number of proposals that might offer a way forward for seeing more effective T&D in the Saudi higher education sector in terms of TNA analysis, implementation and evaluation. Exploring solutions to the identified challenges faced by T&D in Saudi public universities is a primary aim of this research, as they could support decision-makers in overcoming the challenges and offer the opportunity to further develop T&D processes. Figure 29 shows the solutions suggested by the faculty members and HR directors, and it is the perspectives of these people which represents the main purpose of this research, as they could provide realistic and productive results.

### **7.5.1 Training Needs Analysis challenges**

This study demonstrates that the Saudi higher education sector is failing to determine the T&D needs of faculty members. Solutions to overcome these challenges would also improve HR practices and help universities gain the value of T&D programmes in order to enhance the performance of universities, staff and students. The current methods used to determine training needs are unclear and not fit for purpose and therefore should be redesigned in a way that takes the job performance of the target participants into account. A process of conducting surveys to gain the first-hand opinions of faculty members through direct contact should be combined with study of files, records, and reports from direct superiors.

A scientific methodology should be established to determine the actual needs of faculty members, incorporating a database identifying training courses in which each faculty member has previously participated as the main challenge faced by T&D is accurately assessing gaps between the HR department and faculty members. This study shows that determining training needs is currently an issue because the HR department does not empower department heads to

adequately do this. Therefore, university policy should change, giving department heads and college Deans the ability to assess training needs. This kind of decentralisation can be followed up by allowing department heads to contribute to the design of the college's training programmes. It may be the case that only the college Dean accurately understands the current productivity, experience and limitations of the staff sufficiently to decide which training programmes they require. Thus, communication channels must be established between the administration, which is responsible for training and each academic department, so they are involved in determining faculty members' training needs. Rapid, direct communication between the college Deanship and those responsible for training would positively contribute sufficient training needs assessment. Dialogue sessions, meetings, and workshops could all be used as part of this communication network designed to select appropriate training. Figure 29 summarises the challenges regarding communication gaps in the Saudi higher education sector and the suggested solution.

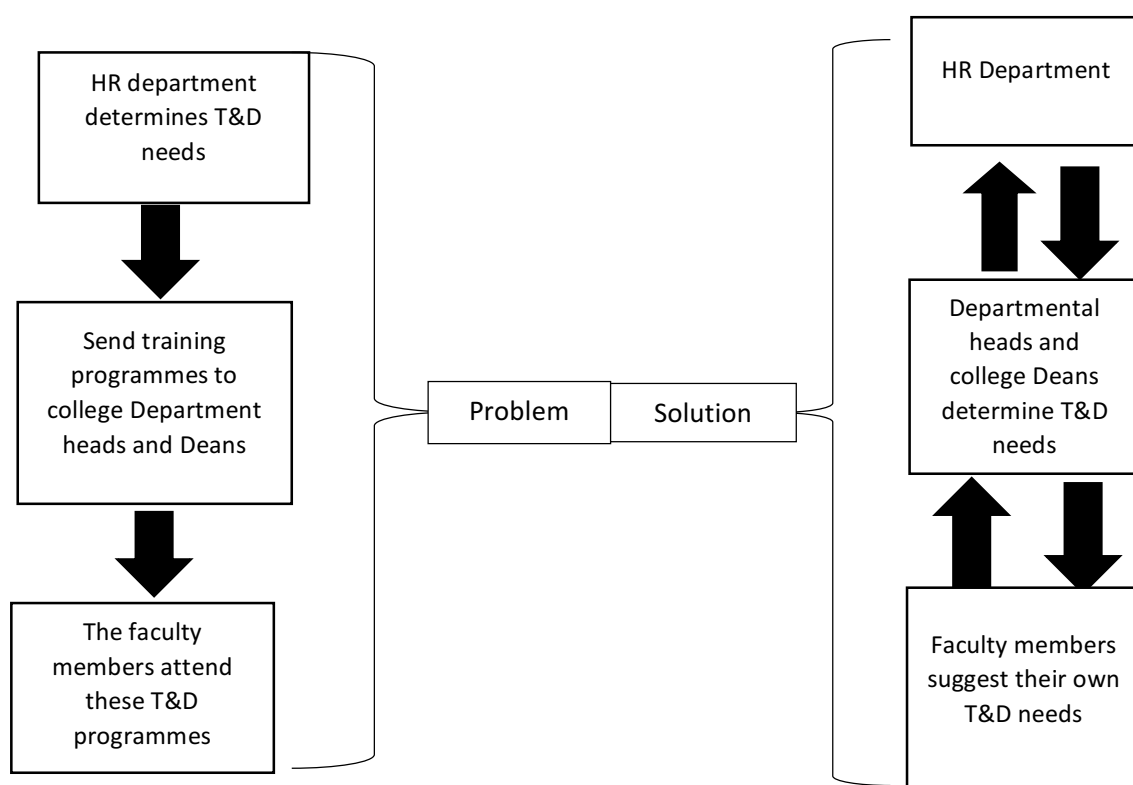


Figure 29: Solution to TNA challenges through communication

The two-way solution illustrated above would present a significant improvement over the current one-way communication many staff members presented as a failing system. Several participants stated that hiring qualified and ambitious people would lead to more effective identification of training needs, and that HR personnel should themselves be continually upskilled so as to be up to date with the dynamic teaching industry worldwide. Many of the

academic staff also suggested that HRM provide accurate and straightforward job descriptions to staff, and that the department responsible for designing training courses ensure the creation of appropriate training workshops in line with the needs of the faculty members. Collaborating with professional organisations would enable high-quality training courses to be designed, and these could incorporate e-training, more relevant than ever in the Covid-19 era. This would improve the training courses in Saudi higher education by enabling the help of experts worldwide. Figure 30 summarises the solutions for the challenges facing TNA.

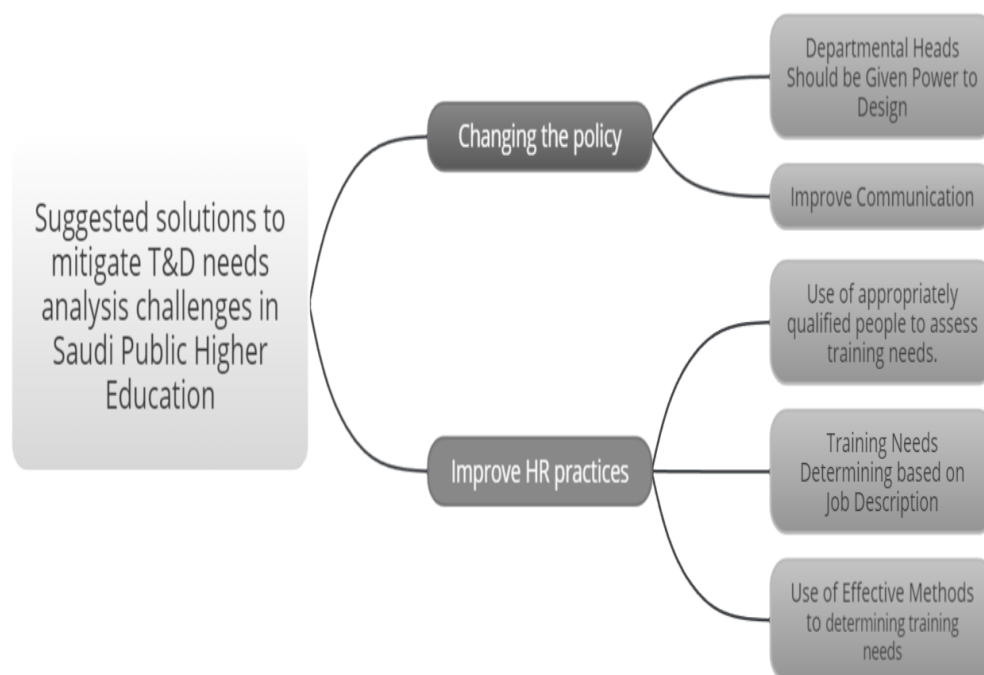


Figure 30: Mitigating TNA challenges

### 7.5.2 Training & Development implementation

The vast majority of the academic staff respondents in this study stated that the heavy teaching workload prevented them from participating in T&D in the university due to a lack of time. Therefore, short-term training programmes should be implemented on weekends or official holidays so that faculty members can fully participate. To assist, the university should reduce the teaching workload to give academic staff more time to develop themselves, especially with T&D programmes, and even more so if those courses entail travel. For long-term programmes, universities should allow faculty members a break from work to provide them with ample time to engage with the T&D programme.

Incorporating creative ideas and methods into training and moving away from traditional methods would also be beneficial. Online training, for example, has proven to be successful, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, and, if taken forward and built on appropriately, could change training strategy for the better. The effective use of technology is an economical method to conduct superior training for both genders, making it a viable overall solution. On-campus training, however, should provide perks or bonuses along with improved quality of T&D programmes to incentivise attendance and engagement. Finally, an orientation programme could improve staff awareness of the significance of training programmes, and make on-campus courses economical, saving the university invaluable resources. Incorporating an integrative bond between faculty personnel, colleges, and their relevant feedback mechanisms can fill the gaps between HR and staff.

Figure 31 summarises the solutions detailed in this section.

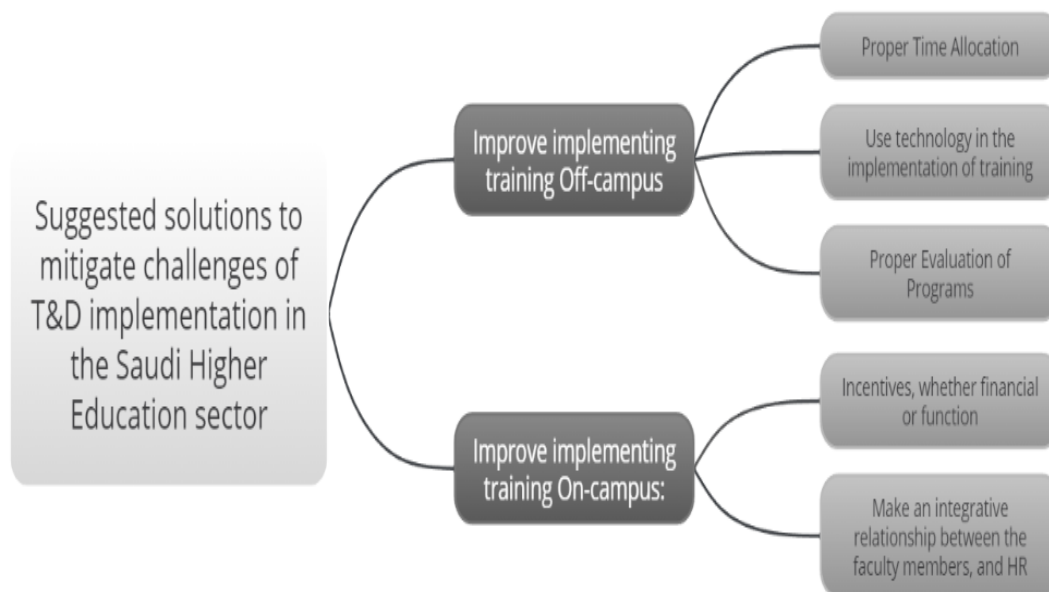
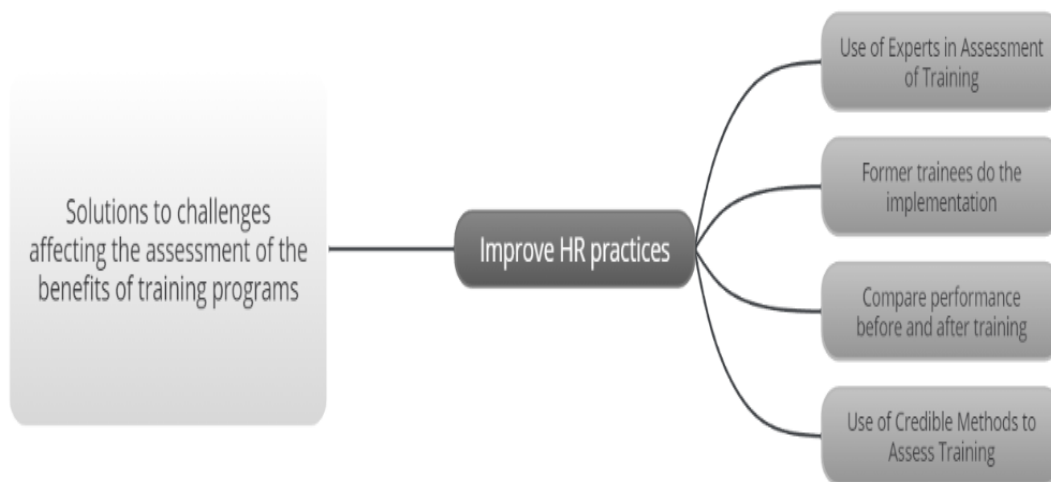


Figure 31: Mitigating T&D implementation challenges

### 7.5.3 Training & Development evaluation

The results of this study revealed that there are currently no straightforward methods to evaluate the impact of T&D programmes on staff learning. It is therefore suggested that universities measure staff performance before and after T&D programmes in order to

determine progress. With regard to this, decision-makers should seek answers to the following questions: What knowledge was learned? What skills were improved? Paying attention to this will help the Saudi higher education sector achieve greater benefits from T&D programmes and assist with decisions about when or if T&D programmes should be discontinued. Hiring qualified, experienced people is a practical solution to ensure the successful evaluation of training courses. HR managers need to be fully equipped with the necessary training to correctly examine the results of these methods for them to prove successful. If this is combined with application of the skills learned in the T&D programmes, this could be a feasible method to examine T&D effectiveness and gain real benefits from the programmes for faculty members. Finally, electronic testing is an effective method to accurately evaluate the extent of any benefits gleaned by staff from attending training courses Figure 32 summarises these solutions, while Figure 33 offers a framework for the closer evaluation of performance indicated in box three of Figure 32.



*Figure 32: Mitigating T&D evaluation challenges*

## **7.6 Improving the Training & Development delivery process in Saudi higher education**

Analysis of the challenges faced by T&D in Saudi public universities and consideration of solutions to mitigate them has led this study to develop a suggested model to address existing problems. Following this would help the Saudi higher education sector develop the delivery of T&D programmes and achieve their full benefits. The proposed model consists of nine stages, detailed below.

### **7.6.1 First stage: Measure employee performance**

This stage allows the organisation to determine what the staff contribute and supports decision-makers in identifying employees strengths and where there is opportunity or need for development. The measurement process should provide a clear picture of each employee's situation and provide a consistent basis for comparison before and after T&D (see fifth stage).

### **7.6.2 Second stage: Training Needs Assessment (TNA)**

To devise a T&D system, it is helpful at this stage to ask for whom the training is being developed. It would be effective to focus on the following points: involve employees in the process; investigate and ask the supervisor / manager / other employees who are knowledgeable about the project and its results to describe it in terms of progress or benefit to customers, colleagues, and subordinates; and determine the viability of the participants. It is essential carry out deep analysis from three angles:

- Organisation: TNA at the organisational level, such as SWOT analysis.
- Task analysis: Tasks to be performed on the job require analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to do them.
- Individual analysis: Who needs to be trained? What are their training needs?

Conducting these three levels of analysis will determine the TNA gap, which denotes the difference between the desired result or target and the prevailing situation. The present study has indicated that managers routinely fail to determine existing needs, which can be solved through implementation of an appropriate TNA process. Based on the gap analysis presented in the proposed model, a decision will be made regarding candidates for training in terms of whether or not they should be trained, whether the costs can be justified, and whether the training represents a worthwhile investment.

### **7.6.3 Third stage: Select academic staff**

This research has shown a bias in Saudi public universities when selecting academic staff for T&D programmes and outlined an exploration of inequality between foreign-born and Saudi nationals with regard to how T&D opportunities are assigned in universities. The concept of justice is interpreted as a positive link between an individual's contribution and the returns they receive; individuals experience inequity when they feel negatively evaluated in exchange for their contribution. T&D must be designed to be bias-free, and all staff given the same opportunity, with no preferential treatment given based on gender or nationality.



#### **7.6.4 Fourth stage: Implement and follow up**

According to the available literature, this is the most challenging stage of the T&D delivery system because the success or failure of the whole training programme is likely to rest on the nature of the decisions made here. Core training types are usually arranged under the following titles: on-the-job training; planned organisational practice; in-house programmes; external planned practice; and exterior programmes. In general, these may be distinguished as internal and external strategies. It is suggested that the following four standards be used to decide which approach would be most applicable in any given case:

- Degree of compatibility with stated training requirements.
- Anticipated likelihood of successful transfer of knowledge gained to the workplace.
- Availability of appropriate resources.
- Appreciation of trainee-related issues.

The analysis in this research has shown that the trainee attendance is not currently at desirable levels, and coordination with training providers is poor, which compromises the effectiveness of the training programmes conducted. These observations give credence to the suggestion that follow-up training in the implementation stage is required. On this basis, it is recommended that efficient implementation can be attained through the development of effective communication with training providers. However, a bigger challenge is related to ensuring that trainees are self-motivated. Stimulating their commitment to the process can be done by allowing them a degree of involvement in the design of the training.

#### **7.6.5 Fifth stage: Measuring employee performance after T&D**

This stage is the same as stage one, but measures employee performance after they have completed the T&D programme.

#### **7.6.6 Sixth stage: Compare employees' performance before and after the T&D programme**

The literature shows that T&D evaluation methods are a significant challenge for public organisations in the Arab world. In line with this, this study found that Saudi public universities lack this T&D delivery stage, often using no evaluation method. Implementing this stage could help decision-makers overcome this issue. The main purpose of comparing employee performance before and after T&D programmes is to answer the following questions:

- What knowledge was learned?
- What skills were improved?
- Has the T&D added value to the organisation and to employees' performance?

#### **7.6.7 Seventh stage: Use the results of the comparison to take appropriate action**

At the end of stage six, the vision and the impact of the T&D programmes will be clear, and the result of that stage might support the decision-maker in the use of given criteria to choose from two or more alternatives. Training evaluation can support decisions regarding participation development programmes for HR by ensuring that the decision-making process surrounding training is effective and creates credibility and a robust foundation for T&D decisions. It can also be used to determine areas in which training interventions can be improved. The employees participating in HR development programmes or activities can review the material they learn and determine how they can implement what they have learned in their day-to-day work. Figure 33 summarises the suggested framework to improve the T&D delivery process in the Saudi higher education sector.

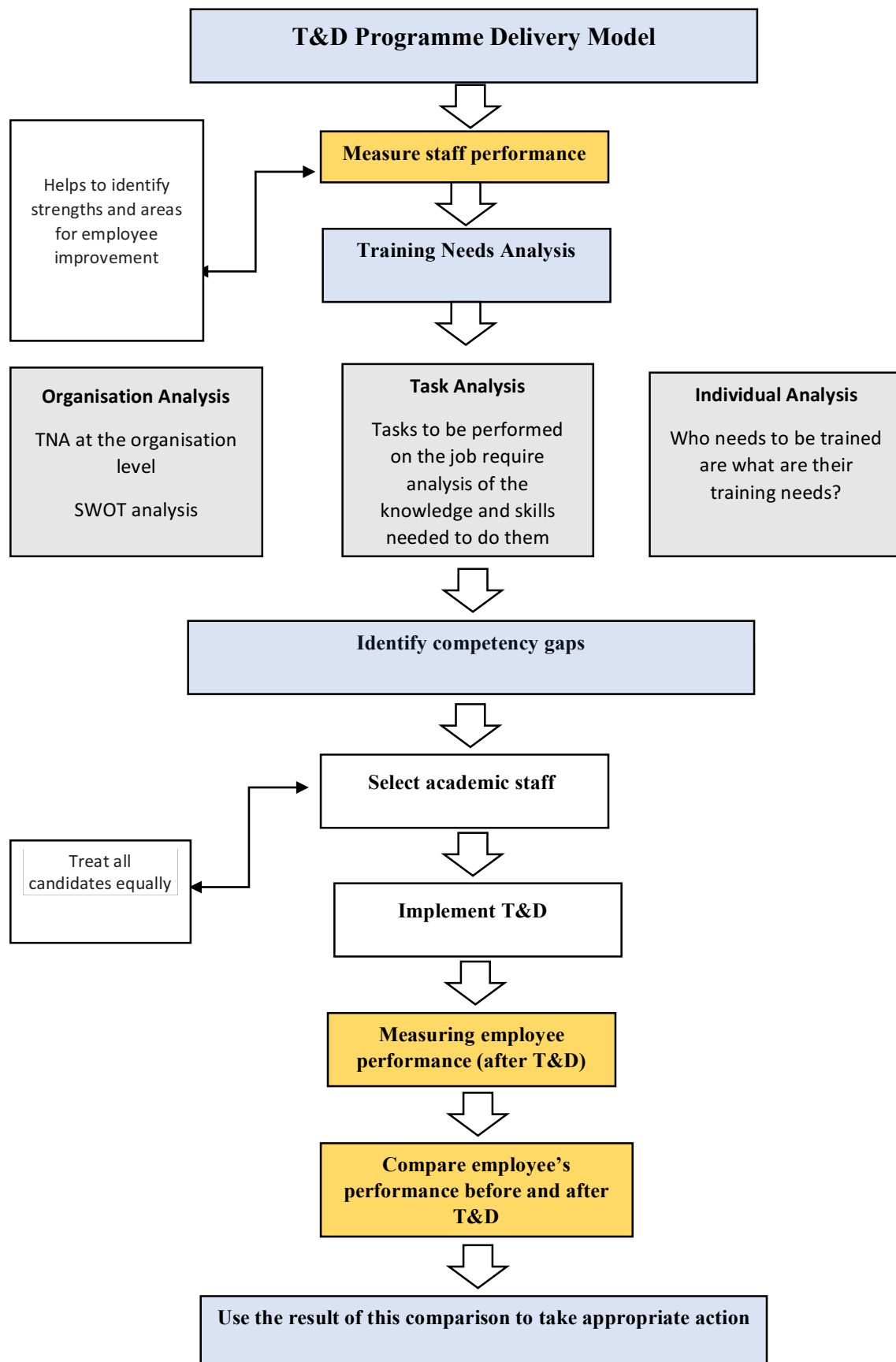


Figure 33: Proposed framework for delivering T&D in Saudi higher education

### **7.7 Study limitations and areas of further research**

This study has contributed to the T&D literature on the Saudi Arabian Higher Education sector, but there are limitations that must be acknowledged, and suggestions for further research to be made (Saunders et al., 2016). As this study comprised part of a doctoral thesis, limited time and resources were available to complete it. This research was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, which presented a safety threat to the participants and the researcher. Also, the pandemic has limited the researcher in terms of using university facilities. However, online meetings via Zoom and Skype were used to meet most of the participants, maximising safety when conducting the interviews. In addition, translating from Arabic to English was time-consuming and presented certain complications.

This research investigated the challenges faced by T&D in Saudi Arabian public universities, therefore representing the context of a unique culture where the structure of higher education may be different to other contexts. The findings are therefore difficult to generalise to other settings, so it is suggested that future research examine the challenges facing T&D in other GCC countries in particular to examine how the contexts might differ or demonstrate similar challenges. Investigation of the tensions and challenges associated with the development of HRD practices in privately-operated Saudi universities would also provide a fruitful avenue for research, particularly if compared with the results from public universities such as those from this study. Finally, there is scope for more research exploring how culture influences the quality of training programmes in public universities in Saudi Arabia.

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# Appendix 1

## Introductory letter

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Date: 17.05.2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I am a PhD supervisor for Mr Majed Bin Othayman, and I have known him since January 2019 when he started his studies at Swansea University. As part of his PhD programme, Majed intends to collect data for his thesis entitled '**An investigation of challenges confronting the delivery of training and development programmes in public universities: A case study of Saudi Arabia high education**'. The data collection will require face-to-face semi-structured interviews with staff at different levels of state university sector. I will greatly appreciate the support you render to him in conducting this data collection for the above project. The research is part of fulfilment of the PhD degree and not commercial. The expected duration of his fieldwork is 90 days, from around 30th May 2020 until around 30th August 2020.

Yours sincerely,

*John Mulyata*

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## Appendix 2

### Description of studies reviewed

References	Location	Results
Horton (2000)	China	This article discusses ten underlying issues involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating capacity development in R & D organisations. The results show that evidence in other areas highlights the importance of high-level commitment and leadership, an important external environment, and effective management of organisational change processes. The success of many capacity development efforts is limited by the fact that they focus on technical factors and ignore major social and political obstacles.
Lusthaus et al., (1999); Lavergne & Saxby, (2001)	Canada	The review of the latest literature deepens the understanding of the concept of capacity development by exploring some conceptual and practical issues related to capacity development and summarise their impact on planning, monitoring, and evaluation results. It also clarifies the implications of adopting a capacity development approach in development cooperation.
Brinkerhoff & Peter Morgan, (2014); Govender, (2016)		Introduces the topic of conventional conceptions of capacity development. Much of the dynamics and interactions that result in increased capacity to achieve results, perform, and cope with complex change.
Segrott et al., (2006); Cleverly, (n.d); Gething & Leelarthapin, (2000); Clare & Hawes, (2001); Iredale & Cleverly, (1998); Farrington, (1996); Crookes & Bradshaw, (2002)	Australia and the United Kingdom	Discusses how to build a research culture in academia the nursing department, specific strategies adopted and its results. It explores the issue of empowerment, describes the author's experience in adding research activities and fostering a research culture, including an assessment of the strategies used. It studies the main obstacles to capacity building, adopts (or proposes) capacity-building strategies in the literature, and considers a wide range of backgrounds. The literature provides many examples of capacity building strategies that follow future research directions.
Feldman & Acord, (2002)	United States	Describes how two schools of nursing developed research activity, including support networks, strategic direction and the distribution of teaching and research loads.
Pearson, (2012); Wilkes & Jackson, (2013)		An enabling research culture is an environment characterised by research productivity, positive collegial relationships, inclusivity, non-competitiveness, and effective research processes and training. The authors' findings resonate with and provide empirical support

		for previous literature highlighting the importance of community and collegial relationships to research productivity.
Hill et al., (2003); Tyler et al., (2019)	Mainly UK	Developing a research culture in the academic sector is a Promoting research and key aspects that require leadership, support and effective management. Mapping primary medical research capabilities and funding, and proposing future capacity-building strategies, including building a sustainable infrastructure
McCreddie et al., (2018)	UAE	Building research capacity includes supportive infrastructures, training, funded posts, and networks.
Nind & Lewthwaite, (2018)	Various European	Examines the issues affecting the productivity of dental schools, including resources, recruitment, support, monitoring, and the creation of research environments.
Crossley, (2019)	Belize	Explores how evaluation and research can aid ‘educational development in small states’ and examines the cultural aspects of ‘north-south collaboration’.
Fussy, (2019)	Tanzania	Outlines the inadequacy of current health research capacity in the global south, and discusses key capacity building strategies and the factors which determine their success
Airhihenbuwa et al., (2015); Owen et al., (2018)	Global perspective	Account of the development of a network to enhance research capacity in primary care which adopted a ‘whole system approach’ to meet the competing aims of capacity development.
Vallejo & Wehn, (2016)	Global South	Discusses collaboration between southern nations, including issues of cultural difference and ensuring that the local community’s benefit from involvement in research studies
(Poon, 2004)	Developing Countries	Examines the strategies which research managers in developing countries can adopt to build research capacity within specific organisations.
Ahmad et al. (2019)	Pakistan	Research outcomes depict that supervisory support and OSCD development does not impact significantly on employee’s performance of the banking sector, whereas the capacity building of an individual employee leads to enhancing his/her performance.
Brinkerhoff (2010)	USA	The model identifies three dimensions that can be used to characterise interventions to build capacity: the amount of time required, the degree of difficulty and complexity and the scope and depth of the change involved.
Buqawa et al., (2018)	Arabian Gulf	The purpose of this article is to review and reflect on the development and transformation of the Graduate Program in Technology Management from 1990 to 2015 at Arabian Gulf

		University. It discusses the characteristics of systems thinking, the links between academia and industry, research methods, problem-based learning, technology policy, social innovation, effective online learning, critical thinking and communication skills.
Al-Hanawi et al., (2019)	Saudi Arabia	Saudization and adoption of the “Nitaqat” programme have played an effective role in advancing Saudization goals in the private sector and have absorbed a huge space for well-trained Saudi boys and girls in the healthcare sector.
Hassanain, (2017)	Saudi Arabia	This case study shows that implementing PIU is a viable way to improve medical services in Saudi Arabia. Despite initial successes, the sustainability is still poor, which highlights the need to further improve the participation, motivation and training of team leaders and members to make the programme a long-term success.

Challenges of T&D in Arab organisations	Related literature
The location of the research done, namely Europe and America. And called for more research in Arab countries as a developing country.	McLean and McLean (2001) (Achoui 2009; Al-Kazi 2011; Dirani 2012; Tlaiss 2014a). Budhwar & Kamel Mellahi in 2007
Organisations should have a balance on training and development between typical cost and typical benefits.	DeCenzo, ect (2016) sa  These give an opposing view that training, and development do not improve performance Aragon et al. (2014) Umar et al. (2013)
Due to lacking communication skills, the personnel in the Middle East are not able to work with the diverse forces of an international organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramdani (2014)</li> <li>• Ologbo and Sofian (2013)</li> </ul>
Training does not impact effectively, but in-service training results in the poor performance. The study found out that in-service training was not organised regularly in developing countries (High School).	Hervie & Winful (2018)
Human resources development in Arabic countries have a lack of management support and these countries need to develop human capital by improving training and development programmes.	2014 Al-Sayyed Alsahlawi and Gardener (2004)
Many organisations are facing challenges for training evaluation because it is costly, and many managers do not have skills and knowledge to conduct training evaluations.	(Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012).
The lack of qualified employees to conduct evaluations might be the main problem of Arabic organisations.	Altarawneh (2009)
Training and development evaluations in most Arabic countries have a lack of the skills to carry out these tasks effectively.	Rajasekar and Khan (2013)
That the training environment does not affect the learning outcomes.	Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2012)
Saudi Arabia is facing issues with about 79% of Saudi employees and students who have studying trains in developed countries and expressing the willingness to extend their stay abroad.	(Hilal, 2015)
Training and development programmes and evaluation of the effectiveness still face challenges.	Abdalla and Al-Homoud (1995)

Little empirical work has explored the impact of training characteristics factors on training effectiveness.	(Aluko and Shonubi, 2014; Bates, 2004; Homklin et al., 2013)
The other gap is the shortage of comprehensive research, and thorough investigations and analysis on the effects of training characteristics on the academic sector performance.	(Homklin et al., 2014; Giangreco et al., 2009; Iqbal et al., 2011; Salas and Cannon-Bowers, 2001).
Most Arab organisations are challenged with training and development facilities	Madhoun (2006) Tlaiss & Kauser, (2011)
Most Arabic organisations still have lack of preparation and insight into the various aspects of training such as setting the training objectives.	AlMadhoun (2006)
Resource's managers in any Arabic organisations are affected by many factors, for example, personal connections, community attitudes, beliefs and customs, which might affect making the right decisions, which could in turn affect training and development objectives in the workplace.	As Agnaia (1996)
Trainer behaviours have a positive impact on trainees' performance and learning	Ghosh et al.(2011) Al-Mughairi, (2018) Ghosh et al.(2011)
Gulf countries have a difficulty with training evaluation because of the lack of management support for human resource management.	(Al-Sayyed, 2014).
In Arab organisations, the training and development facilities are traditional, limited and used infrequently.	(Sweis, 2019).
A lack of research in Arab organisations. The researchers consider that a trainee's positive reaction will help them to develop the knowledge and skills which will have a positive impact on the organisation's performance.	Al-Mughairi (2018) Ghosh et al. (2011) Iqbal et al. (2011)
Most Arab countries are unlikely to reach the desired level of efficiency and effectiveness because of the weak education and training systems, and a mismatch between training outputs and labour market demands.	(Al-El Obeidy, 2016).

## Appendix 3

## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Higher Education Ethical Approval

Ministry Of Education  
King Khalid University



وزارة التعليم  
جامعة الملك خالد  
إدارة الابتعاث

٣٨  
١٤

سعادة القائم بأعمال المحقق الثقافي السعودي في بريطانيا حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد :

إشارة إلى الطلب المقدم عبر بوابة سفير رقم (SM-8864) من المبتعث إلى جامعة Swansea في بريطانيا / ماجد بن عبدالله محمد عظيمان برحلة علمية إلى المملكة العربية السعودية (أبها - جامعة الملك خالد) لمدة تسعون يوماً إعتباراً من ١٤٤١/١١/٠٧ هـ الموافق ٢٠٢٠/٠٦/٢٨ م، لجمع البيانات اللازمة لإكمال بحثه لدرجة الدكتوراه.

وبناء على خطاب عميد كلية العلوم الأعمال رقم (٩/٢/١/٧٦٥٢١) وتاريخ ١٤٤١/١١/٢٤ هـ، والمتضمن التوصية بقيام المبتعث إلى جامعة Swansea في بريطانيا / ماجد بن عبدالله محمد عظيمان برحلة علمية إلى المملكة العربية السعودية (أبها - جامعة الملك خالد) لمدة تسعون يوماً إعتباراً من ١٤٤١/١١/٠٧ هـ الموافق ٢٠٢٠/٠٦/٢٨ م، لجمع البيانات اللازمة لإكمال بحثه لدرجة الدكتوراه.

عليه نفيديكم بالموافقة على قيام المبتعث / ماجد بن عبدالله محمد عظيمان برحلة علمية إلى المملكة العربية السعودية لمدة تسعون (أبها - جامعة الملك خالد) يوماً إعتباراً من ١٤٤١/١١/٠٧ هـ الموافق ٢٠٢٠/٠٦/٢٨ م، لجمع البيانات اللازمة لإكمال بحثه لدرجة الدكتوراه، على أن يكون تحت إشراف المشرف الدراسي على المبتعث وفي نهاية الرحلة يقوم بموافاة القسم الذي ينتمي إليه بتقرير مفصل عن الرحلة العلمية .

وتقبلوا أطيب تحياتي وتقديري .....

وكيل الجامعة

للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي

أ. د. سعد بن عبد الرحمن العمري

الرقم : ٣٢ / ٤٩٦٣ التاريخ : ١ / ١١ / ١٤٤١ هـ المرفقات : ب





الرقم : 4/1/3817 التاريخ : 14/08/1441 عدد المرفقات : 0

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA  
Ministry of Education  
King Khalid University  
38  
Vice President's Office  
For Graduate Studies & Research



المملكة العربية السعودية  
وزارة التعليم  
جامعة الملك خالد  
٣٨  
مكتب وكيل الجامعة  
للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي

سعادة الاستاذ ماجد بن عبد الله العظيومان

حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ...

إشارة إلى طلبكم الموافقة على تطبيق الإستبانة بالجامعة بعنوان ( بحث في التحديات التي تواجه استمرارية برامج التدريب والتطوير في الجامعات الحكومية : دراسة حالة للتعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية ) .

عليه نفيدكم بالموافقة المبدئية للجامعة على تطبيق أداة الدراسة ( الإستبانة )

المشار إليها ، وإرسال الطلب بشكل رسمي عن طريق برنامج سفير ( ٢ )

وتقبلوا أطيب تحياتي وتقديري ...

وكيل الجامعة  
للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي  
سعد بن عبد الرحمن العمري

## Appendix 4

### Debriefing Form

Thank you for taking time to share your valued thoughts in this interview that aims to identify and investigate challenges that are experienced by T&D in public higher education universities in a Saudi Arabian context from three angles: training and development need analysis, training and development implementation and training and development evaluation from the senior managers and academic staff's perspectives. The results of this study are expected to inform quality improvement in the delivery of T&D in public higher education universities in a Saudi Arabian. This study is also expected to develop a streamlined framework to overcome these challenges would also improve HR practices and help universities gain the value of T&D programmes in order to enhance the performance of universities, staff and students

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or any of the supervisors using the following contact details:

|

**Researcher:**

## Appendix 5

### Semi-structured Research Questionnaire Guide

#### Semi-structured Research Questionnaire Guide

**An investigation of challenges confronting the delivery of Training and Development Programmes in State universities sector: A case study of Saudi Arabia,**

#### **Group: A**

Section A: General Information on the informant

Name: .....

Gender: .....

Position: .....

Any other relevant information: .....

#### **Section B: Challenges facing the T&D delivery in the State Universities sector**

1. Please kindly tell me, do you have any training and development programme in place?
2. If yes, how long has it been in existence?
3. Could you please kindly explain in detail how is your training management structure designed?
4. How many employees have so far benefited from your training and development programme?
5. How is training & development needs assessment conducted, do you have a training and development needs assessment tool in place?
6. If yes, who designed it?
7. What are the challenges associated with identification of training and development needs assessment?
8. What are the training and development methods used in your organisation?
9. What are the challenges associated with the type of method used in training and development in your organisation?
10. Please tell me, are your training and development programmes evaluated?
11. How often do you evaluate your training and development programmes?

13. Please tell me, what are the evaluation tools used to measure the outcome of your training and development programme?
14. How effective are the evaluation tools used to measure your T&D programme?

**Section C: The extent to which challenges influence the delivery of T&D programmes**

1. To what extent do these challenges affect the identification of training and development needs?
2. To what extent do these challenges affect the design of the training and development programmes?
3. To what extent do these challenges affect the selection of the trainees?
4. To what extent do these challenges affect the outcome of the training and development programme?

**Section D: Factors that influence the delivery of T&D programmes**

1. What are the factors associated with identification of training and development needs assessment and training objectives?
2. What are the most critical factors that affect training and development design?
3. What are the factors that might affect you as a manager to select the trainers?
4. What are the factors that influence training and development methods?
5. What are the factors that affect training and development evaluation?
6. What are the factors that affect the evaluation of the trainees' learning?

**Group: B****Section A: General Information on the informant**

Name: .....

Gender: .....

Position: .....

Any other relevant information: .....

**Section B: Challenges facing the T&D delivery in the Public-Sector Universities**

1. Please kindly tell me, do you have a training and development programme in your organisation ?
2. If yes, how long has it been in existence?
3. How is training and development needs assessment conducted in your organisation, do your managers have a training and development needs assessment tool in place?
4. What are the challenges associated with identification of training and development needs assessment?
5. What are the training and development methods used in your organisation?
6. What are the challenges associated with the type of method used in training and development in your organisation?
7. Are you satisfied with the training and development design you attended? If yes what are the enablers/ If no, why?
8. Please tell me, what are the evaluation tools used to measure your outcome after the training and development programme?
9. What are the significant challenges associated with your measurement tools?

**Section C: The extent to which challenges influence the delivery of T&D programmes**

1. To what extent do these challenges affect training and development needs assessment methods?
2. To what extent do these challenges affect training and development design?